AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR OF DETERGENTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BANGALORE CITY

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Abstract: The Indian Detergents Market consists of synthetic detergents comprising bars, powder and liquids and oil based laundry soaps. It is derived from petroleum products. The pheonicians were acquainted with it by at least 600 BC and it was known the gauls not later than about 300 BC. These chemical compounds are used for human comfort, cleanliness and for industrial surface active applications. The success of any cleaning agent is to supply compounds with hydrophobic and hydrophilic groups which will also appreciably decrease surface tension and increase mutability. Synthetic detergents are organic chemicals which promote better surface tension lowering than soaps. The use of detergents increases to the point of creating problems in municipal sewerage plants due to excessive foaming and inability to reduce the organic content of the sewage effluent, bio-degradation of detergent compounds becomes an important factor.

It is hopefully believed that the present study would definitely help to learn about the sources of informations for the customers during different stages of buying sanitary goods and hence, enhances their level of awareness and brand preference for durable sanitary goods. It is essential for the marketers to understand what are the important sources to create awareness of their products. The present study helps them to evolve better promotion strategies which will help to enhance the level of awareness of the consumers and creating a need for their products.

Keywords: Detergents, Consumer Behaviour, Consumer Perception, Bangalore City.

Introduction: The Consumer process is concerned with how consumers make decisions. In this study the purchase process has been defined according to a "stage mode" of buying process the consumer passes through five stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behaviour. Clearly, the buying process starts long before the actual purchase and has consequence long after the purchase. In the preparation of questionnaire it was attempted that information is collected regarding different stages. Questions regarding these five stages were put to the interviewees. Problem recognition results when a consumer recognizes a difference of sufficient magnitude between what is perceived as the desired state of affairs and what is the actual state of affairs, enough to arouse and activate the decision process. The situation leading the problem recognition may be depleted stock of goods, discontentment with the stock of goods, changing environmental and financial circumstances or marketing activities. The term "search" refers to mental as well as physical information-seeking and processing activities which one engages in to facilitate decision making regarding some goal-object in the market place consequently, search may be undertaken in order to find out about products, prices, stores and so on related to the product. Internal search is a mental process of recalling and reviewing information stored in memory that may relate to purchase situation. The marketers are interested in knowing how consumers process the information gathered during the search process on their evoked set of brands. There are two broad approaches: brand processing or attribute processing. In brand processing the buyer assesses one brand at a time. Thus, the consumers may decide to look at a particular brand, examine several attributes, and then assess several attributes for a second and third brand. In attribute processing, the consumer examines a specific attribute and then compares several brands on that attribute. The next stage is the purchase division. It involves selecting a course of action based on the preceding evaluation process. It involves activities such as choosing a store. Paying for the purchase is a part of this decision process. It may be either on cash or on credit. the last stage is post-purchase behaviour. It refers to those behaviours exhibited after the purchase decision. It involves consumer expectations, satisfaction, post purchase dissonance and the feedback mechanism. Cognitive dissonance occurs as a result of a discrepancy between a consumer's decision and his prior evaluation.

Review Of Literature: Thus, the consumer market is very complicated bundle of contradictory values, attitudes and behaviours, as shown by the study on Indian Consumers by MARG, the Genie Study by O & M, articles in the press and experiences of consumer markets.

Foxman (1989) stated that recent changes in demographic and household structure have increased consumers impact on their decisions and their general involvement in family decision-making.

Moschis (1989) dealt with an important type of inter

personal communication – Family communication. They are found to play an important role in the consumer socialization of their offspring and are instrumental in teaching them the national aspects of consumption.

Hoyer and Brown (1990) revealed the subtle difference between awareness and recognition. Awareness represents a state of knowledge possessed by the consumer, whereas recognition is a cognitive process which results from awareness. In this study were examined the effects of brand awareness on choice, brand sampling and the frequency with which the highest quality brand is selected after a series of trials. It was found that brand awareness is a prevalent choice tactic among inexperienced consumers who are faced with a new decision task.

Childers and Rao (1992) pointed out that from consumer behaviour prospective; it appears that their reference groups can influence products and brands that individuals select. In nuclear families, the degree to which an individual is influenced by peers appears to be significantly higher for public than for private products and brands, while this is not the case in extended families.

Krishna (1994) demonstrated that there is heterogeneity in consumer knowledge of prices and deals. In addition, it was found that buyers purchase behaviour can be influenced by not only the current price of a product but also by what price they expect in the future.

