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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	HRM PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE ATTRITION: A GENDER CENTRIC ANALYSIS OF INDIAN BPO INDUSTRY <i>AMIT MALHOTRA & ADITYA GAUTAM</i>	1
2.	CONSUMER BRAND PREFERENCE TOWARDS PASTEURIZED PACKAGED MILK IN GUDALUR TOWN <i>DR. L. RAMESH & POORNIMA.S</i>	6
3.	ASSESSING THE POTENTIALITY OF RAINWATER HARVESTING SYSTEMS IN PUNE CITY <i>RAJESHWARI SHINDE & DR. VIJAYA S. NAWALE</i>	14
4.	PROFITABILITY ANALYSIS OF SELECTED AUTOMOBILE COMPANIES IN INDIA <i>ANAND R. & MARIA D'SOUZA</i>	20
5.	THE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE OF NORTH CYPRUS IN THE GREEN LINE TRADE: EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS DURING PERIODS OF 2005- 2013 <i>ZEHRA SENHAZ, FEHIMAN EMINER & OKAN VELI ŞAFAKLI</i>	23
6.	ANALYSIS THE INFLUENCE OF MACROECONOMIC VARIABLES ON JAKARTA COMPOSITE INDEX AND SECTORAL INDEX STOCK RETURN <i>LIANITHA KURNIAWATI, DR. NOER AZAM ACHSANI & DR. LUKYTAWATI ANGGRAENI</i>	31
7.	INDUCEMENT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ON BEAUTY PARLOUR BUSINESS IN SIVAGANGA DISTRICT <i>THANGAM ALAGARSAMY & DR. S. GANAPATHY</i>	38
8.	A STUDY OF MARKETING MIX STRATEGIES ON THE INDIAN UPVC WINDOW MARKET <i>K. SATYA SUBRAM, DR. MOHAMMED NAVED KHAN & DR. CHETAN SRIVASTAVA</i>	41
9.	CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS MARKETING OF TANTEA PRODUCTS <i>S. DEEPA & M. JAYALAKSHMI</i>	47
10.	ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL FINANCIAL SCHEMES FOR SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES IN INDIA <i>SUSHMA NANDKUMAR BANSODE & DR. CA SUBHASH PRALHAD DESAI</i>	51
11.	PEER COACHING: A TOOL FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT <i>CHANDRASHEKHAR CHOLLI, SREERAJ P S & DR. RAVINDER KAUR</i>	54
12.	FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS BRANDED CLOTHES IN RURAL AREAS <i>AMANDEEP KAUR SANDHU & GAGANDEEP KAUR</i>	57
13.	COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PRE AND POST-MERGER FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE WITH REFERENCE TO IT SECTOR IN INDIA <i>ZOHRA BI</i>	61
14.	THE ART OF GIVING FEEDBACK IN COACHING: SIGNIFICANCE AND PERSPECTIVE <i>MANALI DAREKAR, MILKA SEBASTIAN & DR. RAVINDER KAUR</i>	70
15.	INVENTORY MANAGEMENT IN PAPER INDUSTRY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN SPML AND INTERNATIONAL PAPER APPML <i>DR. YELLASWAMY AMBATI</i>	74
16.	CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMERCIAL BANKS IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS TO SBI <i>AMALKUMAR.P</i>	79
17.	AUDIT PROCESS UNDER MGNREGA <i>KHEM RAJ</i>	82
18.	COMPETITIVE CHALLENGE OF CASHEW INDUSTRY IN ANDHRA PRADESH (WITH REFERENCE TO PRAKASAM, EAST & WEST GODAVARI DISTRICTS) <i>P.V.V. KUMAR, T. SUSMITHA, P. YAMUNA & B. YAMINI</i>	85
19.	REGULATION OF E-COMMERCE IN INDIA <i>MAITRI TANDON</i>	88
20.	STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AS INTERVENING FOR COMPANY'S RESOURCES AND REGULATIONS IN ORDER TO FORM BUSINESS PERFORMANCE [STUDIES IN UNIT BUSINESSES OF PT PERTAMINA (PERSERO)] <i>ELFIEN GOENTORO</i>	93
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	97

