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**RETENTION AND SATISFACTION OF CONSUMERS: A STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Consumer retention, loyalty and satisfaction are important ingredients for the sustainability of any organisation. Customer switching is opposite to the customer loyalty, and being loyal means satisfaction for a particular product or services. The consumers may switch to other brands if they are not satisfied with the present one. Thus, for the long term sustainability of the organisations, consumer retention has become challenge for them and hence, satisfaction plays an important role. The satisfied consumers have less probability to switch to other brands. For satisfying the consumers, one has to know about what consumer buy, why they buy it, when they buy it, how and how often they buy it and what made them to switch to other brands. The present paper is an attempt to study the toothpaste buying patterns among the individuals. The study also examines the various factors which influence the consumers to buy toothpaste of particular brand and reasons for their switching to other brands.*

**KEYWORDS**

Consumer retention, Consumer Switching, Toothpaste buying patterns, Consumer satisfaction.

**INTRODUCTION**

A consumer is a person or group of individuals that are the final users of products and or services generated within a social system. A consumer select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires. In other words, Consumers are the ultimate destination of any products or services. The study of these individuals, groups, or organizations is what we call Consumer behaviour. Consumer retention, loyalty and satisfaction are important ingredients for the sustainability of any organisation. Customer retention is more than giving the customer what they expect; it is about exceeding their expectations so that they become loyal advocates for a particular brand. Customer loyalty is all about attracting the right customer, getting them to buy, buy often, buy in higher quantities and brings even more customers. Customer switching is opposite to the customer loyalty, and being loyal means satisfaction for a particular product or services. The consumers may switch to other brands if they are not satisfied with the present one. Thus, for the long term sustainability of the organisations, consumer retention has become challenge for them and hence, satisfaction plays an important role. The satisfied consumers have less probability to switch to other brands. For satisfying the consumers, one has to know about what consumer buy, why they buy it, when they buy it, how and how often they buy it and what made them to switch to other brands.

Today, particularly in the competitive global market, it has been seen that organisations are increasingly focusing on the retention of their existing customers. Thus, Gaining knowledge about customers' switching behavior is substantively important for the sustainability of any organisation. Customers' switching behavior is the process exhibited by a customer, behaving differently to a particular brand and undergoes alteration in the preference of the existing product or services. Since, customers are the ultimate end users of any product or services, the success of any organisation depends upon the satisfaction of the consumers, if not they will switch to other brands. When any organisation loses a customer they are not only losing future earnings but also incurring the cost of finding new customers. Over time loyal customers become less price-sensitive therefore, losing loyal customer means giving up high margins. Considering the technological advancements and its easy access to every individual, customers are becoming intolerant and they can dissolve the relationship as soon as any problem arises. Thus, customer retention is the core concern of each and every organization. Due to this reason, the satisfaction of the consumers becomes priority for any organisations. The present paper is an attempt to study the toothpaste buying patterns among the individuals. The study also examines the various factors which influence the consumers to retain to a particular brand and reasons for their switching to other brands.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To study the toothpaste buying patterns among the select individuals.
2. To study the factors which influence consumer to switching to other brands.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The current literature revealed that researchers have been focusing on customer retention, loyalty and satisfaction. Customer retention is important to most of the organisations because the cost of acquiring a new customer is far greater than the cost of maintaining the relationship with a current customer (Ro King, 2005). Also, customer loyalty can be defines as "customer behavior characterized by a positive buying pattern during an extended period (measured by means of repeat purchase, frequency of purchase, wallet share or other indicators) and driven by a positive attitude towards the company and its products or services" (Looy, Gemmel & Dierdonck, 2003). It has been further seen in the studies of Reichheld and Kenny (1990), that there are six factors which are imperative to improve retention: senior management commitment; a customer-focused culture in which all employees and managers focused their full attention on customer satisfaction; retention information systems that tracked and analyzed the root causes of defections; empowerment of front line employees to take actions that provided immediate customer satisfaction; continuous training and development; and incentive systems based on customer retention.

To retain customers, organizations have to understand the behaviour of their customers and try to satisfy them, by catering their needs and preferences (Oyeniya and Abiodun, 2010). Consumer behaviour has been defined as those acts of individuals directly involved in obtaining, using, and disposing of economic goods and services, including the decision processes that precede and determine these acts (Engel, et al., 1986). The consumer in this era is in target of massive media attacks effectively planned, and enlighten with glamour as per the emotions, needs, wants and demands of the consumers. Market researchers and organisations are spending billions of dollars on consumer research and to know the important factors involved in consumer decision making. Consumer behaviour analysis helps to determine the direction that consumer behaviour is likely to make and to give preferred trends in product development, attributes of the alternative communication method etc. consumer behaviours analysis views the consumer as another variable in the marketing sequence, a variable that cannot be controlled and that will interpret the product or service not only in terms of the physical characteristics, but in the context of this image according to the social and psychological makeup of that individual consumer or group of consumers (Proctor and Stone, 1982). Zain-Ul-Abideen and Salman Saleem, found that emotional response of consumer purchase behavior is the variable that results into strong association with the consumer buying behavior. It has been seen that people purchase those brands with which they are emotionally attached. The given study presents new evidences in the field of consumer buying behavior of consumers pertaining to the local markets. In addition to it, advertising also plays an important role in making purchasing decisions of the consumers.