Balakrishnan and Rao (1998) conducted an opinion poll young persons in the age group of 15 to 20 in eight metropolitan cities & found that for 75% of the youngsters teenage years were a time of stress and anxiety about exams, jobs, parental expectations, peer pressure, love lives, the need to look good and dress smartly and even the state on nation.

Chung Kai (2008) has reported that public relations, consumer perception and customer loyalty are interlinked and interconnected. Business Organizations having good public relations and rapport with the customers and producing goods according to the needs and requirements of the customers can build up customer loyalty and properly match with the customer perceptions and customer expectations thereby the goals and objectives of the organization can be accomplished effectively and efficiently.

Anonymous (1999) has reported that in the youth marketing forum held on 10th March, 1999 the marketers gathered to find ways to make their brands relevant to the youth. Youth today is brand conscious, stringently assesses price-value equation, and is keen to be seeing as buying the best, which may not necessarily be foreign.

Need For The Study: The consumer market scenario is undergoing a rapid change. The Indian government policies and programs are changing the present consumer's life style, literacy level, consumption expenditure and communication. The present study is undertaken particularly to understand the consumers, their attitudes, characteristics, tastes, preferences and also understand the importance of retailers

The basic idea of the Research is to survey the behaviour of the consumers while consuming the FMCG products in the market and how they utilize the marketing skills and applications in making consumption decisions.

Objectives Of The Study:

a. To find out the attitudes of consumers towards detergents.

b. To find out the tastes and preferences of the consumers towards branded detergents.

c. To find out which price slots are convenient to buy.

d. To analyse the competitors activities in selling products in consumer market.

e. To find out which of the advertising media course helps to know consumers about the detergents.

f. To understand the purchase habits of the end consumers and the factors which influence their purchase habits.

Scope Of The Study: This research study helps to put into practice the theoretical aspects of the study. It helps in the formulation based upon which fellow researcher can plan their studies. It helps in understanding the attitudes and behaviour of the consumers and retailers and is very useful for the manufacturers in producing the detergents according to the consumer tastes and preferences. Consumers preferences are changing and becoming highly diversified. Although having some similarity, consumers are not all alike. To better understand and meet the needs for specific group of consumers on lightened marketers should adopt a policy of market segmentation, which calls for the division of their potential market into smaller homogeneous segments. The collection and analysis of information about consumption habits provinces the field of consumer behaviour. Successful marketer is the one who effectively develops and produce brands that are of value to consumers and who effectively present these products and brands to consumers in an appealing and persuasive way. The essential reason for studying consumer behaviour is to enable managers to make better marketing decision while reducing the incidence of product failures. Marketing efforts are directed towards satisfying customer needs. Satisfaction of needs provides the rational for existence. Knowledge of the consumer behaviour helps a firm to seek better and more

effective sales and advertising strategies and to plan its marketing program in a more effective manner. In nutshell, marketing starts with consumers and ends with the consumers. Consumer satisfaction thus becomes the most important goal of a business enterprise. The key to ensure customer satisfaction lies in understanding the consumer likes and dislikes his motivation and in nutshell the consumer behaviour. Also what affects his purchase choice or decision that is the decision maker and how his perceptions work on product evaluation make it important to the study of consumer behaviour. Purchase behaviour is a sound basis of identifying the consumer needs. Therefore, the study of it for only product is of vital importance to marketers in shaping fortunes of organizations. Also it is significant for regulating consumption of goods and thereby maintaining economic stability.

It is hopefully believed that the present study would definitely help to learn about the sources of information's for the customers during different stages of buying sanitary goods and hence, enhances their level of awareness and brand preference for durable sanitary goods. It is essential for the marketers to understand what are the important sources to create awareness of their products. The present study helps them to evolve better promotion strategies which will help to enhance the level of awareness of the consumers and creating a need for their products.

Research Methodology:

Primary Data: The primary data will be collected through the questionnaire and personal interviews with the ultimate consumers.

Secondary data: The Secondary data is collected from newspapers, magazines, trade journals, brochures, catalogues and other published records of consumer goods

Tools and Techniques for analysis: The data will be collected through interview and questionnaires to be analysed by using the different statistical tools and Techniques for analysis:

Hypothesis:

H1. Changes effecting the Consumer Needs, Tastes and Preferences that play a significant role in Consumption Decisions.

