

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE & MANAGEMENT

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

OBJECTIVES

HYPOTHESES

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

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TO STUDY THE FACTOR AFFECTING THE PURCHASE DECISIONS OF CUSTOMERS TOWARDS THE PURCHASE OF CONSUMER GOODS: A STUDY CARRIED OUT AT BHIWANI DISTRICT

DR. SONIA

ASST. PROFESSOR

**INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES & RESEARCH
MAHARISHI DAYANANDA UNIVERSITY
ROHTAK.**

DR. GARIMA DALAL

ASST. PROFESSOR

**INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES & RESEARCH
MAHARISHI DAYANANDA UNIVERSITY
ROHTAK**

ABSTRACT

Consumer is the central point of every business. Now a days, attracting and satisfying customers is more difficult than producing the goods. For any product, many brands are available in the market. Every company wants to increase its market share. But, buyers dominate the market. Therefore, seller has to make a lot of efforts to attract and to persuade the persons to purchase his products and services. Indian consumers are seemingly more and more doctored and enlightened about products; media channels that provide companies to convey with consumers are adopting in diversity and reach. Consumers are getting richer, leading to competition in the market place for consumer products. The result is that consumer companies are increasingly pertained with marketing issues, as they seek to tell apart their products and communicate their appraisals to potential customers. Various consumer companies are mad about Indian sheer market size. The companies say the growth in media channels brought about by economic liberalization has made people increasingly aware of brand values. A smaller number of companies believe that India offers significant opportunities on selective brands, which provide higher margins. Companies also say that groundbreaking marketing can be the solution to tackling the fragmentation and relative poverty of much of the Indian market. A senior manager at a consumer goods company points out the recent success of very small packages or sachets of personal care products, "The sachet phenomenon is an example of accomplishing to the bottom of the pyramid. It was identification that a lot of people in India are just not willing to buy a whole bottle of shampoo. That doesn't mean they won't buy shampoo" KPMG. So, the present research tries to find out those factors affecting the purchase decisions of customers towards the purchase of FMCGs.

KEYWORDS

Purchase decisions, consumer goods.

INTRODUCTION

After the introduction of New-Economic Policy in 1991 by the then Finance minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh, the total scenario of Indian economy has undergone a significant change. The new economic policy has given greater priority to liberalization and globalization. With the advent of these two concepts a number of MNCs have entered the Indian market in various economic activities and as a result a battle has started for greater market in various economic activities and battle started for greater market coverage as Indian market is constituted of both rural and urban sections. To carve their market share, these MNCs have to understand and change the mindset of consumers and their perception which will bring about a total change in their buying behaviour. These changes can be possible only with the help of effective advertising as it is a significant tool which can bring about the required kind of change in perception, attitude and buying behaviour of consumers. The more effective is the advertisement, the greater impact there will be on the buying behaviour of consumers.

The Indian Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry began to shape during the last fifty odd years. The FMCG sector is a corner stone of the Indian economy. This sector touches every aspect of human life. Indian FMCG market has been divided for a long time between the organized sector and the unorganized sector. Unlike the US market for FMCG which is dominated by a handful of global players, India's Rs. 460 billion FMCG market remains highly fragmented with roughly half the market going to unbranded, unpackaged home-made products. This presents a tremendous opportunity for makers of branded products who can persuade consumers to buy branded products. Globally, the FMCG sector has been successful in selling products to the lower and middle income groups, and the same is true in India. Over 70 percent of sales are made to middle class households today and over 50 percent is in rural India. The sector is excited about a burgeoning rural population whose income is rising and which is willing to spend on goods designed to improve lifestyle. Also with a near saturation and cut throat competition in urban India, many producers of FMCGs are driven to chalk out bold new strategies for targeting the rural consumer in a big way. Moreover, the arrival or existence of these goods must be known to consumer so that they can take interest and if found suitable to their needs and wants, they may go for ultimate purchase. The only way to reach this objective advertising is the dire need because; advertising is a mirror of society, reflecting people tastes habits and desires. Companies ranging from large multinational corporations to small retailers increasingly rely on advertising to sell their products and services. Moreover, customers have also started giving due importance to advertising while making purchase decisions. Advertising influences consumer attitudes and buying behaviour. Advertising is used for communicating business information to the present and prospective customers. It provides information about advertising firm, features off its products, qualities, place of availability of its products, different schemes offered, benefits of using its product, etc

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The ensuing text seeks to review the existing literature for the purpose to define the problem precisely and crystallise its objectives. This not only helps in setting the direction for the research but also broadens the mental horizon and the vision of its implications.

