
Prospective Teachers' Awareness On Consumer Rights

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Abstract

Consumers are the basic or fundamental part of the global economy. The trade and commerce has become boundary less due to the advancements happened in the internet and digital technology. This opened a wide range of business world before the consumers. Accordingly the exploitation of consumers becomes more. It is a fact that many legal measures are there in our country intended to protect the rights of the consumers, thus protecting them from the exploitation. At this point, this research focus on the extent of awareness of prospective teachers, who is going to impart knowledge to the future generation, on consumer rights. The data was collected using Consumer Rights Awareness Test. Percentage analysis, t test and ANOVA were executed to analyse the data.

Keywords. *Awareness, consumer rights, Consumer Protection Act 1986, prospective teachers*

Introduction

We are living in a world where free market system exists. All are consumers, in one way or other. It is not false to say that consumers are the base of world's economy. John. F. Kennedy's initiative to bring the Bill of Consumer Rights points out how important a consumer is to this economy. The day (the 15th of March) on which this bill came into force is celebrated as World Consumer Day. Every consumer has freedom to know about the products they buy. Welfare of the consumer should be one of the primary concern of this business world.

While discussing about Indian economy, India is becoming more and more a consumer state. Now-a-days we can see wide development in the market, including digitalization in the business. Consumer Protection Act of India came into effect on December 24, 1986. Apart from this many legislative measure are there intended to protect the rights of the consumers directly or indirectly. Drugs and cosmetics act, Hire purchase act, Prevention of Food adulteration Act, Agricultural Produce act, etc. are some among them. All these highlight the importance of consumers in this economy.

Need of the Study

History marks how the consumers were exploited one way or the other. As the world changes, the nature of exploitation changes. Many laws are there –nationally and internationally –to protect the rights of consumers. How many people know about their rights is still a question to think. The expansion of market globally due to the blast in digital world has somehow or other increased the consumer exploitations. Educating consumers on their rights are the need of the era, where the boundary of market has become seem less with the advancement in the internet technology.

Deepika and Kumari (2014) conducted a study among students and came into conclusion that the students possess awareness on the legal acts from our government which was framed to protect the rights of consumers. On the other hand Patil et.al. (2022) in their article in which they reviewed many literature on the awareness of consumer rights concludes by pointing out that still there is a need for educating the society on their consumer rights. Rawal (2019) also supports this with their study conducted on the perception of consumer rights among the college students by taking students from Tikapur municipality. The data marked a low perception among college students on consumer rights which gives more stress on the need for educating people on consumer rights. Devi and Rao (2016) put forward the need for making essential changes in the contents of education as their comparative study on consumer rights among educated and uneducated consumers marked no difference in the level of awareness among the samples. If education can't mark difference in the basic consumer awareness, then whom can we blame? Suma (2016) and Chaudhary (2017) also supports the need for providing consumer education in schools

and higher levels of education. The latest study by Bisht (2024) also highlights that even the educated citizen who lives in urban areas are not aware of their rights as a consumer.

Teachers who gives guidance to the future generation should possess the knowledge of basic rights, of which consumer right is one among that. Keeping this in view, the researcher found it important to conduct a study among the prospective teachers, who will be the artisans of the future of our country.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher entitled the study as “Prospective Teachers’ Awareness on Consumer Rights”

Objectives of the Study

1. To know whether the level of awareness of prospective teachers’ on consumer rights differs
2. To analyze the differential effect of gender, locality of residence, type of management and optional subjects of the prospective teachers on their awareness on consumer rights.

Hypothesis of the Study

- The level of awareness of prospective teachers’ on consumer rights differs
- There exists no significance difference in the mean awareness score of prospective teachers on consumer rights when classified based on gender, locality of residence, type of management and optional subjects.

Methodology

To conduct the study, the researcher followed survey method. 450 prospective teachers from different teacher education institutions under University of Calicut, Kerala were selected using purposive random sampling method giving due representation to the sub samples. The researcher along with the supervising teacher prepared and standardized a Consumer Rights Awareness Test for Prospective Teachers and was used for collecting the essential data needed for the study. The collected were analysed on the basis of formulated hypothesis by applying percentage analysis, t test and ANOVA.