H2. Changes affecting the Market Environment, which play a significant role in the behaviour of the Consumers.

H3. The Consumers Protection Act on Consumers brings about some positive changes in the behaviour of the Consumers.

Selection of Sample: Market research will be done and conclusions will be drawn about large group of consumers by studying a sample of the total consumer population. A sample is segmented of the population selected to present the population's whole / ideally the sample will be representative so that the research can make accurate estimates of thought and behaviour of the larger population.

Designing sample requires three things to be done:

a) Deciding who is to be surveyed (Deciding Sample Unit) – Urban Consumers in Bangalore City.

b) How many people should be surveyed (Deciding Sample Size) – 400 Urban Consumers.

c) How many people in the sample to be chosen (Deciding about sampling

Procedure) – 400 urban consumers will be chosen in the sample.

The type of sample design used by me in the survey was that of Non -

Probability Quota sampling method since the sample will be chosen at random.

Hence this study was dealt with stratified random tool, which is one of the popular methods of sampling.

Stratified random sampling is generally applied in order to obtain a representative sample. Here under stratified random sampling method the population is divided into different sub-populations called "Strata" which are more homogeneous than the total population and then we select items from each stratum to constitute a sample.

Stratified random sampling requires three things to be done:

a) Forming of Strata – Strata are formed on the basis of common characteristics of the items to be put in each stratum. There has to be relationship between the characteristics of the population and the characteristics to be estimated which are normally used to define the strata. Here in this study the strata are formed taking into consideration the urban consumers in the Bangalore city wherein the Bangalore city will be sub-divided into 4 stratums namely (Bangalore East, Bangalore West, Bangalore North & Bangalore South). Each stratum is divided equally and will have 100 urban consumers each. In each stratum there will be domains and parameters, which are again equally divided like:

Age: Below 20 years;
          Between 20 – 40 yrs;
          Between 40 – 60 yrs;
          60 years & Above
Sex: Male/ Female
Income: Between Rs.25, 000 – 50, 000;
          Between Rs.50, 000 – Rs.1Lakh
          Between Rs.1 Lakh – 2 Lakhs;
          Between Rs.2 Lakhs & above.

b) Selection of Items from each Strata – Here in this study simple random tool

is used for selection of items for the sample from each stratum, which gives more reliable and appropriate

information's.

c) Allocation of sample size of each Strata – Here in this study the method of

proportional allocation is followed wherein which the sizes of the samples from the different strata are kept proportional to the sizes of the strata.

Limitations of the Study:

- The time available at disposal of the research was limited for an independent Study.
- Since the universe of the survey was quite large, it was not feasible for the
- interviewer to cover all the customers of the city.
- Respondents lack of time to give information and casual attitudes.
- The study was limited to Bangalore City.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Test Statistics[a,b]							
	Km Product	Km Style	Km Design	Km Colour	Km Price	Km Brandname	Km Quality
Chi-Square	15.660	19.007	3.420	6.453	3.089	11.686	2.670
Df	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.001	.000	.331	.092	.378	.009	.445
a. Kruskal Wallis Test							
b. Grouping Variable: Income							

Test Statistics[a,b]		
	KmAvailability	KmInternationalfashion
Chi-Square	1.993	17.282
Df	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.574	.001
a. Kruskal Wallis Test		
b. Grouping Variable: Income		

Test Statistics[a,b]		
	KmAvailability	KmInternationalfashion
Chi-Square	4.421	7.550
Df	5	5
Asymp. Sig.	.490	.183
a. Kruskal Wallis Test		
b. Grouping Variable: Age Interval		

Test Statistics[a,b]							
	Km Product	Km Style	Km Design	Km Colour	Km Price	Km Brandname	Km Quality
Chi-Square	2.564	3.877	8.038	2.503	10.427	2.179	7.484
Df	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Asymp. Sig.	.767	.567	.154	.776	.064	.824	.187
a. Kruskal Wallis Test							
b. Grouping Variable: Age Interval							

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	Km Product	Km Style	Km Design	Km Colour	Km Price	Km Brandname	Km Quality
Chi-Square	19.273	19.445	3.149	11.986	11.858	18.479	5.572
Df	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Asymp. Sig.	.002	.002	.677	.035	.037	.002	.350