Robertson observed that (i) the consumer may make decisions in a "non-rational" manner. Because, he/she may not secure, process or carefully evaluate all the available information; (ii) there is not a specified sequence of stages which must occur as in Lavidge and Steiner's view. Any such model must make allowances for consumers to "skip" stages; and (iii) the model must also provide feedback loops because such a process will not necessarily be linear and one-dimensional.

Cotton B.C. reported results of a study which measured the response of consumers to promotional deals for dairy products. The objectives were to determine the extent to which consumption of various dairy products was influenced by deals; to analyze response of households with various demographic characteristics; and to determine relative response for different types of promotional deals. Consumer panel data were used to analyze household purchases over time, during periods when purchases were made on promotional deals viz. in store specials, coupons, multiple item discounts and free gifts and when they were not. It was found that promotional deals resulted in substantial increase in the level of purchase, especially during the period when the deal was effective.

Krishna proposed that perception of deal frequency may affect consumer price perceptions and deal response much more strongly than the actual deal frequency. The author determined how consumer perception of deal frequency for a brand may be influenced by the dealing pattern of that brand and of other brands. It was found that the price consumers were willing to pay for a brand that was correlated more highly with perceived deal frequency than with actual deal frequency.

Erdem Tulin provided a model by outlining the process by which past purchases affects current choices, in a framework which captured both consumer habit persistence and variety seeking behavior. More specifically, consumer preferences for brand attributes were modeled to depend on the attributes of brands bought on the previous purchase occasion. The results indicated that the average consumer was habit persistent in all the product categories studied. The proposed models were estimated on Nielsen scanner panel data for margarine, peanut butter, yogurt, and liquid detergent using simulated maximum likelihood techniques.

Questaer designed a conjoint analysis study to understand consumers' choice of a popular product based on consumption situation and involvement. How both these variables influence the importance allocated by consumers to a number of key attributes which were determined by a sample of experts and product users. A large sample drawn from diverse wine retail outlets was asked to rank ten hypothetical wine products, the purchase of which related to three different consumption situations. While price remained the most important factor overall, all three other attributes were ranked differently depending upon the intended usage situation and the level of product involvement exhibited by respondents.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study attempts to:

- (i) know the awareness level among the customers towards brands of consumer goods;
- (ii) recognize the factor affecting the purchase decisions of customers towards the purchase of consumer goods.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H₁: There is a significant difference among the respondents towards brand awareness level with reference to consumer goods;

H₂: There is a significant difference among the respondents towards the factors affecting purchasing behaviour with reference to consumer goods.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY AND SURVEY POPULATION

In the present study, the existing and potential customers of consumer goods or FMCGs in the district Bhiwani of Haryana are considered as a unit of analysis. Further, it is restricted to four FMCGs like Toothpaste, Shampoo, Detergent Powder and Soaps, which are treated as consumer goods as a whole.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Initially, study used exploratory design to get the objectives clearly defined and to formulate the hypotheses. Afterwards, the research used descriptive design by forming a structured questionnaire and surveying 300 respondents from the locale of Bhiwani in Haryana.

SAMPLING PLAN

The sampling was done on the random basis. For selecting the sample convenience sampling was used. Key informants included the users of FMCGs. Questionnaires were filled by personal interviews from each respondent.

DATA COLLECTION

An extensive literature review facilitated theory development and item generation. The literature search includes several journals, articles, books, newspapers and business magazines. So the principal data collection methods used were combination of the analysis of the literature, statistical data from secondary sources, questionnaire survey and the content analysis. The term 'content analysis' means information analysis of the key events of an industry recorded in reports, research papers, compendium, and handbook of statistics, business magazines, newspapers and Internet.

