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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON BUYER BEHAVIOUR AND BRAND LOYALTY OF TOILET SOAPS IN KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT (TAMIL NADU)

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ABSTRACT

Consumer is the king of any business .Understanding consumer needs and wants is important and foremost task of any marketer. Consumer satisfaction is a judgment made by the consumer .Consumers normally has a general objective of creation and maintaining a collection of goods and services that provide present and future satisfaction. The good are produced only to meet the needs of the consumer. So the analysis of consumer behavior is one of the foundation on which future marketing depends. Every producer interested to increase the profitability, loyalty and retention and repeat purchases of the product. Consumers have wide variety of choices in toilet soap and they were influenced by many factors internal and external. The study is focused to identify the factors which influence consumers while purchasing toilet soap and to examine the brand loyalty with regard to toilet soaps.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer preference is an important factor of marketing management. Unless a marketing manager has the knowledge of the factors that affect consumer's purchasing patterns, consumers purchasing patterns are likely to be influenced by demographic, economic, psychological and sociological factors. They must find out how consumers translate their desires in to meaningful technical language. Consumers describe what they want, in terms of product benefits. Functions, characteristics, performance criteria and even manufacturing procedures. A marketing manager must be aware of the reason, why people buy a Soap Since consumers differ in their present and future buying requirement, hence the knowledge of buying of different product helps marketers an identify groups, which represents the greatest sales potentials.Marketing management must know, buyers are really seeking their goods and services. Since the ultimate motive of all the marketing activities is based on consumer satisfaction.

Toilet Soaps- An Introduction

Toilet soap is an important day to day basic requirement of any consumer. It is considered as cleansing and beautifying products which is usually used for cleansing one's body. The toilet soaps market is dominated by several, leading national and global brands and a large number of small brands.. The accepted and quality brands are Hamam, Lux, Power, Dove, . Rexona, Medimix, Cinthol, Pears, Mysore sandal, and Lifebouy. The existence of different brands made the consumers difficult to differentiate each brand from other. It is, therefore, very important to find out the impact of brand loyalty and advertisement lure the consumers. The toilet soap market is fragmented and highly competitive in nature.

Brand Selected for the Study

1). Hamam, 2). Lux, 3). Power, 4). Dove, 5). Rexona,6). Medimix, 7). Cinthol, 8). Pears, 9). Mysore sandal, 10). Lifebouy

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Objectives of the study

1. To examine the consumer behavior and consumer preference towards toilet soap.
2. To study the brand loyalty among the consumers towards toilet soap.
3. To find out the factors which affect the brand loyalty of consumers for toilet soap
4. To give suggestions to FMCG companies to develop marketing strategy

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design: The research design followed in the study is descriptive in nature

Method of data collection

Primary data

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected by distributing interview schedule to the users of toilet soap in Perambalur district.

Secondary data

The secondary data has been collected from the various journals, magazines connected with toilet soap.

Sample Size: The sample size of 200 respondents were selected from the respondents of perambalur district

Sampling Technique

The study has been undertaken by survey method, the data is collected with the help of convenient sampling method from the household in Perambalur.

Tools and Techniques Used

The data collected from the respondents were edited, analyzed and presented in the form of tables, and various diagrams.

Literature Review

Customer loyalty is defined as a customer who repurchases from the same service provider whenever possible, and who continues to recommend or maintains a positive attitude towards the service provider (Bloemer et al., 1999, Gremler and Brown 1999, Shoemaker and Lewis 1999, Kandampully and Suhartanto 2000). Customers may be loyal due to high switching barriers or lack of real alternatives. Customers may also be loyal because they are satisfied and thus want to continue the relationship. History has proven that most barriers to exit are limited with regard to durability; companies tend to consider customer satisfaction the only viable strategy in order to keep existing customers. Several authors have found a positive correlation between customer satisfaction and loyalty (Bearden, Teel et al. 1980; Bolton and Drew 1991; Fornell 1992; Anderson and Sullivan 1993). Customer loyalty is a buyer's overall attachment or deep commitment to a product, service, brand, or organization (Oliver, 1999). Oliver, (1999) defines loyalty as a deeply held commitment to re-buy product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same brand or same-brand set purchasing. From all previous studies about customer loyalty and the factors that affecting on it such as service quality, switching barriers, and brand image, all researchers gave several definitions of customer loyalty, each definition expect type of product or service, but there are some things are similarity between their definitions as, repeatedly purchase a goods or service over time; and hold favorable attitudes towards a goods or service, or towards the company supplying the goods or service. But the deference between their definitions are the factors that affecting on customer loyalty for example the factors that affecting on loyalty to cars are deferent the factors that affecting on loyalty on mobile phone or any product that consume it daily, monthly or yearly, as mentioned by (Jun and Bin, 2005).