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CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS MARKETING OF TANTEA PRODUCTS**S. DEEPA****RESEARCH SCHOLAR****ASST. PROFESSOR****RESEARCH CENTRE IN COMMERCE****THE STANDARD FIREWORKS RAJARATNAM COLLEGE FOR WOMEN****SIVAKASI****M. JAYALAKSHMI****ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR****RESEARCH CENTRE IN COMMERCE****THE STANDARD FIREWORKS RAJARATNAM COLLEGE FOR WOMEN****SIVAKASI****ABSTRACT**

Consumer perception analysis aims to ultimately improve business performance through an understanding of past and present consumers so as to determine and identify future consumers and their perception. Perception is defined as "the process by which people select, organize and interpret information to form a meaningful picture of the world". In this paper, results relating to consumers perception on Tamilnadu Tea Plantation Corporation Limited (TANTEA) products in respect of various elements of marketing mix includes product, price, place/physical distribution and promotion are discussed.

KEYWORDS

consumer perception, marketing, marketing mix, TANTEA.

INTRODUCTION

Tamilnadu Tea Plantation Corporation Limited - TANTEA is an undertaking of the State Government of Tamilnadu, India. A Vision that took root in 1968, to rehabilitate Sri Lankan repatriates trained in the fine art of tea culture. TANTEA is one of the biggest black tea producers in India with high quality clonal tea plantations spread over nearly 4500 ha. in Nilgiris and Coimbatore districts of Tamilnadu.

Consumer perception refers to the process by which a consumer selects, organizes and interprets information or stimuli inputs to create a meaningful picture of the brand or the product. Consumers perception towards marketing can be examined through their views towards the for basic dimensions of marketing known as 4 P's namely Product, Price, Place/ Physical distribution and Promotion.

Perception being an abstract concept cannot be measured directly in terms of quantitative terms. But perception can be measured indirectly by devising an attitude scale. The researcher has devised an attitude scale for measuring the level of perception of the consumers towards marketing of TANTEA products. To analyse the level of perception of the consumers, some important components are identified and a comprehensive study has been made by measuring the level of satisfaction.

In this study, 54 statements have been formulated under four heads namely product, price, place/physical distribution and promotion to measure the perception level. Likert's five-point attitude scale was constructed by awarding scores to these 54 statements. With the help of the scale, the extent of perception has been measured.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The TamilNadu Tea Plantation Corporation Limited is one of the biggest black tea producers in India. It aims to improve the distribution effectiveness and explore the preferences of the retail outlets. The outlets bridge the gap between the consumer and the dealers. The limited distribution of TANTEA in selected regions alone make the dealers to face with out of stock position and create dissatisfaction among the retail outlets which leads to dissatisfaction among customers too who switch over to other brands. Hence, the researcher is interested to study the consumer perception towards marketing of TANTEA products.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the consumer perception towards marketing of TANTEA.
2. To offer valuable suggestions based on the findings.

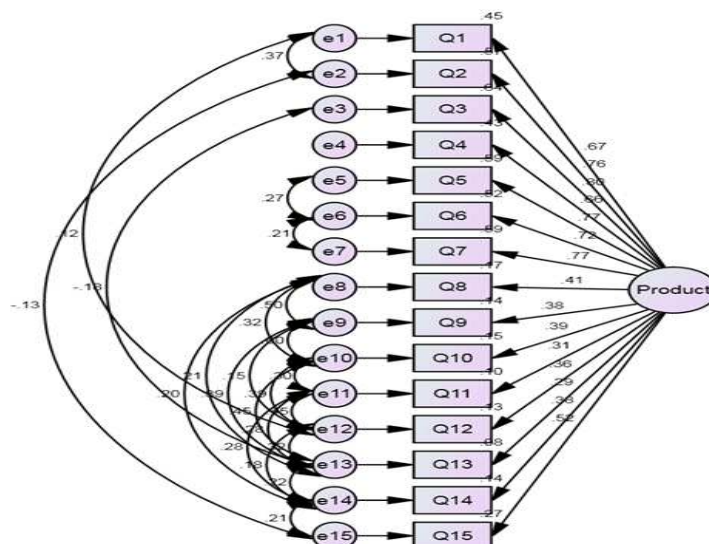
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The information required for the study are collected by means of primary source. The data which is collected in a fresh manner and which is not available is termed as primary data. The primary data have been collected from the consumers of TANTEA. For the purpose of the survey, Likert's five-point attitude scale was constructed by awarding scores to 54 statements under four heads namely product, price, place/physical distribution and promotion.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

In this section, results relating to consumers opinion in respect of various elements of marketing mix includes product, price, place/physical distribution and promotion are discussed.