To answer the research questions (objectives of the study) and to verify/test the tentative answers (hypotheses of the study), the required information is identified. Then, questionnaire was developed, which was the main instrument used to collect the required information. The qualitative data was collected using scaling techniques on a 5-point Likert scale. The values on the scale signify a continuum from '1 to 5' as anyone of the below mentioned rows:

- 1..... Strongly Agree,
- 2..... Agree,
- 3..... Indifferent,
- 4..... Disagree,
- 5..... Strongly Disagree.

A total of 300 respondents (sample using convenience sampling) were contacted personally during survey in the Bhiwani district of Haryana state; out of which 227 respondents responded positively and provided the required information and gathered 227 filled up questionnaires from them. Secondary data was collected from different previous research studies, including several journals, compendium, and handbook of statistics, articles, books, newspapers and business magazines. Furthermore, Internet is also used for gathering worldwide information. During the course of editing of the questionnaires, the number 227 in terms of questionnaires was further reduced by 29, when it was discovered that the information recorded in the questionnaires was incomplete and highly inconsistent on one or the other count. Therefore, 198 questionnaires were finally considered for further processing of the data and final analysis.

ANALYSES PATTERN: DEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

There are five independent variables like gender, age, income, occupation and education. The dependent variables used to operationalise advertising effectiveness are: (a) Attitude towards the ad; (b) Attitude towards the brand.

After collection of data through various sources, different techniques have been used for the analysis of data. A set of simple techniques of statistical analysis such as average, weighted mean, percentage, cumulative percentage, ranking and standard deviation, has been used. Wherever appropriate and to test the hypotheses, Chi-square, Correlation and ANOVA have been used. Furthermore, graphical presentation is also done for its easy grasping. Most of them are obtained with the help of the computerized packages SPSS (16.0 version); and Microsoft Office Excel 2007. Interpretation of data is based on rigorous exercise aiming at the achievement of the objectives of the study and findings of the existing studies.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

TABLE 1.1: AWARENESS ABOUT BRANDS OF FMCGS-TOOTHPASTES AND SHAMPOOS

Brands of Toothpaste	Mean	Std. Deviation	Brands of Shampoo	Mean	Std. Deviation
Colgate	1.37	0.692	Sun Silk	1.49	.611
Pepsodent	2.08	0.821	Clinic Plus	2.05	.804
Close-up	2.34	0.769	Head & Shoulder	2.47	1.016
Anchor White	2.94	1.123	Organics	3.02	1.090
Babool	3.52	1.225	GarnierFruitic	3.41	1.348

Source: Survey

Table 1 is prepared on the basis of responses collected from the respondents using five-point Likert scale (1 for Strongly Agree and 5 for Strongly Disagree). It depicts that the respondents are more aware about Colgate brand of toothpaste and low awareness about the brands of toothpaste like Anchor White and

Babool with mean value $\bar{x}=1.37$, $\bar{x}=3.52$ respectively. In case brands of shampoos the respondents are more aware about Sun Silk brand of shampoo and low awareness among the respondents regarding the brands of shampoo like Organics and GarnierFruitic with mean value $\bar{x}=1.49$, $\bar{x}=3.41$ respectively.

TABLE 1.2: ANOVA VALUES FOR BRANDS OF TOOTHPASTES

Brands of Toothpaste	Gender (df=1,196)	Age (df=3,194)	Income (df=6,191)	Occupation (df=4, 193)	Education (df=4,193)
Colgate	.010*	.008	.000*	.001*	.005*
Pepsodent	.094	.159	.003*	.000*	.521
Close-up	.004*	.003*	.000*	.003*	.001*
Anchor White	.505	.004*	.004*	.683	.077**
Babool	.162	.115	.008*	.000*	.414

Note: * significant at 1 percent significance level, ** significant at 5 percent significance level.

Source: Survey

On the application of ANOVA (Table 1.2) it is analysed that respondents significantly differ towards the awareness level of brands of toothpaste gender-wise, age-wise, income-wise, occupation-wise and educationally.

