

RESEARCH PAPER

Determinants of cognitive dissonance among buyers of consumer durables

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ABSTRACT

Cognitive dissonance is the term used when there is inconsistency between two cognitions and is recognised by an individual. In the present study the determinants which cause an individual to have cognitive dissonance towards buying of consumer durables are brought out, taking LED TV as the test item. A survey on hundred and twenty consumers of LED TV in the Thrissur Corporation of Kerala state was made. Random sampling method was used to sample the respondents. Its determinants were analysed by means of factor analysis. Out of hundred and twenty respondents seventy respondents have found to experience cognitive dissonance. Out of ten variables and fifty six sub variables examined, seventeen factors such as Family status, Influence of peer group, Trust in the sales man, Education, Religious factors, Information about the product, Market search, Sales promotion, Perception of consumers, Quality of the product, Advertisement, Confidence level on product, Emotion driven, Cash discount, Packaging, Brand loyalty and After sales service were evolved as the major determinants. The methods adopted by the consumers to minimize cognitive dissonance were also analysed by forming indices. 'Will share good qualities of the product with peer group' and 'Confirm the positive aspects with other buyers' were emerged to be the top two steps that will be adopted by the consumers to minimise the cognitive dissonance. The present study will help the sales personnels to identify the major areas that has to be given attention to make possible 'consumer delight'.

KEY WORDS : Cognitive dissonance, Consumer durables, LED TV, Determinants of cognitive dissonance, Minimization of cognitive dissonance

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Cognitive dissonance occurs when there is inconsistency between two cognitions and is recognised by an individual (Festinger, 1957). It

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is what is called as the remorse that the consumer feels while they are not able to be consistent with the expectations they have about something. The cognitive dissonance created in the minds of individuals will automatically induce a pressure so as to reduce or minimize it. It can be minimized in one of the three basic ways such as change beliefs, change actions or rationalize the action.

Cognitive dissonance is useful to explain and manage post purchase concern to counter a consumer who feels an alternate purchase would have been better and not

buying the product again, marketers have to convince the buyer constantly that the product satisfies their need which help to reduce their cognitive dissonance ensuring repurchase. A sales man congratulating his buyer on saying having made the correct choice and the quote on the premium priced hall mark card tag 'When you care enough to send the very best' are examples of post purchase dissonance resolution. Cognitive dissonance theory applies to all situations involving attitude formation and change. It is especially relevant in decision making and problem solving. It also plays a key role in the sales and profits of the firms directly as well as indirectly in several means. When a consumer is affected with cognitive dissonance it means that he has not delighted with the performance of the commodity he has purchased. Information about the magnitude of remorse the user feels after buying is analysed in this study. Hasan and Nasreen (2012) argued that higher the degree of purchase involvement on behalf of the consumer the lesser would be his dissonance level and also suggested that the consumer is likely to face more dissonance over his decision which involves the purchase of luxury and expensive products whereas less dissonance was found to be associated with the purchase of Fast Moving Consumer Goods.

The present study focused to identify the determinants that drive the consumers towards cognitive dissonance and to examine the cognitive dissonance reducing mechanisms adopted by the consumers. The results related to the types and determinants of cognitive dissonance will help the marketers in framing the appropriate marketing strategies to reduce the cognitive dissonance.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Thrissur corporation of Kerala state. Hundred and twenty respondents were selected through random sampling among buyers of LED TV from 12 retail outlets from the Thrissur area during 2016. They were interviewed through structured survey schedule designed to know whether the customers have experienced Cognitive dissonance and to identify the various determinants of cognitive dissonance of the consumers.

Through extensive review on the factors/variables/determinants ten factors with altogether fifty six variables under them (Bose and Sarkar, 2012; Hamza and

Zakkariya, 2012; Hasan and Nasreen, 2012 and Sharma, 2014) which are given in Table 1-10 were evaluated in Likert scale (Likert, 1932) based on the score of respondents in the five point scaleranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree by assigning numbers 2,1,0,-1,-2, respectively. In order to identify the determinants among various factors factor analysis was conducted (Field, 2005). The factors which had factor loading ≥ 0.5 were selected as determinants. The factors were categorised into factor 1, factor 2 and so on based on the factor loadings. Communalities were worked out which indicates the percentage of variation of the sub variables explained by the factor model. The steps taken by the respondents to reduce cognitive dissonance were ranked after working out indices from the data analysed by means of Likert scale.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under the following heads :