The customer loyalty is characterized by repurchasing and not transferring by the fluctuation of the market. There are many factors that affect the customer loyalty. In the telecommunication industry, according to opinions of the experts and literatures previous studies, the effects of customer loyalty can be assessed in these aspects: service quality, switching barriers, and brand image "the customers' switching cost requirement, quality requirement and service requirement for the telecommunication business" (LI Li, 2005). Oliver (1999) proposes that eventual customer loyalty is a role of perceived product superiority, personal fortitude, social bonding, and their synergistic effects. Further analysis of Oliver's discussion tend to suggest not that loyalty is commitment, but that loyalty is an aspect of commitment called attitudinal or emotional component of commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991, 1997; Meyer et al., 1993; Ogba, 2008) A brand's image often influences a customer's expectations and consequently satisfaction with a product or service. Brand image pertains to the perception or mental picture a customer holds of a brand and is formed through his/her response, whether reasoned or emotional, an organization's image is an important variable that positively influences marketing activities. Image is considered to have the ability to influence customers' perception of the goods and services offered (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996). Thus, image will have an impact on customers' buying behavior. The objective is to arouse a positive affective response to the brand in the customers, such that they buy brands for their physical attributes and functions, and their symbolic meanings associated with the brand, product or service. During its formation, the customer's experiences, feelings and trust will influence the image. (Nguyen and Leblanc, 2001) claim that corporate image is related to the physical and behavioral attributes of the firm, such as business name, architecture, variety of products/services, and to the impression of quality communicated by each person interacting with the firm's clients.

Data analysis and Interpretation

Chi-Square analysis

The Chi-square analysis is used to find out association between occupation and brand

1.Ho: The Occupation of the respondent has no influence on the and Brand of toilet soap

Table 1. Relationship between occupation and brand

Factor	Calculated χ^2 Value	Table Value	D.F	Remarks
Brand	128.56	51.00	36	Significant at 5% level

It is found from the above Table that the calculated chi-square value is greater than the table value and the result is significant at 5% level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. From the analysis, it is concluded that the occupation of the respondents has influence on the choice of brand of toilet soap

2.Ho: The Income of the respondent does not influence the choice of Brand

Table 2. Relationships between brand and income

Factor	Calculated χ^2 Value	Table Value	D.F	Remarks
Income	87.44	40.11	27	Significant at 5% level

It is found from the above Table that the calculated chi-square value is greater than the table value and the result is significant at 5% level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. From the analysis, it is concluded that Income of the respondent influence the preference of soap brand.

WEIGHTED AVERAGE ANALYSIS:

Table 3. Reasons for preferring particular brand of soap

Reasons	No. of Respondents (X)	W	Total (WX)
Doctor Advice	12	4	48
Price	52	3	156
Quality	100	2	200
Fashion	36	1	36
Total	200	10	440

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\sum WX}{\sum X} = \frac{440}{10} = 44$$

The weighted average analysis shows that the reason for preferring particular brand of soap is on an average 44 respondents.

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Table 4. Sex wise classification

Particular	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	96	48
Female	104	52
Total	200	100

Source: Primary Data

The above Table shows the sex wise classifications of the respondent, out of 200 respondents 48% respondents are male and 52% respondents are female.

Table 5. Changes felt by the respondents

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Skin colour	12	6
Skin softness	20	10
Freshness	68	34
Oil controller	28	14
Body odour	20	10
Fragrance	52	26
Total	200	100

Source: Primary Data

The above Table highlights the changes felt by the respondents for the use of particular brand of toilet soap. Out of 200 respondents 34% of respondents were said Freshness, 26% of respondents were felt Fragrance, 14% of them are said oil controller, 10% of respondents were felt skin softness, body odour, and 6% of respondents were said skin colour.

Table 6. Frequent usage of toilet soap

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Once	76	38
Twice	96	48
More than twice	28	14
Total	200	100

Source: Primary Data

The above Table depicts the frequent usage of soap, out of 200 respondents 48% of respondents were use twice in a day, 38% of respondents were use once in a day, and 14% of respondents were using more than twice in a day.

Table 7. Purchase pattern

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Weekly	44	22
Fortnight	104	52
Monthly	52	26
Total	200	100

Source: Primary Data

The above Table describes 200 respondents out of which 52% of respondents are purchase fort nightly, 26 % of respondents are purchase monthly, and 22% of respondents purchase weekly.