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Occupation

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	KmAvailability	KmInternationalfashion
Chi-Square	5.090	19.682
Df	5	5
Asymp. Sig.	.405	.001
a. Kruskal Wallis Test		
b. Grouping Variable: Occupation		

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PmToiletsoaps	400	350	100	450	239.25	55.944
PmToothpaste	400	250	100	350	218.00	50.571
PmShampoo	400	250	50	300	196.63	33.878
PmDetergents	400	300	50	350	178.87	50.660
Age	400	52	18	70	41.96	14.798
KmQuality	400	7	3	10	8.82	1.556
KmBrandname	400	6	4	10	8.30	1.648
KmPrice	400	9	1	10	7.88	1.553
KmInternational Fashion	400	6	4	10	7.36	1.274
KmProduct	400	8	2	10	7.27	1.942
KmAvailability	400	7	3	10	7.11	1.332
KmColour	400	8	2	10	7.04	1.591
KmDesign	400	8	2	10	7.02	1.603
KmStyle	400	9	1	10	6.86	1.467
Rate Offer	400	3	2	5	4.19	.738
Rate Price	400	4	1	5	3.98	.715
Rate Attractive	400	4	1	5	3.91	.890
Rate Package	400	3	2	5	3.77	.763
Current Quality	400	4	1	5	3.76	.972
Current Well Known	400	4	1	5	3.64	.882
Current Effective	400	4	1	5	3.61	.938

Current Brand	400	4	1	5	3.60	.936
Rate Colours	400	4	1	5	3.36	.792
Previous Brand	400	4	1	5	2.48	1.071
Previous Effective	400	4	1	5	2.43	1.074
Previous Well Known	400	4	1	5	2.42	1.059
Previous Quality	400	4	1	5	2.40	1.174
Important	400	2	1	3	2.04	.614
Valid N (list wise)	400					

Results And Discussion:

1. Equal number of male and female respondents was chosen for the study.
2. There was more or less equal representation from the various occupations in the study, with highest representation from the students (22%)
3. 50% of the respondents belong to the first income group. There is least representation from the highest income group.
4. Consumer goods manufacturers seem to be following few important measures (46%) or all the measures (35%).
5. The top of mind recall is for Wheel and Surf (21%). Sunlight and Henko show lower recall (13% to 14 %).
6. The perfume seems to be the most important factor that they like about the brand (47%). The least important seems to be shape (14%).
7. The preferred brand is Wheel (21%). The least preferred is Henko (12%).
8. T.V ads are the biggest influence on purchase of detergents (36.5%). Friends have the least influence on the purchase (4.5%).
9. Value for money and satisfaction are the two important factors according to the respondents.
10. Brand name followed by popularity is the most frequent basis of selection of brand.
11. Sample has been chosen more or less equally from all part of the city.
12. 81% prefer branded goods as compared to local goods.
13. 50% of respondents are price sensitive 'to some extent'.
14. 71% go for second opinion while taking consumption decision.
15. 64.3% purchase the same brand again
16. 46.3% look for a new brand because of the qualities and 26% look for a new brand because it is new in the market.
17. 41% shop alone, 24.5% with friends, and 19.5% with family.
18. People, who shop with friends or family, do so because they don't like going alone (23.3%) or they want a second opinion (20.5%).
19. 36% are influenced by the 'quality' in purchase decision.
20. 73.3% are influenced by Discounts/Free gifts, when making their purchase decision.
21. Film stars (23.8%) are the most important trendsetters. This is followed by business celebrities (18.3%) and Fashion models (18.3%).
22. Advertisements (32.5%) followed by television (29.5%) are the main sources of knowledge about latest brands and trends.
23. 77.3% look up to others for cues and style.
24. Most of the people seem to make minimal changes (52.5%) and least people don't care (32.8%).
25. Most of the people choose celebrity because of their humour nature followed by their helping nature.
26. Most of the samples describe themselves moderately (69%) in terms of political indication and least of them describe themselves liberal (10.8%).
27. Most of the people change their detergent brand due to poor quality (44%) followed by poor response (33%).
28. People seem to buy their own detergent in majority (85.5%).
29. General provision stores seems to be the major outlet from where people purchase their detergent (31%) followed by buying from a departmental stores (26%).
30. Most of the people use the current brand between six to twelve months (57%) and least use the brand more than four years (3%).
31. Most choose celebrity as the important element, which is recalled during buying of detergents.
32. Most of the people are undecided about the

importance of range of colours to choose the product (56%) and least considers that is not at all important.

