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AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE GEOGRAPHICAL SEGMENTATION IN FMCG COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), are products that are sold quickly at relatively low cost. Though the absolute profit made on FMCG products is relatively small, they generally sell in large quantities, so the cumulative profit on such products can be large. They try to achieve this by segmenting the whole market into segment markets which has a number of customers with common needs and buying motives, and then developing solutions that appealed particularly strongly to those segments. The best segments must have Potential, Lifespan, Accessibility, and Profitability. The key is identifying which segments provide value in terms of potential, lifespan, accessibility and profitability; because a sales strategy's effectiveness increases according to our capacity to size segments, identify them, and dissect them. How to segment a market is always an issue in the FMCG marketing? One of the bases of segmentation is to base segment on the geographical location of the customer. However, there are number of factors that affect the customer choice of location, that describe why the customer has chosen a particular location for his purchases. This research paper endeavour to describe the relative importance of the factors affecting the geographical segmentation in FMCGs.

KEYWORDS

FMCG, convenience, promotion, price, purchase location, quality.

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INTRODUCTION

Even though market segmentation is one of the most established concepts in marketing, there are still some shortfalls in the body of research, which create a gap between theory and practice and lead to failure in the implementation of segmentation. One of the bases of segmentation is to segment the market based on the geographical location of the customer. However, there are number of factors that affect the customer in a particular location selection, that describe why the customer has chosen a particular location of the purchase. This research paper describes the relative importance of the various factors effecting the geographical segmentation for a particular bathing soap. That can give an Idea to the FMCG companies which factors to be stressed for the purpose of targeting the customers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Charlie Nelson (2002) in his work on Market Segmentation: The Role of Futures Research stated that "Market segmentation is important because markets are becoming increasingly diverse and it is rare for mass marketing to be a profitable strategy. Market segmentation enables more accurate and effective communication of benefits in relation to needs. It helps to identify growth opportunities."

Michael Richarme (2007) vice president at Dallas-Fort Worth based Decision Analyst Inc in his article, Business Segmentation: Emerging Approaches to More Meaningful Clusters quoted that, "Consumer opinion research has a well-established track record, stretching over the past five or six decades. Conducting opinion research among businesses, however, is much more problematic. This is particularly evident at the simplest level of analysis, customer segmentation. However, segmentation techniques are evolving and techniques that were common practice in the recent past are rapidly being supplanted by newer, more meaningful segmentation techniques. The underlying purpose of segmentation is to divide customers into distinct groups, such that marketing messages can be tailored to their specific needs. There are some general criteria for the establishment of these distinct groups. The groups of customers, or segments, should share more commonalities within each group than there are between groups. The segments should also be large enough for organizations to mount cost-effective campaigns, and should be reachable through most media avenues

Leo Lingham (2008) Describes a market segment is a subgroup of people or organizations sharing one or more characteristics that cause them to have similar product needs. Market segmentation is the process in marketing of dividing a market into distinct subsets (segments) that behave in the same way or have similar needs. Because each segment is fairly homogeneous in their needs and attitudes, they are likely to respond similarly to a given marketing strategy. That is, they are likely to have similar feelings and ideas about a marketing mix comprised of a given product or service, sold at a given price, distributed in a certain way and promoted in a certain way.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to study the importance of various factors like Convenience, Price, Quality, and Promotional Offers in the geographical segmentation for the FMCG particularly in case of bathing soap.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was descriptive in nature; a structured questionnaire was used for this research. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 500 customers of the bathing soap and the respondents were contacted personally for the same. The study was carried out in the major cities of Punjab and Haryana. For data analysis IBM PASW 18 software was used.

ANALYSIS

DEMOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONDENTS

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Male | 376 | 75.2 | 75.2 | 75.2 |
| | Female | 124 | 24.8 | 24.8 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 500 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

It was found that out of the total respondents 75.2% were male whereas only 24.8% were female. (Table 1)

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Less than 20 Years | 13 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 2.6 |
| | Between 20 to 30 Years | 301 | 60.2 | 60.2 | 62.8 |
| | Between 30 to 40 Years | 111 | 22.2 | 22.2 | 85.0 |
| | More than 40 Years | 75 | 15.0 | 15.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 500 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Most of the respondents (60.2%) were in the age group of 20 to 30, 22.25 were the respondents in the age group of 30 to 40, 15% respondents were over 40 and very little (2.6%) were below 20 years. (Table 2)