TABLE 1.3: ANOVA VALUES FOR BRANDS OF SHAMPOOS

Brands of Shampoo	Gender (df=1,196)	Age (df=3,194)	Income (df=6,191)	Occupation (df=4, 193)	Education (df=4,193)
Sun Silk	.555	.470	.000*	.096	.066
Clinic Plus	.622	.263	.012**	.013**	.000*
Head & Shoulder	.024**	.317	.002*	.001*	.082
Organics	.196	.030**	.000*	.005*	.001*
GarnierFruitic	.380	.126	.027**	.009*	.014**

Note: * significant at 1 percent significance level, ** significant at 5 percent significance level.

Source: Survey

On the application of ANOVA (Table 1.3) it is analysed that respondents significantly differ towards the awareness level of brands of shampoos gender-wise, age-wise, income-wise, occupation-wise and educationally.

TABLE 1.4: AWARENESS ABOUT BRANDS OF FMCGS-DETERGENT POWDERS AND SOAPS

Brands of Detergent Powder	Mean	Std. Deviation	Brands of Soaps	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ariel	1.52	0.991	Lux	1.54	0.695
Surf Excel	1.99	0.870	Liril	2.15	0.802
Wheel	2.51	0.949	Cinthol	2.63	0.993
Rin	2.75	1.001	Lifebuoy	2.73	1.426
Mr. White	3.31	1.372	Dettol	2.94	1.241

Source: Survey

Table 1.4 depicts that the respondents are more aware about Ariel brand of detergent powder and low awareness among the respondents regarding the brands of detergent powder like Mr. White with mean value $\bar{x}=1.52$, $\bar{x}=3.31$ respectively.

In case of brands of soaps the respondents are more aware about Lux and low awareness among the respondents regarding the brands of soap like Dettol and Lifebuoy with mean value $\bar{x}=1.54$, $\bar{x}=2.94$ respectively.

TABLE 1.5: ANOVA VALUES FOR BRANDS OF DETERGENT POWDER

Brands of Detergent Powder	Gender (df=1,196)	Age (df=3,194)	Income (df=6,191)	Occupation (df=4, 193)	Education (df=4,193)
Ariel	.002	.397	.000*	.000*	.054
Surf Excel	.027**	.044**	.057	.000*	.169
Wheel	.003*	.000*	.053	.005*	.065
Rin	.322	.002*	.147	.392	.114
Mr. White	.453	.202	.001*	.794	.128

Note: * significant at 1 percent significance level, ** significant at 5 percent significance level.

Source: Survey

Table 1.5 depicts through ANOVA values that respondents significantly differ towards the awareness level of brands of detergent powders gender-wise, age-wise, income-wise and occupationally at 1 percent and 5 percent levels of significance.

TABLE 1.6: ANOVA VALUES FOR BRANDS OF SOAPS

Brands of Soaps	Gender (df=1,196)	Age (df=3,194)	Income (df=6,191)	Occupation (df=4, 193)	Education (df=4,193)
Lux	.248	.309	.001*	.699	.409
Liril	.872	.713	.000*	.010*	.000*
Cinthol	.045**	.357	.000*	.309	.022**
Lifebuoy	.978	.077	.239	.043**	.041**
Dettol	.064	.287	.207	.001*	.167

Note: * significant at 1 percent significance level, ** significant at 5 percent significance level.

Source: Survey

On the application of ANOVA (Table 1.6) it is analysed that respondents significantly differ towards the awareness level of brands of soaps gender-wise, age-wise, income-wise, occupation-wise and educationally.

In total, it may be concluded that all the demographic factors influence the awareness levels of respondents towards the brands of FMCGs. Further, they are significantly differing in the opinions towards the knowledge of brands of FMCGs.....H₁

TABLE 1.7: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ABOUT THE PREFERENCE OF VARIOUS BRANDS OF CONSUMER GOODS

Consumer Goods→	Toothpastes		Shampoos		Detergent Powders		Soaps	
Factor	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Influence of Advertisement	1.50(1)	0.894	1.58(3)	0.890	1.57(2)	0.874	1.63(4)	.868
Use of Product	2.24(3)	0.740	2.19(1)	0.967	2.30(4)	0.785	2.18(2)	.798
Price of the Product	2.51(2)	0.981	2.37(1)	0.879	2.53(3)	1.121	2.64(4)	1.066
Quality of the Product	2.77(1)	1.161	3.05(4)	1.091	2.89(2)	1.236	2.91(3)	1.125
Brand Popularity	3.44(2)	1.338	3.52(3)	1.410	3.33(1)	1.471	3.57(1)	1.379
Average of Ranks→	1.8		2.4		2.4		2.8	

Note: Rank in parenthesis.

