Impact of Sun Signs on Buying Behaviour – A Review

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I. ABSTRACT & INTRODUCTION TO SUN SIGNS

The astrologers have believed that the “Sun” is the most important star which has got a direct bearing on the behaviour of individual. An individual’s Sun sign will be approximately eighty percent accurate, sometime up to ninety percent (Goodman L, 1968). The astrologers believe that the sun moves from one zone to another zone on a particular date and time. A particular zone of Zodiac in which the sun is located at the moment of one’s birth is known as his / her sun sign. The astrologers have described 12 sun signs on the basis of various position of the sun at various points of time. The astrologers have also defined the various characteristics of a person w.r.t. his / her sun sign. These sun signs can be better understood with the help of following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name of Sun Sign</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Basic Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ARIES</td>
<td>March 21st to April 20th</td>
<td>Competitive, Enthusiastic, Ambitious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>TAURUS</td>
<td>April 21st to May 20th</td>
<td>Loyal, Persuasive, Practical, Nurturing, Lazy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>GEMINI</td>
<td>May 21st to June 20th</td>
<td>Popular, Industrious, Variable, Important, Break Puts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>CANCER</td>
<td>June 21st to July 22nd</td>
<td>Protective, Dramatic, Sensitive, Moody, Emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>LEO</td>
<td>July 23rd to August 22nd</td>
<td>Brave, Confident, Romantic, Blunt, Dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>VIRGO</td>
<td>August 23rd to September 22nd</td>
<td>Methodical, High Standards, Reliable, Fru tire - taking, Workaholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>LIBRA</td>
<td>September 23rd to October 22nd</td>
<td>Fair, Co-operative, Full - going, Generous, Intellectual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>SCORPIO</td>
<td>October 23rd to November 21st</td>
<td>Emotional, Determined, Content, Independent, Ambition, Aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>SAGITTARIUS</td>
<td>November 22nd to December 21st</td>
<td>Honest, Hopeful, Friendly, Independent, Direct, Trustful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>CAPRICORN</td>
<td>December 22nd to January 19th</td>
<td>Wise, Astute, Organized, Witty, Social Clueful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>AQUARIUS</td>
<td>January 20th to February 18th</td>
<td>Helpful, Independent, Broad Minded, Decorative, Bright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>PISCES</td>
<td>February 19th to March 20th</td>
<td>Sensitive, Compassionate, Inclined, Easy, Influential, No Self Confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table has described the basic characteristics of all the sun signs and these characteristics can help the marketer in understanding the personality traits and behaviour of their target customers. This understanding can lead to a competitive advantage and thus can result in leading in the market.

II. INTRODUCTION TO CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

The term consumer behavior is defined as the behavior that consumer display in searching for purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of product and services that they expect will satisfy their needs. Consumer behavior focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, effort) on consumption related items (Kotler P, 2000). This includes what they buy, why they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it, how often they use it, how they evaluate it after the purchase and the impact of such evaluation on future, and how they dispose of it.

In another words, consumer behavior can be define as the behaviour of individuals in regards to acquiring, using, and disposing of products, services, ideas or experiences. Consumer behavior also includes the acquisition and use of information. Thus, communication with consumers and receiving feedback for them is a crucial part of consumer behavior which is of great interest to marketers.

III. CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND SUN SIGNS

In this competitive era, marketers face a tough competition to grab new customers and retain the existing customers. There are various tools and techniques which the marketers use in order to understand the personal characteristics and consumer behaviour of their target consumers. Sun signs play a vital role in formation and development of one’s personality. Sun signs influence the behaviours of individuals to a significant extent and leads to scope for marketers to have extra advantage in understanding their target customers.
IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Veno A. and Pamment P. (1979) conducted research on the topic “Astrological Factors and Personality: A Southern Hemisphere Replication.” The main objective of the study was to find the relation between Extraversion and birth under the odd numbered sun signs & introversion and birth under the even numbered sun signs. The next objective of the study was to analyze whether the people born under the water signs are more emotional than others. To accomplish these objectives, a sample of 692 university students born in southern hemisphere was taken into study. The sample was judged with the help of Eysenck Personality Inventory. Mean score of Extraversion and Neuroticism was calculated and it was found that mean Extraversion score does not have “saw – tooth” pattern as it was expected by the hypothesis. With the help of Mean Neuroticism score it was concluded that Water signs were not having more mean score than non water signs. The study concluded that there is no significant difference among extraversion scores of people born under odd or even numbered sun signs. The researcher found that the Mean Neuroticism score for Capricorn males was very low, but they have taken it as a chance factor that might have occurred in the data. The authors have clearly concluded that further studies are needed in order to settle the relationship of sun signs to personality.