Analysis of the Data

The researcher systematically arranged the data and analysed in accordance with the hypothesis. Preliminary analysis was done to know whether the data distribution meets the attribute of normality. Inferential analysis (t test and ANOVA) was employed to test the hypothesis.

Preliminary Analysis of the Data

Table 1 gives a summary of the preliminary analysis done with the scores of awareness of prospective teachers on consumer rights

Table 1: Summary of the Descriptive Statistics of the Scores of Awareness of Prospective Teachers on Consumer Rights

<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M_{dn}</i>	<i>M_o</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>S_k</i>	<i>Ku</i>
450	14.53	15.00	15.00	5.09	0.076	0.817

Table 1 marks the mean for total sample, $N = 450$, is 14.53. Median and mode is found to be 15.00 and 15.00 respectively. Standard deviation for the distribution is recorded as 5.09. The value of skewness is found to be 0.076 and kurtosis is marked as 0.817.

The obtained values for measures of central tendencies are almost equal which denotes a normal distribution of data. The value obtained for standard deviation also denotes that the data is not scattered. The value of kurtosis says that the distribution is leptokurtic in nature.

Level of Prospective Teachers’ Awareness on Consumer Rights

The researcher tried to categorize the whole sample into three levels, based on the SD distance from M . The number and percentage of the student teachers falling into high, moderate and low categories based on their score of awareness on consumer rights is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Level of Awareness of Prospective Teachers on Consumer Rights

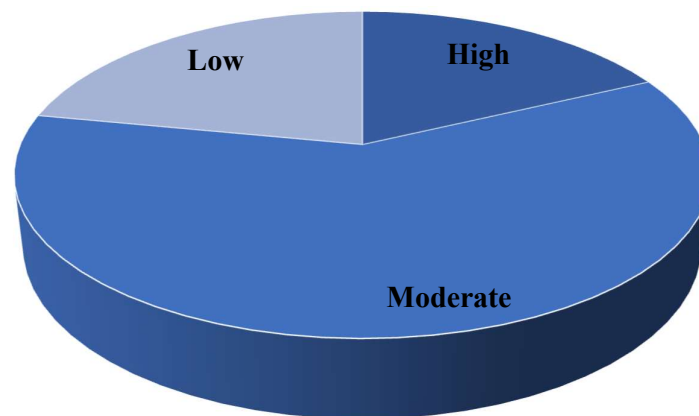
Variable	Group	Score	<i>n</i>	%
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Awareness on Consumer Rights	High	≥ 19.62	81	18.00
	Moderate	$19.62 - 9.44$	270	60.20
	Low	≤ 9.44	99	22.00
	Total		450	100.00

From Table 1 it can be clearly pointed that majority of the prospective teachers have a moderate level of awareness on consumer rights. 60.20 per cent of the sample falls into moderate level. Only 18.00 percent ($n = 81$) of the prospective teachers is found to have high level of awareness on consumer rights. 22 percent can be categorized as having low level of consumer right awareness.

Figure 1 grammatically represents the categorization of prospective teachers on their level of awareness on consumer rights.

Figure 1 *Level of Consumer Right Awareness of Prospective Teachers*



Test of Significance of Difference in the Mean Scores of Awareness of Prospective Teachers on Consume Rights for the Sub-samples classified based on Gender

Independent sample t test was employed to know whether the difference in the mean consumer right awareness score of the female and male prospective teachers is significant or not. The result is given in Table 3.

Table 3: Test of Significance of Difference in the Mean Scores of Awareness of Prospective Teachers on Consume Rights for the Sub-samples classified based on Gender

Sub-Sample	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Gender	Female	75	15.09	1.342	0.945
	Male	375	14.41		

From Table 3, it is clear that the mean value obtained for consumer right awareness of female prospective teachers is 15.09 ($SD = 3.68$) and for male teachers 14.41 ($SD = 5.32$). The critical ratio obtained for the test of significance of the difference in mean consumer right awareness of prospective teachers for female and male sub sample is recorded as 1.342. The t value obtained is less than 1.96 - the value of significance at .05 level- and hence it can be marked that the difference in the mean score is not significant at .05 level of confidence.

Test of Significance of Difference in the Mean Scores of Awareness of Prospective Teachers on Consume Rights for the Sub-samples classified based on Locality of Residence

To test whether the mean consumer right awareness of prospective teachers from rural and urban are differ significantly, the researcher employed students t test. Table 4 discusses the obtained result briefly.

