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QUALITY PARAMETERS, USE OCCASION, COMBO-GIFT AND MOTIVATION: A STUDY OF CYMBIDIUM ORCHIDS OF SIKKIM HIMALAYAS

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ABSTRACT

When customers rated attributes on importance when purchasing cymbidium orchids, the following attributes were important to all: flower/bloom quality, color, price, design, longevity, availability, fragrance, uniqueness, and ease of care. We have tried to study the consumer's preference when it comes to purchasing flowers, buy cymbidium orchids, and use cymbidium orchids for various occasions and also study their preference of combo-gift along with cymbidium orchids. We have tried to understand the reason why consumers spend on flowers. The sample comprised of 206 local buyers, 212 domestic buyers and 106 International buyers. From the results we find the local, national and international customers' parameter of quality in buying flowers. We also find the occasions most preferred by the customers to give Cymbidium orchids to others.

KEYWORDS

Cymbidium, occasions, parameters. Gifts.

INTRODUCTION

Cymbidium orchids are extremely appreciated as cut flowers, hanging baskets, potted plants and as herbal medicines. Both standard and fresh hybrids are used as cut flowers. Cymbidiums are used as potted plants and these plants are often used for home ambience. Cymbidiums are ideal for hanging baskets. (Lakshman Chandra De, 2011).

Orchids are popular with plant growers commercially, as they are expensive and a single branch of cymbidium orchid can cost up to Rupees 1000. With a little push from the state government in Sikkim, orchid cultivation and commercialization has caught on the attention of the local growers (Anonymous, 2014)

Fresh flowers sold are consumed as gifts in many countries, such as Taiwan, Japan, and the United States. As gift consumption is so important for the sales of fresh flowers, consumer behavior in floral gift giving is an important topic that has not been researched worldwide. (Yen-Chun Lai, Li-Chun Huang, 2013).

Most of the customers purchased flowers for themselves, rather than as gifts. Still, knowledge about how product behavior functions in the floral market is very limited. (Li Chun Huang, 2005)). Amount of floral knowledge does not influence consumer purchasing behavior for flower choice (Behe and Wolnick.1991).

Floral Purchase motivation is important in measuring the degree of floral market development and its potential relationship with consumer floral products behaviors (Demby, 1973).

Research shows that the demand for fresh cut flowers and floral products has been declining in recent years, predominantly among young consumers. Often younger consumers felt their friends would not enjoy floral gifts. Additionally, younger consumers viewed floral advertisements less frequently, perceived the price as being more unreasonable than other gift items, and they were the least easy gifts to purchase, resulting in decreased awareness, interest, and convenience. Floral sales or discounts, greater longevity, more price ranges, and trendier arrangements/flowers would increase their use of fresh flowers as gifts. (Alicia L. Rihn, Dr. Chengyan Yue, 2010)

METHODOLOGY

- a. NATURE OF RESEARCH:** The present research is exploratory and empirical in nature with descriptive statistics based on the data on the belief expressed by the customers.
- b. RESEARCH DESIGN:** The research-design for the research work is conclusive. To arrive at conclusions descriptive approach has been used.
- c. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**
 - i. To determine the customer preference of identified quality parameters for Sikkim Cymbidium Orchids
 - ii. To find out the customer rating of Sikkim Orchids on identified quality parameters
 - iii. To ascertain the customer combo-gift items preference along with Sikkim Cymbidium Orchids
 - iv. To determine the motivation factor for the first purchase of Sikkim Cymbidium Orchids.
- d. Sample:** The sample respondents of this research consist of flower buyers (including potential) who have fair understanding of cymbidium orchids as a commercial product. They spend considerable amount of money on flowers and are emotional in nature. They are students, professionals, businessmen, and retired people. 206 local buyers, 212 domestic buyers and 106 International buyers were surveyed with the help of a questionnaire.
- e. Sample size:** 206 local buyers, 212 domestic buyers and 106 International buyers. This sample was considered statistically relevant for the study.
- f. Sampling method:** Random and judgmental sampling methods were used for the research. The data was collected online. For the purpose a website was made and the respondents could fill the research tool online.
- g. Reliability:** Reliability analysis was made by determining the Cronbach's Alpha which was found to be 0.755 which statistically is considered acceptable reliability.