Source: Survey.

The table depicts that advertisement is the most influential factor that may affect the preference or selection of various brands of different consumer goods having the mean values: 1.50, 1.57, 1.58 and 1.63 for toothpaste, shampoo, detergent powder and soaps, respectively; whereas, the use, price and quality are less preferable in comparison of advertisement of product. The mean values are based on the agreement and disagreement of respondents towards the factors affecting preference towards the selection of brands of different goods. Further, it is found that consumer decisions for the purchase of toothpaste followed by shampoo and detergent powder are least influenced by the factor brand popularity.

In total, these all factors or attributes like advertisement, use, price, quality and brand popularity influence on the choice of the various brands of toothpastes, shampoos, detergent powders and soaps.

TABLE 1.8: ATTRIBUTES OF CONSUMER GOODS AFFECT PURCHASING DECISION

Consumer Goods→	Toothpastes		Shampoos		Detergent Powders		Soaps	
Attribute	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Price	3.05(2)	2.102	3.13(3)	1.852	3.25(4)	2.024	2.89(1)	2.012
Medically Proved	3.47(4)	2.012	3.22(1)	2.137	3.27(3)	1.826	3.23(2)	1.963
Brand name	3.69(2)	1.947	3.93(3)	2.182	3.98(4)	2.105	3.57(1)	2.006
Ingredients	4.04(1)	1.856	4.29(4)	1.908	4.11(2)	1.772	4.24(3)	1.786
Packaging proved	4.17(1)	1.773	4.30(3)	1.621	4.25(2)	1.824	4.39(4)	1.648
Fragrance	4.71(3)	1.902	4.44(1)	1.939	4.60(2)	1.999	4.76(4)	1.800
Colour	4.97(3)	1.744	4.66(2)	1.845	4.63(1)	1.975	4.98(4)	1.780
Average of Ranks→	2.57		2.71		2.85		2.99	

Note: Rank in parenthesis.

Source: Survey.

The above text has clarified that advertising is an important tool or factor that may affect the consumer behaviour regarding the purchase of consumer goods. In corollary, Table 4.14 depicts that price is also the most influential factor that may affect the choice of various consumer goods having the mean values: 2.89, 3.05, 3.13 and 3.25 for soaps, toothpaste shampoo and detergent powder respectively; whereas, the medically proved, brand name, ingredients, packaging, fragrance and colour less preferable attributes in comparison of price of the product. But, one thing may be noted here that all of the attributes of these consumer goods affect at maximum to toothpastes, shampoos, detergent powders and soaps.

Further, on the basis of high degree of variations among the opinions of respondents from scattered fields of education, age, gender, occupation and income it may be evidenced that they are influenced in very elaborative manner by these factor at the time of purchasing decision. Consequently, the hypothesis may be rejected.....H₂.

CONCLUSION

1. The respondents are aware maximum about the brands of toothpaste and shampoos like Colgate and Sun Silk, respectively.
2. It is concluded that the maximum respondents are aware about the brands of detergent powders and soaps like Ariel and Lux, respectively.
3. Advertisement is the most influential factor that may affect the preference or selection of various brands of different consumer goods having the mean values: 1.50, 1.57, 1.58 and 1.63 for toothpaste, shampoo, detergent powder and soaps, respectively; whereas, the use, price and quality are less preferable in comparison of advertisement of product. The mean values are based on the agreement and disagreement of respondents towards the factors affecting preference towards the selection of brands of different goods. Further, it is found that consumer decisions for the purchase of toothpaste followed by shampoo and detergent powder are least influenced by the factor brand popularity.
4. Price is also the most influential factor that may affect the choice of various consumer goods having the mean values: 2.89, 3.05, 3.13 and 3.25 for soaps, toothpaste shampoo and detergent powder respectively; whereas, the medically proved, brand name, ingredients, packaging, fragrance and colour less preferable attributes in comparison of price of the product. But, one thing may be noted here that all of the attributes of these consumer goods affect at maximum to toothpastes, shampoos, detergent powders and soaps.

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