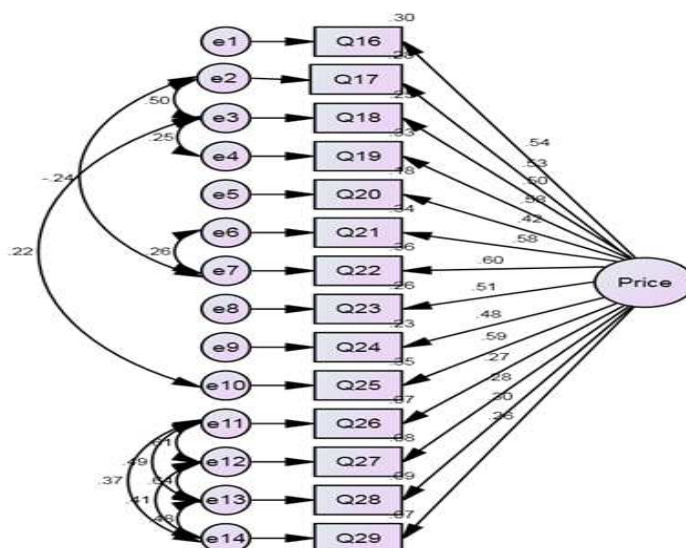
FIGURE 1: PRODUCT



This is a simple regression model where one observed variable, the consumers perception towards product, is predicted as a linear combination of the other observed variables. The model assumes '1' as standardized regression weights which specifies that other variables must have a weight of 1. Each single headed arrow represents a regression weight in the prediction of consumer perception towards the product of TANTEA. Each single-headed arrow represents a regression weight. The value shown against two sided arrows (-.13,.12,-.18,.37,.27,.21,.50,.32,.60,.21,.15,.30,.20,.39,.39,.45,.45,.28,.28,.32,.18,.22,.21) is the correlation between the observed variables and satisfaction about TANTEA products. The values shown with single sided arrow (.67,.76,.80,.66,.77,.72,.77,.41,.38,.39,.31,.36,.29,.38,.52) are standardized regression weights. The consumer perception is influenced Regularly using TANTEA (.80). The next two equally influencing variables are High brand image for TANTEA and Product is readily available (No product shortage) (.77) followed by Satisfied with the quantity supplied (.76), Product meets the taste and preferences of customer (.72), Quality of the product is good (.67), Wide varieties of products available (.66), There is product adulteration (.52), Packaging is good (.41), Reusable containers are useful (.39). The next two equally influencing variables are Packaging is more attractive and Labeling explain the product usage (.38) followed by Induce to make repeated purchase (.36), By consuming feel freshness (.31). The least influencing factor is TANTEA is preferred by all (.29).

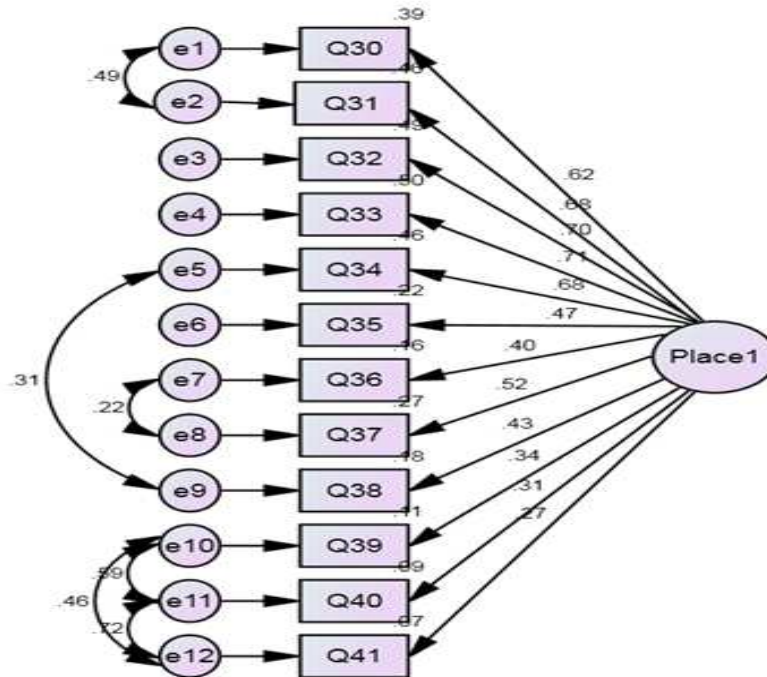
CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION ON PRICE