Mitchell V. W. (1995) published an article titled “Using Astrology in Market Segmentation.” The study discussed the history and uses of astrology demonstrate how it can be of potential use to marketers wishing to segment markets where the consumer’s lifestyle and psychology are important discriminators. The study also discussed that the recognizing people’s sun sign might add to a better understanding of consumer which may be used to improve communication and marketing mix. The study concluded that more subtle access to markets might be achieved with the use of symbols, colours, sounds, mood and image creation designed to appeal to the personalities of specific zodiac groups. The study had also highlighted the main characteristics of all the sun signs.

Ertel S. and Dean G. (1996) published “Are personality differences between twins predicted by astrology?” In this study the authors have reviewed the study conducted by Braesch F. S. in 1992. The earlier study (conducted by Braesch F. S.) showed that astrology can predict the personality differences between twins. The parents of 238 pairs of twins matched brief astrological descriptions with their twins’ personalities and achieved 68.5% of hits, which is much more than 50% expected by chance. But the later study found many complicating factors, evidence of bias due to response set and stereotypes and few other discrepancies. The study concluded that the earlier study conducted by Braesch F. S. is not valid and the results were biased. It also concluded that an astrological interpretation of earlier study is unwarranted.

Braesch S. F. (1997) studied on the topic “Astrology and Sociability: A Comparative Analysis of the Results of a Psychological Test.” The objective of the study was to compare sociability scores with classical astrological data found in natal charts. For this 524 French voluntary students from 7 different institutions studying in various fields including science, architecture, business administration and psychology were taken of which 213 students were females and rest 311 were males. For statistical calculation t-test, F test and ANOVA were calculated. The researcher found that with the sun in a sign, the sociability scores alternate significantly and in a regular way from one sign to another from Taurus to Pisces. The most sociable signs are Gemini, Leo, Libra and Sagittarius. Only Aries departs from the rule since its sociability score is the lowest of them all. The researcher also found that there is strong correspondence between professions and planet situated at the angles like Saturn for scientists, Jupiter for actors and politicians, Mars for sportsmen, Moon for painters and writers. It can be concluded from the study that a certain number of results particularly with respect of Zodiacal division strongly confirmed in the case of the sun and also mars. The sociability scores generally alternate in the odd and even signs in zodiac. Results also showing a significance of sociability at its maximum in Libra / October and its minimum six months later. It is also found that the Zodiacal sign of the moon and mercury are not related to sociability, that of Venus only moderately but that of Mars to a great extent.

Mitchell V. W. and Hageded S. (1997) studied “Sun-sign Astrology in Market Segmentation: An empirical investigation”. The objective of the paper is to test whether date of birth has any effect on behavior and was to see whether any such observed effects could be interpreted in line with astrological predictions. Data was collected on basis of stratified random sample from 10,000 households through personal interviews over the age of 16 years for smoking, drinking, reading books, listening radio, Gardening, Watching TV, Visiting Friends and Going on Holiday. For analyzing purpose cruskal - wallis test, chisquare test and one way analysis of variances were used. The results of the study showed that Cancerians are less likely ever to have smoked probably because they are more prone to health worries. Capricorns are less likely to have smoked regularly as they are cautious and risk averse. Scorpios’ are ambitious and career concern and they are less likely to have drank alcohol. Virgoans are most active in all zodiac signs and the results showed that they spend less time in gardening, listening radio and watching TV. The results also showed that Sagittarians are less likely to spend their leisure time in visiting and talking to friends. The number of significant results suggested that the date of birth had some effect on behavior. They found that we can
remove the requirement that astrology has to effect consumption and simply use it as an additional variable when examining a segment’s psychological profile. They also found in their study that astrological sign, particularly suited to a brand’s image can be used as sales promotion tools in the brand’s communication and positioning strategy.