TABLE 1: RELIABILITY STATISTICS

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.755	.743	83

Tools: Descriptive statistical tools have been used primarily to understand the consumers' perceptions and preferences. Data has been tabulated in simple tables and wherever applicable percentage has been calculated. Graphs have been used to enhance the visual impact of results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

8.1 RANK (1 TO 7) THE PARAMETERS OF QUALITY OF FLOWERS

TABLE 2

S.N.	Parameter	Local		National		International	
		Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
1	Appropriate Colour	676	3	792	4	370	3
2	Aroma	888	5	1012	6	380	4
3	Size	689	4	731	3	600	6
4	Freshness	548	2	514	1	300	2
5	Longevity	503	1	539	2	280	1
6	Packaging	1073	7	1020	7	490	5
7	Less need for upkeep	957	6	928	5	550	6

- i. When the local customers were asked to Rank the parameters of quality for flowers, Longevity gets the lowest total of 503 but the highest Rank of 1. The Ranking ranging from 1-7; 1 for the highest and 7 for the lowest. We find that packaging-quality parameter gets the highest score of 1073, making it the least factor of quality for buying flowers.
- ii. When the national customers were asked to Rank the parameters of quality for flowers, Longevity gets the lowest total of 514 but the highest Rank of 1. The Ranking ranging from 1-7; 1 for the highest and 7 for the lowest. We find that packaging-quality parameter gets the highest score of 1020, making it the least factor of quality for buying flowers.
- iii. When the international customers were asked to Rank the parameters of quality for flowers, Longevity gets the lowest total of 280 but the highest Rank of 1. The Ranking ranging from 1-7; 1 for the highest and 7 for the lowest. We find that Size quality-parameter gets the highest score of 600, making it the least factor of quality for buying flowers.

8.2 VALUES ASSIGNED TO CYMBIDIUM ORCHIDS OF SIKKIM

TABLE 3

S.N.	Parameter	Local		National		International	
		Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1	Appropriate Colour	4.71	3	5.21	3	5	4
2	Aroma	3.65	5	3.77	7	5.545	2
3	Size	4.70	4	4.74	4	3.363	7
4	Freshness	5.48	2	5.92	2	3.909	6
5	Longevity	5.58	1	6.06	1	5.545	3
6	Packaging	3	7	3.91	6	4.636	5
7	Less need for upkeep	3.2	6	3.93	5	5.727	1

- i. When the local customers were asked to give value to the parameters of quality for Cymbidium orchids from Sikkim, Longevity gets the highest Rank 1 with a Mean of 6.06 .The highest value being 7 and the lowest being 1. Packaging of the orchid gets the lowest Rank 7 with a Mean of 3.
- ii. When the national customers were asked to give value to the parameters of Cymbidium orchids from Sikkim, Longevity gets the highest Rank 1 with a Mean of 6.06 .The highest value being 7 and the lowest being 1. Aroma of the orchid gets the lowest Rank 7 with a Mean of 3.77.
- iii. When the international customers were asked to give value to the parameters of Cymbidium orchids from Sikkim; Less-need-for-upkeep gets the highest Rank 1 with a Mean of 5.72.The highest value being 7 and the lowest being 1. Size of the orchid gets the lowest Rank 7 with a Mean of 3.77.

8.3 RANK ASSIGNED TO OCCASIONS FOR GIFTING CYMBIDIUM ORCHIDS OF SIKKIM

TABLE 4

S.N.	Parameter	Local		National		International	
		Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1	Birthday	3.77	5	4.67	4	4.55	3
2	Wedding	2.83	6	3.57	7	5.36	1
3	Anniversary	2.96	7	3.85	6	5.27	2
4	Honouring a Guest	4.79	2	5.49	1	4.18	5
5	Valentine’s day	4.56	3	3.92	5	3.36	7
6	Achievement	3.94	4	4.78	2	4.36	4
7	Get-well message	5.47	1	4.75	3	4.09	6
		28.32		31.03		31.17	

- i. When the local customers were asked to give rank the occasion for gifting Cymbidium orchids from Sikkim; Get well - as the occasion, gets the highest Rank 1 with a Mean of 5.47 .The highest value being 7 and the lowest being 1. Anniversary - as the occasion, gets the lowest Rank 7 with a Mean of 2.96.
- ii. When the national customers were asked to give rank the occasion for gifting Cymbidium orchids from Sikkim; Honouring the guests - as the occasion, gets the highest Rank 1 with a Mean of 5.49 .The highest value being 7 and the lowest being 1. Wedding - as the occasion, gets the lowest Rank 7 with a Mean of 3.57
- iii. When the international customers were asked to give rank the occasion for gifting Cymbidium orchids from Sikkim; Wedding - as the occasion, gets the highest Rank 1 with a Mean of 5.49 .The highest value being 7 and the lowest being 1. Valentine’s Day - as the occasion, gets the lowest Rank 7 with a Mean of 2.96.