Determinants of cognitive dissonance :

An analysis of the determinants of cognitive dissonance would contribute an insight into the firms and marketers on the factors that contributed to cognitive dissonance which would help them to design their product and marketing strategies to reduce the cognitive dissonance. The determinants of cognitive dissonance was analysed by using factor analysis. The impact of the factors such as product attributes, advertisement factors, sales promotion strategies, salesman related particulars, demographic factors, attitudinal factors, particulars related to family status, peer group, market search and new information were analysed using factor analysis. The factor loadings and the communalities were found out from this and the different factors out of the determinants were analysed. The impact of these derived factors (with highest factor loadings) on the cognitive dissonance was studied. The results are given below.

The factor analysis for the variables relating to determinants of cognitive dissonance is presented in the Tables 1 to 10. It showed factor matrix with communalities. The variables which had highest loading (≥ 0.50) in each factor were grouped, the variables which were closely related to a particular group were boxed. The last column in the table is communality (h^2) that is

the variations of different sub variables explained by the factor model. In the following section, the results have been interpreted by carefully examining the significant loading for ratios clustered on each factor.

Product attributes :

Factor-1 (F_1) :

The first factor consisted of variables like ‘Reduced confidence about the performance of the TV bought’(0.858) and ‘Lack of proper inculcation of technology has resulted in CD’ (0.815).The former had highest significant positive loadings. Hence factor 1 was characterized as “Confidence level on product”.

Factor-2 (F_2) :

The second factor consisted of variables like ‘Quality of the product when not upto the mark has resulted in CD’ (0.714), ‘Sizing-colour-styling-programmes when not upto the expected level has evolved CD’ (-0.675), ‘Price of the commodity if not equal to the value of the commodity has resulted in CD’ (0.656), ‘After sales services when not upto the mark has evolved CD’ (0.625). The statement ‘Quality of the product when not upto the mark has resulted in CD’ (0.714) had highest significant positive loadings. Hence factor 2 was characterized as ‘Quality of the product’ (Table 1).

Advertisement factors :

Factor-1 (F_1) :

The first factor consisted of variables like ‘Creative methods of advertisements were good enough to buy the product which was not matching with product characteristics that evolved CD’(0.903), ‘I was attracted by the presentation style but the product was not upto the mark that evolved CD’(0.832), and ‘The advertisement was made in such a way that it was not matching with self image/personality and I was unhappy with the product that evolved CD’(0.674).‘Creative methods of advertisements were good enough to buy the product which was not matching with product characteristics that evolved CD’(0.903) had highest significant positive loadings. Hence factor 1 was characterized as Advertisement.

Factor-2 (F_2) :

The second factor consisted of variables like ‘The message for persuasion which was used was emotional that made me to buy wrong product which evolved CD’ (0.965) and ‘Communication language was very unattractive so that I couldn’t digest the need of the product which led me to buy right product evolved CD’ (0.856).‘The message for persuasion which was used was emotional that made me to buy wrong product which evolved CD’ had highest significant positive loadings.

Table 1 : Influence of product attributes towards cognitive dissonance

Sr. No.	Product attributes	Factor 1	Factor 2	Communality (h^2)
1.	Lack of proper inculcation of technology has resulted in CD*	0.815	0.015	0.665
2.	Quality of the product when not upto the mark has resulted in CD	0.516	0.714	0.776
3.	Price of the commodity if not equal to the value of the commodity has resulted in CD	0.474	0.656	0.654
4.	After sales services when not upto the mark has evolved CD	-0.012	0.625	0.391
5.	Sizing-colour-styling-programmes when not upto the expected level has evolved CD	0.427	-0.675	0.638
6.	Reduced confidence about the performance of the TV bought	0.858	0.054	0.739

*Cognitive dissonance

Table 2 : Influence of advertisement factors towards cognitive dissonance

Sr. No.	Advertisement factors	Factor 1	Factor 2	Communality (h^2)
1.	I was attracted by the presentation style but the product was not upto the mark that evolved CD	0.832	0.118	0.705
2.	Creative methods of advertisements were good enough to buy the product which was not matching with product characteristics that evolved CD	0.903	0.098	0.825
3.	The advertisement was made in such a way that it was not matching with self image/personality and I was unhappy with the product that evolved CD	0.674	0.198	0.494
4.	Communication language was very unattractive so that I couldn’t digest the need of the product which led me to buy right product evolved CD	0.394	0.856	0.888
5.	The message for persuasion which was used was emotional that made me to buy wrong product which evolved CD	0.013	0.965	0.931

Hence factor 2 was characterized as ‘Emotion driven’ (Table 2).