Table 8. Classifications on the basis of brand loyalty

Brand	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	96	48
No	104	52
Total	200	100

Source: Primary Data

The above Table shows that out of 200 respondents, 52% of respondents are not having brand loyalty and 48% of respondents are having brand loyalty while purchasing toilet soap.

Table 9. The reason for not having brand loyalty

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
High price	40	38.46
Non availability	24	23.07
Not satisfaction	28	26.94
Doctor's advice	12	11.53
Total	104	100

Source: Primary Data

The above Table shows that nearly 38 percent respondents change their brand because of high price, 27 percent respondents change their brand due to dissatisfaction of brand , 23 percent respondents due to non availability of brand, and 12 respondents due to doctor's advice.

Table 10. Habit of comparison

Brands	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	48	24
No	152	76
Total	200	100

Source: Primary Data

The above Table prescribes 200 respondents out of which 76% of the respondents are not comparing their brand with the other brand, and 24% of the respondents only comparing their products with other brands.

Table 11. Factors on which comparison

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Quality	12	25
Availability	8	17
Price	20	41
Free gifts	8	17
Total	48	100

Source: Primary Data

The above Table depicts 48 respondents out of which 41% of respondents were comparing their brand with other brands based on price factor, 25% of the respondents were using the factor quality for their comparison and 17% of the respondents were comparing the brands by using the factors brand availability & free gifts.

Table 12. Respondents opinion about the price of the brand

Brand Name	High	Low	Reasonable	Total	Percentage
Hamam	4	8	32	44	22
Lux	-	4	20	24	12
Power	4	-	24	28	14
Dove	8	-	-	8	4
Rexona	-	4	12	16	8
Medimix	4	4	16	24	12
Cinthol	4	-	16	20	10
Pears	8	-	4	12	6
Mysore sandal	8	-	-	8	4
Lifebouy	-	8	8	16	8
Total	40	28	132	200	100

Source: Primary Data

The above Table depicts the respondent's opinion about the price of the brand, out 200 respondents, 40 respondents gives opinion that the price is high, and 28 respondents feel that the price is low.

Table 13. Ranking the brands

Brand Name	Total	Percentage	Rank
Hamam	44	22	I
Lux	24	12	III
Power	28	14	II
Dove	8	4	VII
Rexona	16	8	V
Medimix	24	12	III
Cinthol	20	10	IV
Pears	12	6	VI
Mysore sandal	8	4	VII
Lifebouy	16	8	V
Total	200	100	

Source: Primary Data

The respondents ranked the various brands of toilet soaps based on price, quality and product attributes. The research shows that the Hamam soap is ranked first; seventh rank is given to Mysore sandal and Dove

Findings

- The study shows that 22 percent of the respondents preferred Hamam soap which is the leading toilet soap in Perambalur district and the other 88 percent is shared by all the remaining toilet soap
- The study reveals the fact that 34 percent of them felt that changes after using the particular brand of soap is freshness.
- The research shows that 52 percent of the respondents purchasing their brand in the frequency of once in fortnight
- It is found that out of 200 respondents, 52 percent respondents express that they have no brand loyalty
- 38 percent of respondent's opinion that they have no brand loyalty due to fluctuation in price level.
- The research shows that 66 percent of respondents felt that the price of their brand is reasonable.
- The chi-square analysis shows that the occupation of the respondents has influence on the choice of brand of toilet soap

- The chi-square analysis shows that Income of the respondents has influence the preference of particular soap brand.
- The weighted average analysis shows that the reason for preferring particular brand of soap is 44 percent.

Suggestions

- The toilet soap such as Dove, Pears are not popular among the consumer. So the manufactured should take necessary steps to popularize the above said brands.
- The price of brands like Hamam, Power, Lux, Medimix and lifebouy can be reduced. So that these brands of toilet soap can be purchased by all level of income group.
- Most of the consumers are concerned about the quality of toilet soap. So manufacturers can take necessary steps to improve the quality brands of toilet soap.
- The FMGC company needs to focus on its distribution channels, networking, marketing strategies, sales promotion etc to tap the potential segment

Conclusion

Consumer preference is one of the important factors of marketing, FMCG companies must find out consumers want and than translate these desires in to meaningful technical language. Knowledge of buying behavior of different market segments help marketers to identify buyer who support the company. In toilet soap market generally buyers are of low or reasonable price minded, expecting free gifts, quality and modification, the company should take up some changes in their product to cover more market area and attract more customers and to complete their competitors. FMCG companies should concentrate their innovative strategies and distribution channels to attract the new customers and retain the existing customers

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