FIGURE 2: PRICE



This is a simple regression model where one observed variable, the consumers perception towards price, is predicted as a linear combination of the other observed variables. The model assumes '1' as standardized regression weights which specifies that other variables must have a weight of 1. Each single headed arrow represents a regression weight in the prediction of consumer perception towards the product of TANTEA. Each single-headed arrow represents a regression weight. The value shown against two sided arrows (.22,-.24,.50,.25,.26,.61,.49,.37,.64,.41,.48) is the correlation between the observed variables and satisfaction about TANTEA products. The values shown with single sided arrow (.54,.53,.50,.58,.42,.58,.60,.51,.48,.59,.27,.28,.30,.26) are standardized regression weights. The consumer perception is influenced Price reduction will enhance market expansion (.60) followed by fluctuation in price affect the effective purchase (.59). The next two equally influencing variables are Price variation for different varieties is acceptable and Price of the product ensure best value for money (.58) followed by TANTEA adopts genuine pricing methods (.54), The price is reasonable (.53), Higher the quality, higher the price (.51), Different varieties offered at different prices (.50), Higher the price, higher the benefit from the product (.48), Auction price influence the product price (.42), The price of white tea is high (.30), Government policy has impact on the price of the product (.28), Brand image enhance the price of the product (.27). The least influencing factor is The price of the green tea is acceptable (.26).

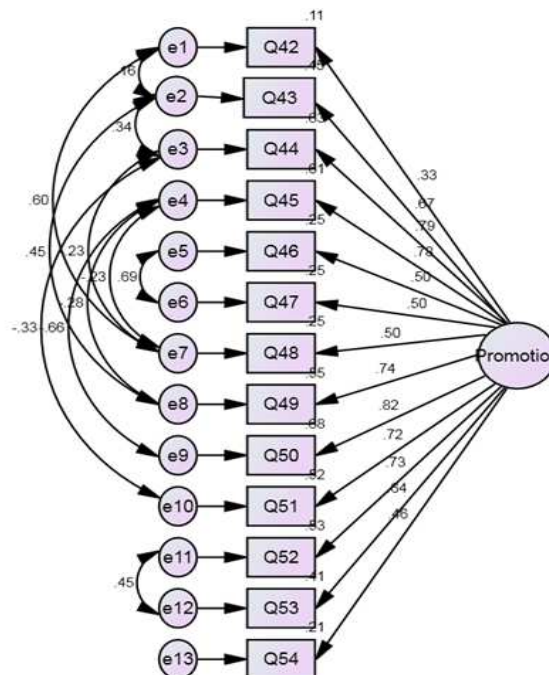
FIGURE 3: PLACE/PHYSICAL DISTRIBUTION



This is a simple regression model where one observed variable, the consumers perception towards place/physical distribution, is predicted as a linear combination of the other observed variables. The model assumes '1' as standardized regression weights which specifies that other variables must have a weight of 1. Each single headed arrow represents a regression weight in the prediction of consumer perception towards the place/physical distribution of TANTEA. Each single-headed arrow represents a regression weight. The value shown against two sided arrows (.49,.31,.22,.59,.46,.72) is the correlation between the observed variables and satisfaction about TANTEA products. The values shown with single sided arrow (.62,.68,.70,.71,.68,.47,.40,.52,.43,.34,.31,.27) are standardized regression weights. The consumer perception is influenced TANTEA can sold through Fair Price Shops (.71) followed by TANTEA can expand the market (.70). The next two equally influencing variables are Area coverage is adequate and Area of location of TANTEA shop is easy to access (.68) followed by TANTEA is available with all retailers (.62), More number of TANTEA shops can be established (.52), Follow the shortest channel of distribution (.47), Increased retail outlets ensure easy access to the TANTEA (.43), Distributing the products mainly through exclusive agency (.40), Services of middleman is prompt (.34), Packaging protect the product in transit (.31). The least influencing factor is There is no product defect / damage (.27).

CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION ON PROMOTION

FIGURE 4: PROMOTION



This is a simple regression model where one observed variable, the consumers perception towards promotion, is predicted as a linear combination of the other observed variables. The model assumes '1' as standardized regression weights which specifies that other variables must have a weight of 1. Each single headed arrow represents a regression weight in the prediction of consumer perception towards the promotion of TANTEA. Each single-headed arrow represents a regression weight. The value shown against two sided arrows (.60,.45, -.33,.16,.34,.23, -.23,.69, -.28, -.66,.45) is the correlation between the observed variables and satisfaction about TANTEA promotion. The values shown with single sided arrow (.33,.67,.79,.78,.50,.50,.50,.74,.82,.72,.73,.64,.46) are standardized regression weights. The consumer perception is influenced More and clear product information is available in labeling (.82) followed by Media selected for promotion of TANTEA is effective (.79), Promotional strategies are adopted in selected regions only (.78), More and clear product information is available in advertisement (.74), TANTEA website influence to purchase the product (.73), Web advertisement of TANTEA is well known (.72), Different media are used to promote TANTEA (.67), TANTEA attracts new customers (.64). The next three equally influencing variables are Special seasonal promotional activities are carried out, In exhibition, stall for TANTEA is effective and Offers and discounts are given to promote sales (.50) followed by Recommend the product to others (.46). The least influencing factor is Knowledge of product gained through their promotional strategy (.33).

TABLE 1: MODEL FIT SUMMARY OF CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Indices	Product (Value)	Price (Value)	Place/Physical Distribution (Value)	Promotion (Value)	Suggested value
Chi-square value	302.164	211.481	186.952	233.888	-
P value	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.01
GFI	0.938	0.953	0.950	0.944	>0.90
AGFI	0.918	0.925	0.919	0.906	>0.90
CFI	0.948	0.944	0.947	0.959	> 0.90
RMR	0.060	0.037	0.044	0.054	< 0.08
RMSEA	0.077	0.061	0.070	0.075	< 0.08

Source: Computed data

From the above Table 1 it is found that the calculated P value is less than 0.01 which indicates perfectly fit. Here GFI (Goodness of Fit Index) value and AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index) value is greater than 0.9 which represent it is a good fit. The calculated CFI (Comparative Fit Index) value is greater than 0.9 which means that it is a perfectly fit and also it is found that RMR (Root Mean Square Residuals) and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) value is less than 0.08 which indicated it is perfectly fit in all the marketing elements.

FINDINGS

- ❖ The consumer perception towards product is analysed with 15 variables of which "Regularly using TANTEA" is the most dominating variable.
- ❖ The consumer perception towards price is analysed with 14 variables of which "Price reduction will enhance market expansion" is the most dominating variable.
- ❖ The consumer perception towards place/physical distribution is analysed with 12 variables of which "TANTEA can sold through Fair Price Shops" is the most dominating variable.
- ❖ The consumer perception towards promotion is analysed with 13 variables of which "More and clear product information is available in labeling" is the most dominating variable.

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

- When new varieties of tea are introduced in the market, special offers, discounts and compliments should be given by the TANTEA to attract the consumers to purchase it.
- Market survey and market research by dealers for TANTEA products should be carried out on a continuous basis and strategies towards improving consumer satisfaction must be based on the research findings.
- TANTEA can adopt proper grading techniques to fix price for each grade because in Tamil Nadu the price of tea was varying from year to year.
- TANTEA should adopt careful pricing policy to retain the existing consumers and attract new consumers.
- The marketers of TANTEA should provide excellent distribution network to enable all types of tea to reach all types of shops located in all parts of rural and urban areas.
- TANTEA should popularize their brand through proper promotional measures.
- TANTEA should advertise their product through electronic media in order to attract the consumers easily. Especially TANTEA could advertise through television and mobile phones so that the consumers will immediately notice it.

CONCLUSION

The key problem area of the company is its inability to get good price for tea. Despite 40 years of existence, its dependence on auction sales resulted in realisation of substantially low prices for tea. As the fall in tea prices was much higher compared to the production expenses, to overcome this deficiency, the Company should take immediate and effective steps to reduce its over dependence on auction sales and to improve direct sales and sale of packet tea in the liberalised tea marketing scenario. The price fluctuations of the product should be regulated. Though TANTEA products have more quality, lack of promotional measures leads to problem in sale of product. The future sale of TANTEA products might be increased by increased promotion. Thus TANTEA a public sector company, can become a role model to others.

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WEBSITE

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