Sales promotion strategies :

Factor-1 (F_1) :

The first factor consisted of variables like ‘Free gifts/Accessories like vessels are not welcomed and CD is evolved’ (0.911), ‘Exchange schemes are rather attractive but evolved CD’ (0.855), ‘Celebrity endorsements make me feel that sometimes I am getting deceived by them and this evolves CD’ (0.754), ‘Lucky draw, scratch and win offers are suspected mechanisms which evolves CD’ (0.828), ‘Facility of faster loan and delivery are considered to be ineffective which does not evolve CD’ (0.846). ‘Free gifts/Accessories like vessels are not welcomed and CD is evolved’ (0.911) had highest significant positive loadings. Hence factor 1 was characterized as “Sales Promotion Offers”.

Factor-2 (F_2) :

The second factor consisted of variables like ‘Attraction of the product’ (0.893) had highest significant positive loadings. Hence factor 2 is characterized as ‘Packaging’ (Table 3).

Factor-3 (F_3) :

The third factor consists of variables like ‘Assured

after sales care is suspected which evolve CD’ (0.943). ‘Assured after sales care is suspected which evolve CD’ (0.943) had highest significant positive loadings. Hence factor 3 was characterized as “After sales service”.

Factor-4 (F_4) :

The fourth factor consisted of variables like ‘I feel Cash discount on billing is not sincerely done and evolves CD’ (0.975). I feel Cash discount on billing is not sincerely done and evolves CD’ had highest significant positive loadings. Hence factor 4 was characterized as ‘Cash discount’.

Sales man :

Factor-1 (F_1) :

The first factor consisted of variables like ‘I am not able to trust my sales personnel cent per cent, this thought evolved CD’ (0.933), I felt uncomfortable communicating with my sales personnel that evolved CD (0.891), ‘The sales personnel failed to supply good reasons to support an argument’ (0.881) and ‘My sales personnel did not gave me clear instructions that evolved CD’ (0.876). ‘I am not able to trust my sales personnel cent per cent, this thought evolved CD’ had highest significant positive loadings. Hence factor 1 was characterized as “Trust in the sales man” (Table 4).

Table 3 : Influence of sales promotion strategies towards cognitive dissonance

Sr. No.	Sales promotion strategies	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Communality (h^2)
1.	Exchange schemes are rather attractive but evolved CD	0.855	0.201	-0.247	0.022	0.833
2.	Free gifts/Accessories like vessels are not welcomed and CD is evolved	0.911	0.023	-0.044	0.282	0.912
3.	Celebrity endorsements make me feel that sometimes I am getting deceived by them and this evolves CD	0.754	0.25	0.37	0.057	0.771
4.	Sales personnel charisma are doubted and this evolves CD	0.394	0.798	-0.039	-0.108	0.805
5.	Lucky draw, scratch and win offers are suspected mechanisms which evolves CD	0.828	0.349	-0.118	0.046	0.824
6.	I feel Cash discount on billing is not sincerely done and evolves CD	0.089	0.09	0.057	0.975	0.97
7.	Assured after sales care is suspected which evolve CD	-0.002	0.097	0.943	0.06	0.902
8.	Facility of faster loan and delivery are considered to be ineffective which does not evolve CD	0.846	0.06	0.351	-0.17	0.872
9.	Attraction of the product	0.056	0.893	0.194	0.225	0.888

Table 4 : Influence of sales man towards cognitive dissonance

Sr. No.	Sales man related particulars	Factor 1	Communality (h^2)
1.	My sales personnel did not gave me clear instructions that evolved CD	0.876	0.767
2.	I am not able to trust my sales personnel cent per cent, this thought evolved CD	0.933	0.871
3.	I felt uncomfortable communicating with my sales personnel that evolved CD	0.891	0.794
4.	The sales personnel failed to supply good reasons to support an argument	0.881	0.777

Demographic factors :

The factor matrix and the communalities are given in the Table 5.