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|---------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | No Income | 163 | 33 | 33 | 33 |
| | Less than 10k Rupees | 75 | 15 | 15 | 48 |
| | Between 10k to 20k Rupees | 86 | 17 | 17 | 65 |
| | More than 20k Rupees | 176 | 35 | 35 | 100 |
| | Total | 500 | 100 | 100 | |

33% respondents were not having any income as most of them were the students and some of them were looking for job, where as 15% respondent were earning less than 10000 per month, 17% respondents were earning between 10000 to 20000 and a large number of the respondents (35%) were earning more than 20000 per month. That shows the high degree of income inequality between respondents. (Table 3)

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Un Married | 200 | 40.0 | 40.0 | 40.0 |
| | Married | 300 | 60.0 | 60.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 500 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

60% respondents were married and 40 % of the respondents were unmarried (Table 4)

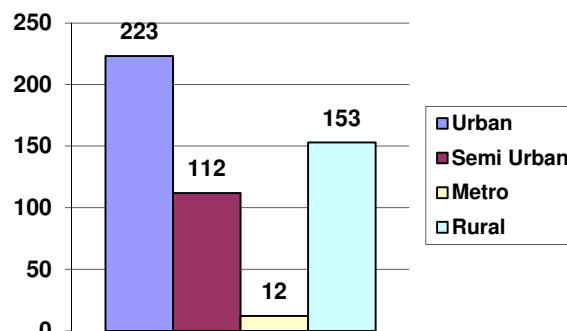
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | No Education | 25 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| | School | 73 | 14.6 | 14.6 | 19.6 |
| | Graduation | 199 | 39.8 | 39.8 | 59.4 |
| | Post Graduation | 203 | 40.6 | 40.6 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 500 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

40.6 % of the respondents were post graduate, 39.8% respondents were graduates, and 14.6% have done basic schooling only, only 5% were having no education. (Table 5) This shows the increasing number of literacy rate in Punjab and Haryana

GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONDENTS

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Urban | 223 | 44.6 | 44.6 | 44.6 |
| | Semi Urban | 112 | 22.4 | 22.4 | 67.0 |
| | Metro | 12 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 69.4 |
| | Rural | 153 | 30.6 | 30.6 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 500 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

CHART 1: AREA WISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

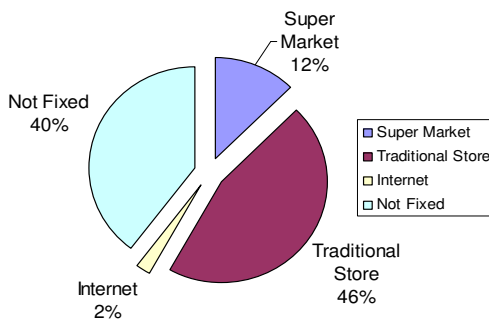


As the study was carried in non-metro cities so only 2.4% respondents were from metro, 44.6% respondents were belonging to urban area, 22.4% were belonging to semi urban area and 30.6 % were belonging to the rural area.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Super Market | 62 | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| | Traditional Store | 228 | 46 | 46 | 58 |
| | Internet | 12 | 2 | 2 | 60 |
| | Not Fixed | 198 | 40 | 40 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 500 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

It is very much clear from the fact that although in India super markets are in the boom still on an average 12% people go to super markets for purchase, most of the people want to purchase the products from the traditional stores with an average of 46%, only 2% purchasing is done on the internet, whereas 40% people are not fixed about the location of the purchase.

CHART 2: REPRESENTATION OF SELECTION OF A PARTICULAR LOCATION FOR PURCHASE

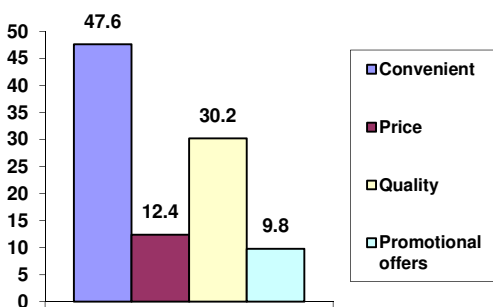


It is very much clear from the fact that although in India super markets are in the boom still on an average 12 % people go to super markets for purchase, most of the people want to purchase the products from the traditional stores with an average of 46%, on an average only 2% purchasing is done on the internet, whereas on an average 40% people are not fixed about the location of the purchase

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Convenient | 238 | 47.6 | 47.6 | 47.6 |
| | Price | 62 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 60.0 |
| | Quality | 151 | 30.2 | 30.2 | 90.2 |
| | Promotional offers | 49 | 9.8 | 9.8 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 500 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Respondents prefer to purchase products from a particular location because of convenience 47.6%, 30.2% of the respondents select a particular location because of Quality, only 12.4% respondents select a particular location for Price, whereas 9.8% respondent have certain other reasons behind the selection of a particular location for purchase.