Mitchell V.W. and Tate E. (1998) studied on “Do consumers’ Star Signs influence what they buy?” The objective of the study was to see how date of birth affects consumptions behaviour and attitudes in three chosen markets i.e. Cigarettes, Leisure and Alcohol. For this three markets were originally chosen on the basis of size, maturity, promotional spending and relationship to personality. Data were collected by interviewing 13000 households aged 16+. The results show that Sagittarians and Cancerians have more smoking habits. Cancerians are more likely to drink alcohol while Capricorns are least likely. Sagittarians regard themselves as heavy drinkers. Cancerians were most concerned for their health while Capricorns and Aquarians are least concerned. Taureans were believed to be home lovers who preferred to entertain from home than go out and socialize. They tend to have healthy appetites and love food and drinks. The results also show that Aquarians are likely to play Rugby which is consistent with their social nature. In all, it can be concluded that date of birth has an effect on consumers’ smoking, drinking and leisure behaviours and attitudes. The study concluded that date of birth has an effect on consumers’ smoking, drinking and leisure behaviour and attitudes. But the authors have clearly indicated that date of birth could change existing segmentation variable such as – age, income sex etc. Instead, date of birth might provide an extra refinement of these sub – groups in certain product markets. The authors concluded that in markets where purchasing is strongly related to personality and lifestyle, astrology might allow marketers to gain more insight into current market segments very quickly, easily and cheaply.

Kwak H., Jaju A. and Zinkhan G. M. (2000) researched on “Astrology : Its Influence on Consumers’ Buying Patterns and Consumers’ Evaluations of Products and Services”. The objective of the study was to find out the relationship between personality traits and zodiac signs — a) consumers’ general evaluation of products and services, b) consumers’ buying patterns i.e. impulsive or compulsive. For this, they adopted two traditional astrological classification methods: odd / even zodiac signs and water / non water zodiac signs. Water signs are Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces & rest are non water zodiac signs. They surveyed 239 college students with convenience sampling. They found in their study that odd and non water signs are positively associated with consumers’ impulsive buying tendencies. The results of the study showed that consumers who belonged to water zodiac signs were less likely to engage in impulsive purchasing as compared to non water signed consumers. They also indicated that zodiac signs can influence impulsive purchase behaviour but not compulsive purchase. The study also found that neither water/non water nor odd/even zodiac signs played any role in consumers’ evaluation of product qualities. Further, the results of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between consumers’ water/non water signs and their overall evaluation of perceived service quality i.e. consumers born under water signs are more likely to show favourable evaluation of services than are those with born under non water signs. Thus the researchers concluded that zodiac signs did not influence overall evaluations of product quality but they do influence overall evaluations of service quality.

Hamilton M. (2001) published a paper “Who believes in astrology? Effect of Favorableness of astrologically derived personality description on acceptance of astrology.” In this paper the author undertook two studies. In the first study 103 people participated with a mean age of 25.7 years. The result showed that few participants indicated strong belief in astrology. Very few respondents reported great knowledge about astrology. Around 19% of the respondents responded “not at all knowledgeable” about astrology. 44% of the respondents no suspicion at all of the astrological origin. But when it came to “Known for Sure” about astrology, not even a single participant responded positively in this regard. Pearson product- moment correlations revealed no significant relationship between favorableness ratings and belief in astrology. Belief in astrology was significantly correlated with self-report knowledge of astrology. In the second study, 96 undergraduate students (of introductory – level Psychology classes) took participation. The analysis indicated that odd numbered sample expressed significantly more belief in astrology as compared to even numbered. The result of this study also showed that few participants expressed their great belief in astrology and relatively few reported no belief at all. The results also showed that those students who were having greater belief in astrology also considered themselves more knowledgeable about it and majority of those respondents who responded no knowledge, nonetheless knew their correct sun signs. In both the studies, the average favorableness rating for the negative signs was slightly above the midpoint.

Gilbert T. (2005) in his paper “The Psychology of Astrology” has explained the Astrology as mathematical and symbolic art. The researcher had given various approaches to astrology viz. – The casual approach, the symbolic approach, the holistic approach and the energy approach. He had explained the astrology according to these approaches. Further, the study had concluded that the art and science of astrology give us a perspective that includes universal forces and energies.