33. Price seems to be a somewhat important factor (56%) in choosing the brand.

34. Packing is accepted to be a somewhat important factor (48%), which influences consumer's buying decision.

35. Most of the people consider the free offers during purchase are supposed to be somewhat important factor (46%) and least think that it is less unimportant factor (1%), which affects buying behaviour.

36. Overall attractiveness of the product seems to be a somewhat important factor (41%) in making buying decision of the detergents.

37. Most people (76%) accepts influence of shop keepers in their buying process

38. Shopkeeper seems to help by showing all detergents to the customer (49%) and least people told that they suggest useful attributes.

39. Most of the people (74%) don't know other products with the same brand name.

40. Most of the people (85%) don't buy other products under the same brand name.

Conclusions And Scope For Future Work: The recommendations are given based on the findings that were generated in the study done to find ways to help push the detergents.

Trade Positioning of the Detergent: The size of the Indian detergent market is roughly estimated to be Rs.12, 000 crore. Characterized by immense competition and high penetration levels the Indian detergent segment is ruled by players like Hindustan Unilever Limited, Henkel and Proctor & Gamble. As a result of rapid urbanization the demand for better quality household products is constantly on a rise. To cater to this increasing demand of quality washing powders most of the top detergents brands in India are continuously introducing better packaged detergents that are offering a host of benefits in a single wash. In India Hindustan Unilever Limited hold a 38% market share in the washing powder segment clearly standing as the winner. The other important players in the detergent industry include Surf Excel, Nirma and Sunlight.

Wheel holds the largest share of the market and is India's top detergent brand. Launched with the motive of catering to the masses this detergent brand in India was instant hit especially with the India's low income group. Known for its effective cleaning with least effort, this product today is the country's most widely used detergent brands both in urban as well as rural India. The introduction of wheel came as a welcome solution for the elimination of dirt especially from heavy laundry like bed sheets, curtains blankets etc.

The Distribution Channel: As per the findings, the setting up of new retail kiosks frequently and due to the unavailability of many of the existing outlets, large numbers of outlets go uncovered by the stockist. To improve the push at these outlets, it is important for the company to get to the retailer directly. This can be achieved by setting up a ***cyclist distribution network*** to supply company products directly to these outlets. It should be noted that HLL has already set up a channel of this sort. The cycle network could simultaneously act as a media instrument as some companies have been doing.

Visibility for the Brand: It is advisable for the company to recruit a separate posturing boy for every city, who will be responsible for the visibility of the brand outside the shop. Initiatives taken by some of the stockiest individually yielded a good response at an earlier occasion. The issue of buying display counters at important retail outlets should be given more attention. Though efforts have been made towards the same, the levers have gone into overdrive on this front which has improved their visibility significant.

Follow up for the win scheme: The WIN scheme will provide a high trial for the detergent. To get the most out of the scheme, a follow up scheme is needed after a period of about 3 months. A consumer offer will be ideal to get entice the consumer to go in for a second purchase. Without this the high trial generated by the WIN scheme will be wasted. At the wholesale level, Quantity Purchase Schemes (QPS) like WIN should be run with an appropriate gap. This will be imperative in the initial stages for the detergent and also important later.

Steps to Tackle Undercutting: First, the company will have to go behind the reasons for the occurrence of undercutting. If the cause of the problem is the excessive pressure generated by targets, a second look should be given to the set targets. Undercutting leads to the demotivation of the trade and if not checked properly it will lead to similar practices being adopted at more and more places.

Role of the Stockist: It was felt that the stockist and also the superstockist had a lot of potential to push the brands of the company, which was not being tapped to the fullest. To get the full support of the stock/super stock, it is important to make them feel important. The management at the higher levels should be in touch with the dealers directly just to make them feel like a part of the family. The wholesalers often spoke about their good relations with some particular manager with a sense of pride, which indicates the importance of this personal touch to them. However at the present time such efforts are woefully lacking. It is felt that such measures will

go a long way in improving the productivity of the team. It is suggested that an annual award be instituted called sth like – "STOCKIST NO.1" on an all India or a regional basis, which publicly recognizes the top five of ten stockists. The CEO at a function in Mumbai can present them an award. This will be taken as a sign of respect and encourage the dealers to be more dedicated to the company and the targets.

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