CHART 3: REPRESENTATION OF VARIOUS FACTORS AFFECTING LOCATION SELECTION



| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Very Important | 214 | 44 | 44 | 44 |
| | Important | 100 | 20 | 20 | 64 |
| | Neither Important Nor Not Important | 137 | 27 | 27 | 91 |
| | Not Important | 25 | 5 | 5 | 96 |
| | Extremely Not Important | 12 | 2 | 2 | 98 |
| | Irrelevant | 12 | 2 | 2 | 100 |
| Total | | 500 | 100 | 100 | |

44% respondents feel that quality is very important in the purchase location selection, for 20 % it is just important, whereas for 27% respondents it remains neither important nor not important, for 5% it is not important, for 2% it is extremely not important and 2% feels that quality is irrelevant in the purchase location selection.

CHART 4: IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY IN THE LOCATION SELECTION FOR PURCHASE

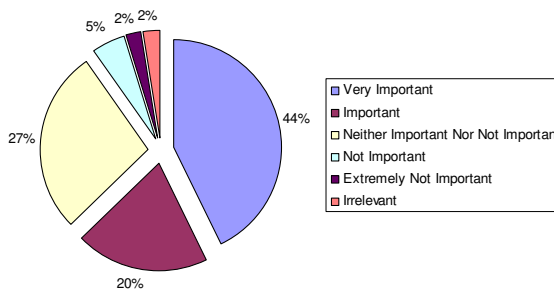


TABLE 10: IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTION

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Extremely Important | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Important | 50 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Neither important Nor Not Important | 87 | 17 | 17 | 27 |
| Not Important | 216 | 44 | 44 | 71 |
| Extremely Not Important | 135 | 27 | 27 | 98 |
| Irrelevant | 12 | 2 | 2 | 100 |
| Total | 500 | 100 | 100 | |

None of the respondents feel that promotion is very important in the purchase location selection, for 10 % it is just important, whereas for 17% respondents it remains neither important nor not important, for 44% it is not important, for 27% it is extremely not important and 2% feels that promotion is irrelevant in the purchase location selection.

CHART 5: IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTION IN THE LOCATION SELECTION FOR PURCHASE

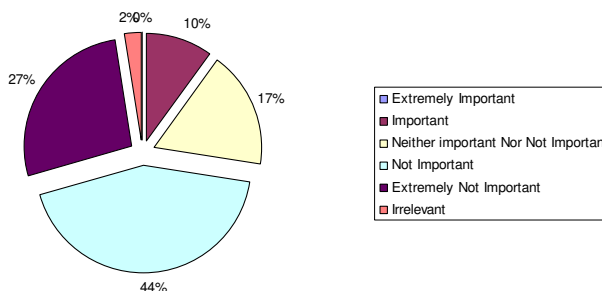
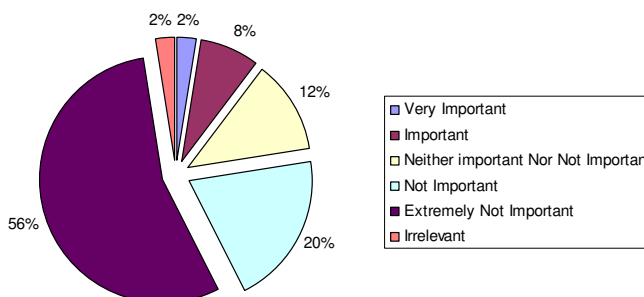


TABLE 11: IMPORTANCE OF OFFERS

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Very Important | 12 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| | Important | 39 | 8 | 8 | 10 |
| | Neither important Nor Not Important | 62 | 12 | 12 | 22 |
| | Not Important | 99 | 20 | 20 | 42 |
| | Extremely Not Important | 276 | 56 | 56 | 98 |
| | Irrelevant | 12 | 2 | 2 | 100 |
| Total | | 500 | 100 | 100 | |

Only 2% respondents feel that offers are very important in the purchase location selection, for 8% it is just important, whereas for 12% respondents it remains neither important nor not important, for 20% it is not important, a large number of 56% respondents feels that it is extremely not important and 2% feels that offers are irrelevant in the purchase location selection.