Table 4 *Test of Significance of Difference in the Mean Scores of Awareness of Prospective Teachers for the Sub-samples classified based on Locality*

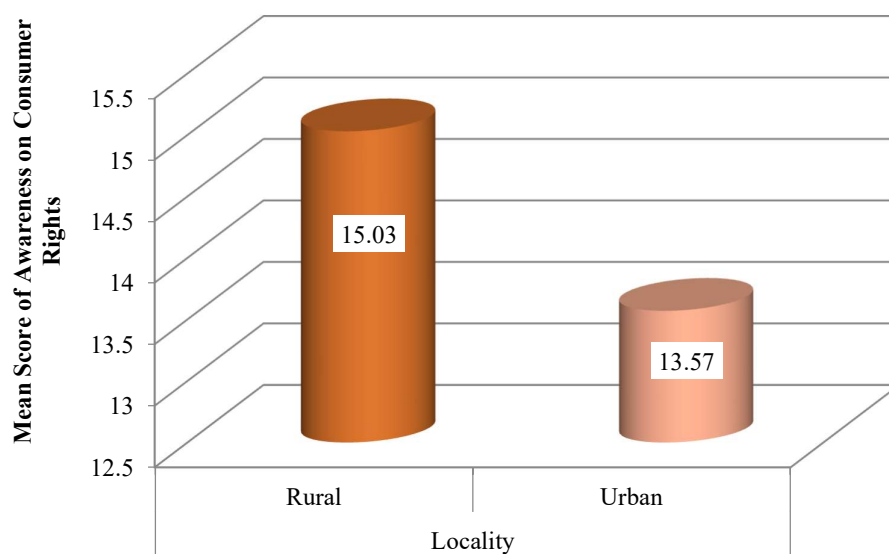
Sub-Sample	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
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Locality	Rural	300	15.03	5.31	2.831**	0.945
	Urban	150	13.57	4.49		

Note. ** indicates that the obtained value is significant at .01 level From Table 4, it can be stated that the mean awareness score of prospective teachers from rural and urban areas are 15.09 and 13.57 respectively. The test of significance of difference in these mean score was done and the *t* value is obtained as 2.831. The critical value obtained is greater than the table value, 2.57 at .01 level of significance. That means, from Table 4 it can be concluded that locality of residence of the prospective teacher has a differential effect on the consumer right awareness of the prospective teachers. Table 4 also tells that those from rural area is having a significantly high consumer right awareness when compared to those residing in urban areas.

The mean score obtained by the prospective teachers of rural and urban area is graphically represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Mean Consumer Right Awareness Score Obtained by the Prospective Teachers from Rural and Urban Area



Test of Significance of Difference in the Mean Scores of Awareness of Prospective Teachers on Consume Rights for the Sub-samples classified based on Type of Management

For the present study, due importance was given to the type of management of the teacher training institutions. Independent sample *t* test was utilized to know the significance of difference in the mean score of prospective teachers from government and private management institutions.

Table 5 Test of Significance of Difference in the Mean Scores of Awareness of Prospective Teachers on Consumer Rights for the Sub-samples classified based on Type of Management

Sub-Sample		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Type of Management	Govt	150	15.59	5.27	0.619	0.945
	Private	300	15.32	4.71		

For a sample on 150 prospective teachers from government teacher training institutions, the mean consumer awareness score is found to be 15.59 with standard deviation 5.27. The prospective teachers from teacher training institutions under private management has obtained a mean consumer rights awareness score of 15.32 (SD = 4.71).

The independent sample t test applied gives the critical value as 0.619, which is less than the table value 1.96 at .05 level of significance. Hence it can be clearly stated that there exists no significant difference in the mean score of consumer right awareness of prospective teachers when classified based on their type of management of the institutions they seek training.