Factor-1 (F_1) :

The first factor consisted of variables like 'The educational qualifications I possess might be contributing to the CD I am experiencing' (0.921), 'I feel that the nature of my occupation adds to the CD (0.910), 'I have felt my age has got a significant impact on the level of CD I have felt' (0.888), 'I think my gender has got an impact on the CD I am experiencing' (0.858), 'In my opinion the family size has got a significant role in determining the CD' (0.813) and 'The level of dislike of family members might have caused high CD'(0.633). The educational qualifications I possess might be contributing to the CD I am experiencing'(0.921) had highest significant positive loadings. Hence factor 1 was characterized as 'Education'.

Factor-2 (F_2) :

The second factor consisted of variables like 'I feel that the religious factors contribute much to the CD' (0.898). 'I feel that the religious factors contribute much to the CD' had highest significant positive loadings. Hence factor 2 was characterized as 'Religious factors'.

Attitude :

Attitude is a settled way of thinking or feeling about something. The attitude of the respondents towards a product has got a major impact on the marketing of the produce. The influence of attitude as a major determinant of the cognitive dissonance was analysed and studied by using the variables such as frequency of changing beliefs, belief about the commodity performance, conflicting beliefs, change of beliefs with increasing pass of time, brand loyalty and emotional buying.

The factor matrix along with the communalities is given in the Table 6 below.

Factor-1 (F_1) :

The first factor consisted of variables like 'I believe Frequency of changing belief has got a major impact in CD' (0.878), 'I am of the opinion that conflicting beliefs will influence the CD' (0.860), Change of belief with increasing pass of time has created CD for me (0.705) and 'I am of the opinion that the degrading belief about the commodity performance influences the post purchase CD' (0.632), and 'I believe Frequency of changing belief has got a major impact in CD' had highest significant positive loadings (0.878). Hence, factor 1 was characterized as 'Perception of consumers'.

Factor-2 (F_2) :

The second factor consisted of variables 'Brand

Table 5 : Influence of demographic factors towards cognitive dissonance

Sr. No.	Demographic factors	Factor 1	Factor 2	Communality (h^2)
1.	I have felt my age has got a significant impact on the level of CD I have felt	0.888	-0.304	0.88
2.	I think my gender has got an impact on the CD I am experiencing	0.858	-0.251	0.8
3.	The educational qualifications I possess might be contributing to the CD I am experiencing	0.921	-0.082	0.855
4.	I feel that the nature of my occupation adds to the CD	0.91	0.025	0.828
5.	In my opinion the family size has got a significant role in determining the CD	0.813	0.146	0.682
6.	I feel that the religious factors contribute much to the CD	-0.042	0.898	0.809
7.	The level of dislike of family members might have caused high CD	0.663	0.314	0.538

Table 6 : Influence of attitude towards cognitive dissonance

Sr. No.	Attitudinal factors	Factor 1	Factor 2	Communality (h^2)
1.	I am of the opinion that the degrading belief about the commodity performance influences the post purchase CD	0.632	0.523	0.672
2.	I believe frequency of changing belief has got a major impact in CD	0.878	0.191	0.806
3.	I am of the opinion that conflicting beliefs will influence the CD	0.86	-0.125	0.756
4.	Change of belief with increasing pass of time has created CD for me	0.705	0.132	0.514
5.	Giving importance to emotions in the buying process	-0.006	0.718	0.516
6.	Brand loyalty	0.144	0.802	0.665

loyalty' (0.802) and 'Giving importance to emotions in the buying process' (0.718). 'Brand loyalty' (0.802) had highest significant positive loadings. Hence, factor 2 was characterized as 'Brand loyalty'.

Family status :

It is a common feature that in order to maintain the family status individuals buy products. This may result in cognitive dissonance. To measure whether it came up as a determinant of cognitive dissonance the variables used are shown in the Table 7 below along with the factor matrix and communalities.