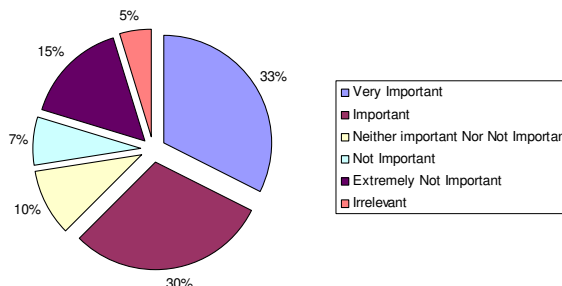
CHART 6: IMPORTANCE OF OFFERS IN THE LOCATION SELECTION FOR PURCHASE



| TABLE 12: IMPORTANCE OF CONVENIENCE | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Very Important | 162 | 33 | 33 | 33 |
| | Important | 150 | 30 | 30 | 63 |
| | Neither important Nor Not Important | 51 | 10 | 10 | 73 |
| | Not Important | 36 | 7 | 7 | 80 |
| | Extremely Not Important | 77 | 15 | 15 | 95 |
| | Irrelevant | 24 | 5 | 5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 500 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

A large number of the respondents (33% respondents) feel that Convenience is very important in the purchase location selection, for 30 % it is just important, whereas for 10% respondents it remains neither important nor not important, for 7% it is not important, for 15% it's extremely not important and 5% feels that convenience is irrelevant in the purchase location selection.

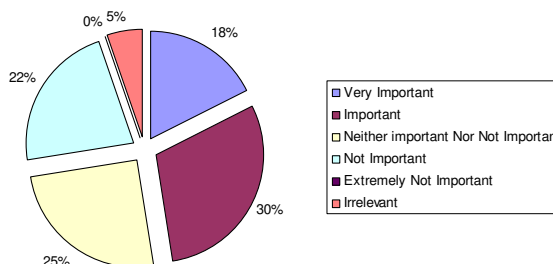
CHART 7: IMPORTANCE OF CONVENIENCE IN THE LOCATION SELECTION FOR PURCHASE



| TABLE 13: IMPORTANCE OF PRICE | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Very Important | 88 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| | Important | 149 | 30 | 30 | 58 |
| | Neither important Nor Not Important | 125 | 25 | 25 | 83 |
| | Not Important | 112 | 22 | 22 | 95 |
| | Extremely not Important | 0 | 0 | 0 | 95 |
| | Irrelevant | 26 | 5 | 5 | 100 |
| | Total | 500 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

18% respondents feel that quality is very important in the purchase location selection, for 30% it is just important, whereas for 25% respondents it remains neither important nor not important, for 22% it is not important, and 5% feels that price is irrelevant in the purchase location selection.

CHART 8: IMPORTANCE OF PRICE IN THE LOCATION SELECTION FOR PURCHASE



FINDINGS

- Majority of the respondents were male (75% approx.)
- Majority of the respondents were in the age group of 20 to 30 years and 30 to 40 years (62% and 22% respectively)
- 35% respondents were earning more than 20000 per month where as 33% respondents without any earning as most of them were the students and the persons who were searching for the jobs
- 60% respondents were married and 40 % were unmarried.
- Most of the respondents were graduate or post graduate (39.8%, 40.6% respectively)
- In the booming arena of the Super Markets still all most half of the purchasing of the bathing soap is done from Traditional Indian Stores
- The main reason behind the selection of a particular location is the convenient location.
- For 64% respondents quality remains the important reason behind the selection of a particular location.
- Only 10% respondents think that promotions are important in the purchase location selection
- 75% respondents feel that offers are not important in the purchase location selection.
- For most of the respondents price remains the vital factor in the purchase location selection
- For 83% respondents other factors remain irrelevant.

CONCLUSION

In the booming arena of the Super Markets still most of the respondents like to purchase the bathing soaps from Traditional Indian Stores. The basic reason for selection of traditional stores is the year's long trust that those stores have made, moreover this is the location from where their elder used to purchase the products so as they have started purchasing the same. Also they think they will always get a good quality of the product from them and it will at relatively less price as compared to big super markets.

Internet is the least preferred method for purchase, the reason is that most of the people are not aware about this method and it is least trusted because most of the time no one is aware about the owner and actual product is not seen.

The basic criteria behind the selection of a particular location, is the convenient location, from where the product can be purchased with minimum of efforts. The second criterion is the quality of the product that they want to purchase. Promotions are helpful in attracting only a few of the customer. Similarly, Price and Offers have very little impact on customers as far as selection of the purchase location.

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