Test of Significance of Difference in the Mean Scores of Awareness of Prospective Teachers on Consumer Rights for the Sub-samples classified based on Optional Subject

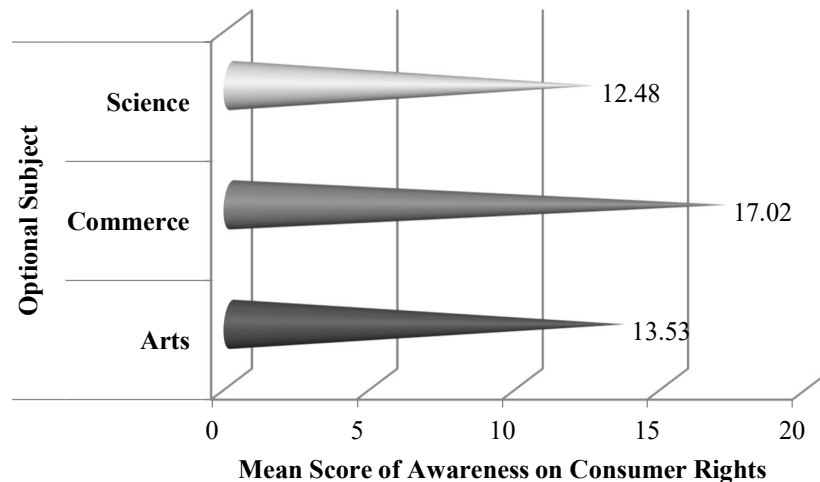
The researcher wished to know whether the mean score of awareness differs significantly in accordance with their optional subject. ANOVA was found to be suitable to test this, and the result is given in Table 6.

Table 6: Test of Significance of Difference in the Mean Scores of Awareness of Prospective Teachers on Consumer Rights for the Sub Sample Classified based on the Optional Subject

Sub-Sample	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Optional Subject	Arts	250	13.53	4.70	17.206** 0.945
	Commerce	50	17.02	3.36	
	Science	150	12.48	5.14	

Note: ** denotes that the difference is significant at .01 level of significance. It can be clearly observed from Table 6 that the mean value obtained for the prospective teachers who opted arts subjects is 13.53. (SD = 4.70). Those from commerce stream have acquired a mean awareness score of 17.02 and from Science subjects have a mean score of 12.48. Standard deviation for commerce and science subjects is marked as 3.36 and 5.14 respectively. The *F* ratio is recorded as 17.206 (df =2) which is much greater than the Table value (Table R) at .01 level of significance. Hence it can be said that the difference in the mean awareness score of prospective teachers on consumer rights awareness is significant at .01 level of confidence. From Table 6 it can also be inferred that the prospective teachers who have opted Commerce as their subject of study have significantly high awareness when compared to other options. The difference in the mean score is represented using a bar diagram in Figure 3

Figure 3 Mean Score of Consumer Right Awareness of Prospective Teachers for the Sub Sample when Classified Based on Their Optional Subject



Findings of the Study

- The mean value obtained for the Consumer Right Awareness Test is 14.53. The total marks for the test was determined as 40. When compared to the total score, the mean score obtained is below 50 percentage. This denotes that the prospective teachers' awareness on consumer rights is not in a satisfactory level. Measures are to be taken to improve their awareness is consumer rights, which is a major fundamental knowledge one should possess, especially those who are going to guide the future of the country.
- Gender of the prospective teachers have no differential effect on their consumer rights awareness
- It was found that the mean awareness score of prospective teachers from rural and urban areas differ significantly at .01 level of significance. Prospective teachers from rural area have obtained a significantly higher mean score than those from urban area.
- There exists no significant difference in the mean consumer rights awareness of prospective teachers from government owned institutions and private institutions.
- Optional subject is found to be having influence on the consumer rights awareness of prospective teachers. The prospective teachers who has opted commerce as their subject is possessing significantly high awareness on consumer rights, when compared to those with arts and science as their optional subjects.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted to analyze the extent of the awareness possessed by the prospective teachers on the consumer rights, which is now considered as the basic knowledge one should possess. The study points out the need of giving sessions on consumer rights, as the data obtained denotes the unsatisfactory level of awareness of prospective teachers. The study also highlights that those from rural areas is having more awareness when compared to urban areas. Those who studied Commerce as their main subject is having more awareness when compared to other two streams, i.e. Arts and Science. This may be because they study more about business and commerce. Still the mean score is found to be less than 50 percentages, which highlights the need for giving awareness classes for the future teachers. The teacher trainees who is going to guide our future generation should be well equipped with basic knowledge for living.

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