8.4 RANK ASSIGNED TO COMBO-GIFT ITEMS THAT MAY BE SOLD ALONG WITH CYMBIDIUM ORCHIDS OF SIKKIM

COMBO GIFTS

TABLE 5

S.N.	Parameter	Local		National		International	
		Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1	Chocolates	4.83	1	4.96	2	5.18	1
2	Greeting cards	3.42	7	3.37	7	4.27	3
3	Soft-toys	3.62	6	3.72	6	4.91	2
4	books	3.65	5	4	5	4.09	4
5	Indian sweets	3.98	4	4.13	4	3.45	5
6	Liquor/Wine	4.45	2	5.57	1	3.18	6
7	None	4.44	3	4.94	3	3.27	7
		28.39		30.69		28.35	

- i. When the local customers were asked to give rank for their preference for combo-gift; Chocolates, gets the highest Rank 1 with a Mean of 4.83 as the most favored combo-gift. The highest value being 7 and the lowest being 1. Greeting cards as combo gifts, gets the lowest Rank 7 with a Mean of 3.42.
- ii. When the national customers were asked to give rank for their preference for combo-gift; Liquor - Wine, gets the highest Rank 1 with a Mean of 5.57 as the most favored combo-gift. The highest value being 7 and the lowest being 1. Greeting cards as combo gifts, gets the lowest Rank 7 with a Mean of 3.37
- iii. When the international customers were asked to give rank for their preference for combo-gift; Chocolates, gets the highest Rank 1 with a Mean of 5.18 as the most favored combo-gift. The highest value being 7 and the lowest being 1. None of the options, gets the lowest Rank 7 with a Mean of 3.42. The unknown factor deserves to be studied further.

8.5 FIRST PURCHASE MOTIVATION FOR CYMBIDIUM ORCHIDS OF SIKKIM

TABLE 6

S.N.	Parameter	Local		National		International	
		Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
1	When I saw a friend/relative buying them	54	26.1	47	22.3	11	10.1
2	During shopping I found them attractive	100	48.3	101	47.9	60	55.0
3	When I saw a friend/relative gifting them	27	13.0	30	14.2	10	9.2
4	When I read about significance of flowers to express feelings	12	5.8	24	11.4	0	0.0
5	I have never brought Cymbidium	14	6.8	9	4.3	28	25.7
		207	100	211	100	109	100

- i. When the local customers were asked to describe their first purchase motivation, 48.3% said that during shopping they found them attractive. 5.8% said that the motivation came when they read about significance of flowers to express feelings.
- ii. When the national customers were asked to describe their first purchase motivation, 47.9 % said that during shopping they found them attractive and. 4.3% said they never had never bought cymbidium orchids from Sikkim.
- iii. When the national customers were asked to describe their first purchase motivation, 55 % said that during shopping they found them attractive and. 4.3% said they never had never bought cymbidium orchids. 9.2% said that the motivation came when they saw a friend/relative gifting cymbidium orchids.

CONCLUSION

We arrive at following interesting conclusions

- 1.1 Freshness, longevity and appropriate colour emerge as the most important quality parameters for determining the quality of Cymbidium Orchids. This is an important information while marketing it from Sikkim. Technology may be utilized to enhance longevity.
- 1.2 Cymbidium orchids are rated high on Freshness, longevity and appropriate colour and hence it may be interpreted that these are considered high quality products or even premium products and hence it may be possible to translate this information into greater market share and/or premium prices for this product. Efforts may be made to popularize place of origin (Sikkim) in this context. Efforts may also be made to obtain geographical indicator status for these orchids.
- 1.3 Local and National consumers rank honouring guests and as get-well message preferred occasions for gifting Cymbidium orchids. In contrast internationally they are preferred as wedding and as anniversary gifts. This information may be useful to match promotion of this product with appropriate occasions.
- 1.4 Chocolates and liquor/wines are considered preferred combo-gifts along with Cymbidium flowers. Internationally it finds a preferred item in soft-toys to be sold together. Combo-gifts is another measure to enhance the promotion of this product.
- 1.5 First motivation to purchase cymbidium orchids seems to be the retail promotion. Retail shops may be patronized/motivated to give premium display to this product. Internationally there is a need to promote Cymbidium Orchids as significant to express feelings.

Overall it may be said that this paper identifies important criteria to aid marketing of Sikkim Cymbidium Orchids to local growers and marketers.

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