Factor-1 (F_1) :

The first factor consisted of variables like 'Purchasing because of the reason that the product is important to maintain family status has evoked CD' (0.974), 'After purchasing items based on family status I have experienced CD' (0.942), 'Purchasing items for showing it only as a status symbol' (0.941), and 'Products' status if not upto the expected level will arouse CD' (0.737). 'Purchasing because of the reason that the product is important to maintain family status has evoked CD' (0.974) had highest significant positive loadings.

Hence factor 1 was characterized as "Family status".

Peer group :

A peer group is both a social group and a primary group of people who have similar interests, age, background or social status. Different aspects of the peer group influence were given as statements in the Table 8 given below and their factor and communalities are determined which shows the range of the determinants of cognitive dissonance.

Factor-1 (F_1) :

The first factor consisted of variables like 'I find items that fellows praise and their purchase has resulted in CD' (0.943), 'Seeking only the opinion of friends' (0.936) and 'Not giving value to fellow mates comments arose CD' (0.908). 'Influence of purchase on fellow mates' comment has resulted in CD' (0.845), had highest significant positive loadings. Hence factor 1 was characterized as "influence of peer group".

Market search :

Factor-1 (F_1) :

The first factor consisted of variables like

Table 7 : Influence of family status towards cognitive dissonance

Sr. No.	Family status related particulars	Factor 1	Communality (h^2)
1.	After purchasing items based on family status I have experienced CD	0.942	0.888
2.	Purchasing items for showing it only as a status symbol	0.941	0.885
3.	Purchasing because of the reason that the product is important to maintain family status has evoked CD	0.974	0.948
4.	Products' status if not upto the expected level will arouse CD	0.737	0.543

Table 8 : Influence of peer group towards cognitive dissonance

Sr. No.	Peer group related particulars	Factor 1	Communality (h^2)
1.	Influence of purchase on fellow mates' comment has resulted in CD	0.845	0.714
2.	I find items that fellows praise and their purchase has resulted in CD	0.943	0.889
3.	Seeking only the opinion of friends	0.936	0.876
4.	Not giving value to fellow mates' comments arouse CD	0.908	0.824

Table 9 : Influence of market search towards cognitive dissonance

Sr. No.	Market search related particulars	Factor 1	Communality (h^2)
1.	I felt with CD while considering more alternatives	0.727	0.528
2.	For me there was CD because of visiting more number of stores prior to purchase	0.578	0.334
3.	I felt frequency of purchase an important factor influencing CD	0.581	0.338
4.	If the knowledge of the product is a factor which influence CD	0.804	0.646
5.	According to me the level of information search is a major determinant of CD	0.883	0.78
6.	Complex buying style adoption has resulted in high cognitive dissonance than impulsive buying style adoption	0.845	0.714

‘According to me the level of information search is a major determinant of CD’ (0.883), ‘Complex Buying style adoption has resulted in high cognitive dissonance than impulsive buying style adoption’ (0.845), ‘If the knowledge of the product is a factor which influence CD’ (0.804), ‘I felt with CD while considering more alternatives’ (0.727), ‘I felt frequency of purchase an important factor influencing CD’(0.581) and ‘For me there was CD because of visiting more number of stores prior to purchase’(0.578). ‘According to me the level of information search is a major determinant of CD’ (0.883) had the highest significant positive loadings. Hence factor 1 was characterized as “Market search” (Table 9).

New information :

Factor-1 (F_1) :

The first factor consisted of variables like ‘When

came to know that same product can be obtained from another brand with low price’ (0.892), ‘When neighbours told that their experience on the products performance is not good’(0.860), ‘When came to know that better quality brand of the same product is available with same price’(0.827), ‘The new information about the good performance of the brand ignored brand’(0.791) and ‘When the confidence on the new source of information is more than the earlier source’(0.546). ‘When came to know that same product can be obtained from another low cost brand’ (0.892) had the highest significant positive loadings. Hence factor 1 was characterized as “Information about the product” (Table 10).