Hartmann P., Reuter M. and Nyborg H. (2006) conducted a study titled “The Relationship Between Date
of Birth and Individual Differences in Personality and General Intelligence: A large scale study”. The study probed the relationship between date of birth and individual differences in personality and intelligence. The study was conducted with the help of two large samples i.e. more than 4000 middle aged male in first sample and more than 11000 young adults in second case. The results show that date of birth does not relate to individual difference in personality or general intelligence. The analysis of the study indicated that subjects born between June to December were slightly more intelligent, but the difference is not significant. The study did not find any association between date of birth and popular sun sign. The analysis of the study showed that there is no significant relationship in Social Desirability and month of birth as well as Neuroticism and month of birth. One of the findings of the study is people born between May – July seemed to show more extraversion as compared with other months. But the authors had described it as a chance factor only. Moreover, the study found that there is no independent effects of sun signs, elements or gender and thus yields no support for the common claim of astrology.

Inanlı O.Z. (2008) studied the topic “Astrology Quality or Cost as Buying Behavior.” The purpose of the study was to search the relationship between astrological personality traits and buying patterns based on quality and cost as feminine and masculine astrological signs. Masculine signs are Aries, Leo, Sagittarius, Libra, Gemini and Aquarius while rest are feminine signs. The study was conducted with the sample size of 286 adults and questionnaire was used to collect the data. The analysis of data showed that there is a significant relationship between masculine astrological personality traits and tendency toward quality. The analysis also found that there is a significant relationship between the cost (as a primary buying motive) and feminine astrological personalities. Famine personality tends to buy cheap or low quality products whereas the masculine personality would be willing to pay higher price for quality and this type of personality see quality as a part of utility maximization. The research did not find any significant relationship between masculine astrological personalities and cost factor & feminine personalities and their prime interest in quality. The study found that masculine astrological personalities have buying tendencies based on quality and feminine personalities are most cost conscious buyers as compared to masculine personalities.

Mustafa G., Olgun K. and Taylan D. I. (2011) studied on the topic “The Effect of Astrology on Young Customer Behaviours.” The objective of the study was to examine whether date of birth has any effect on consumption behaviours of young people i.e. Ad-hoc spending habits, money spending habits and shopping habits of consumers. A face to face interview was conducted with the help of questionnaire of 445 consumers. A Likert’s five point scale was developed. Descriptive studies such as means, frequencies, t-test, ANOVA and chi – square test were calculated. SPSS was used for data analysis. They found in their study that young consumers of fire group i.e. Aries, Leo and Sagittarius take more instant and impulsive purchase actions. According to the study, fire group approach more positively than the water group. The study said that mood of the respondents is an important variable for shopping. It also revealed that young consumers plan their purchase carefully. They concluded that date of birth has an effect on people’s consumption behaviour. It was found that there is a significant relationship between instant buying habits and zodiac group. It was also revealed that young consumers of Fire group (Aires, Leo, Sagittarius) spend more instantly unplanned and with quick decisions, while the Waters is the zodiac group which have the least. The study concluded that some people are more prone to astrological influence than others and therefore marketers can make astrological segmentation for success in market.

Booth J. published an article on “Beyond Sun Signs.” In this article the researcher has explained the meaning of astrology and the components of astrology. Further the article explains the various sun signs in a chart and apparent solar motion. The article also described the signs with respect to season and the important trait of all the signs under two ways i.e. Elements and Modes. The article has explained 3 modes and 4 elements of sun signs. The author had explained the various signs according to its characteristics such as: Aries has been explained as vital and competitive while Leo has been described as creative and courageous. Sagittarius are cheerful and honest people while Capricorn are supposed to be ambitious and efficient. The author has described Taurus as consistent and protective while Virgo as precise and critical. Libra people have been described as diplomatic and balanced, Aquarius as Independent, Gemini as social, friendly and lively. Cancerians are supposed to be sympathetic, domestic while Scorpion as powerful and magnetic. The author has described Pisces people as responsive, unselfish and vague. Thus the study had described the various personality traits according to the sun signs.

V. CONCLUSION

After studying the various literatures, it can be concluded that sun signs have a significant role to play in one’s life. The individual decisions are strongly influenced and these play a vital role in final decision making. If marketers can understand the behaviour of individuals, it can lead to better product offering which ultimately lead to better customer satisfaction and greater reward for the marketers. Thus, it can be concluded that understanding the impact of sun signs on consumer behaviour can lead to new era of marketing segmentation.
REFERENCES