Factor loadings :

From the factor matrix the new factors were derived. From the Table 11 given below it could be

Table 10 : Influence of new information towards cognitive dissonance

Sr. No.	New information related particulars	Factor 1	Communality (h^2)
1.	When the confidence on the new source of information is more than the earlier source	0.546	0.298
2.	When came to know that same product can be obtained from another brand with low price	0.892	0.795
3.	When neighbors told that their experience on the products performance is not good	0.86	0.74
4.	When came to know that better quality brand of the same product is available with same price	0.827	0.684
5.	The new information about the good performance of the brand ignored brand	0.791	0.625

Table 11 : Factor loadings

Factor no.	Variable	Statement	Factor loading
F1	Family status	Purchasing because of the reason that the product is important to maintain family status has evoked CD	0.974
F2	Influence of peer group	I find items that fellows praise and their purchase has resulted in CD	0.943
F3	Trust in the sales man	I am not able to trust my sales personnel cent per cent, this thought evolved CD	0.933
F4	Education	The educational qualifications I possess might be contributing to the CD I am experiencing	0.921
F5	Religious factors	I feel that the religious factors contributes much to the CD	0.898
F6	Information about the product	When came to know that same product can be obtained from another low cost brand	0.892
F7	Market search	According to me the level of information search is a major determinant of CD	0.883
F8	Sales promotion	‘Free gifts/Accessories like vessels are not welcomed and CD is evolved’	0.911
F9	Perception of consumers	I believe frequency of changing belief has got a major impact in CD	0.878
F10	Quality of the product	Quality of the product when not upto the mark has resulted in CD	0.714
F11	Advertisement	Creative methods of advertisements were good enough to buy the product which was not matching with product characteristics that evolved CD	0.903
F12	Confidence level on product	Reduced confidence about the performance of the TV bought	0.858
F13	Emotion driven.	The message for persuasion which was used was emotional that made me to buy wrong product which evolved CD	0.965
F14	Cash discount	I feel cash discount on billing is not sincerely done and evolves CD	0.975
F15	Packaging	Attraction of the product	0.893
F16	Brand loyalty	Brand loyalty	0.802
F17	After sales service	Assured after sales care is suspected which evolve CD	0.943

Table 12 : Ranking of the variables of steps to minimize cognitive dissonance

Sr. No.	Statements	Total score	Index	Rank
1.	Will share good qualities of the product with peer group	52	37	1
2.	Confirm the positive aspects with other buyers	34	24	2
3.	Will reassure my choice by once again analyzing the advertisement	26	19	3
4.	Will once again analyse the reasons for selecting the TV	22	16	4
5.	Will ask the opinion of the consumers who experienced the same default	6	4	5
6.	Will ignore the new information	-24	-17	6
7.	Will reassure the performance with the management	-24	-17	6
8.	Will ask friends to purchase the same TV	-24	-17	6

understood that the different factors that had been given were named according to nature of the statement. Factor loadings were also given.

These were the statements that were derived with highest factor loadings from different components by means of factor analysis. The seventeen factors were concluded to be acting as the major determinants of cognitive dissonance toward the purchase of LED TV.

Steps to minimize cognitive dissonance :

This part of the analysis identified the different methods by which the respondents minimize or overcome the cognitive dissonance which will be an insight to the firms to understand the consumer behaviour and their reactions which will in turn help to evolve appropriate marketing strategies.

Table 12 given below also ranked the activities according to the best way the people would try to minimize the cognitive dissonance they had experienced.

It can be observed that the statement 'Will share good qualities of the product with peer group' constituted the majority to which most have agreed followed by 'Confirm the positive aspects with other buyers'

The other statements 'Will ignore the new information', 'Will reassure the performance with the management', 'Will ask friends to purchase the same TV' were not at all considered as the cognitive dissonance resolving mechanism by the respondents.

Conclusion :

In the present era proper marketing is an important issue for the existence of a business. By providing accurate and correct information to the consumers they can purchase the right product by availing benefits at right amount of sacrifice. So it is the duty of the

marketers to provide adequate information at the right time to consumers. The seventeen determinants that were found to be having significant factor loadings can be given priority to formulate effective marketing strategies. 'Sharing good qualities of the product with peer' followed by 'Confirming the positive aspects with other buyers' were the major cognitive dissonance reduction mechanisms adopted by the respondents. It was noticed that good qualities will be shared to the people by the consumers. So more the qualities it is sure that it will be passed on to others by means of word of mouth. Thus the sales will be increased leading to a successful business by means of delighted consumers.

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