Bashir and Malik, (2009), in the given study revealed that consumers considered advertisement as a reliable source of knowledge about any product or services. Advertisement can affect any income group individuals. Consumers were influenced by the appeal and personality used in the specific brand advertisements. Alnaimi, Richard Jones and Perkins studied that maintaining a long-term relationship with a customer is one of the fundamental factors determining the value that the customer provides to the organisation. Thus, a serious threat to achieving a long-term relationship is the customer's switching behaviour. The study also

revealed that customers' switching behaviour (switchers and stayers) is a vital construct to understand the relationship development process between customers and the organisations. A different approach was applied by Bansal (1997) by incorporating some measures of theory of planned behavior (TPB) in predicting switching intentions. TPB posits a link between attitudes and behavior. In combination, perceived behavioral control, subjective norm and attitude toward the behavior lead towards "behavioral intention" (Ajzen, 1991). Bansal (1997) measured the impact of one's attitude towards switching behavior, perceived behavior control (termed as perceived switching costs) and satisfaction with the product or service provider, with intentions to switch. Results confirmed the significant influence of all three variables on switching intentions.

It has been seen from the existing literature that understanding behaviour of consumers (retention, loyalty and satisfaction) plays an important role in catering their needs and preferences over a time. Also, retention of these consumers plays vital role in the long term sustainability of the organisations. Thus, the present study tries to understand the behaviour of toothpaste users and the various factors that helps to retain the customers and reasons for their switching to other brands.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study has been conducted among the boarders of the girl's hostels of University of Jammu, of state Jammu and Kashmir. These respondents have been chosen for the study, as it is one of common place where girls from different regional and cultural background prevailed. This study will be helpful in evaluating the attitude of the select boarders of the hostel towards usage of toothpaste. For the purpose of the given study primary as well as secondary data has been used. The Secondary data has been collected from various books, journals, published research papers, websites etc. The primary data was collected by means of a questionnaire. Copies of the questionnaire were given personally to respondents in the university hostel. The questionnaire consists a total of 14 items. The respondents are randomly selected and out of 130 respondents, the responses of 124 respondents have taken into consideration. The data collected was mainly primary in nature.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The study deals with the analysis of consumer awareness towards toothpaste usage. The responses from the respondents were subjected to simple percentage method, in order to know the inferences out of the collected data.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Demographic variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
<b>Age (Yrs) - Below 22</b>	60	48.38
22-25	52	41.93
25-28	8	6.45
28 & above	4	3.22
<b>Gender - Male</b>	0	0
Female	124	100
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
Graduation	52	41.93
Post-Graduation	48	38.7
M.Phil	12	9.67
Others	12	9.67
<b>Status - Student</b>	84	67.74
Professional	8	6.45
Research Scholar	32	25.8
<b>Monthly Family income -</b>		
Below Rs.25000	32	25.8
Rs.25000-30000	12	9.67
Rs.30000-35000	12	9.67
Above Rs.35,000	68	54.83

As indicated from the Table 1, it has been seen that about 48.38% of the respondents have their age below 22 years, followed by between 22-25 years (41.93%), 25-28 years (6.45%) and 28 & above (3.22%). All the respondents of the given study are females (100%), as the sample selected is the girl's hostels of the University of Jammu. About 41.93% respondents have their qualification as graduation, 38.7% as post-graduation and others are 9.67%. It has been seen that 67.74% respondents are students, 25.8% are Research Scholars and 6.45% are professionals. Also, it has been found that about 54.83% have their monthly family income above Rs. 35,000 followed by below Rs. 25,000 i.e. 25.8% respondents and 9.67% ranging between Rs. 30,000- Rs. 35,000 and Rs. 25,000-Rs. 30,000.

TABLE-2: TOOTHPASTE USAGE RATE

Usage rate	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	116	93.54
No	8	6.45

Table-2 indicates the usage rate of toothpaste by the respondents. As revealed from the table it has been found that about 93.54% of the respondents using toothpastes in University girl's hostel and only 6.45% using toothpowder and mouthwash etc.

TABLE-3: CONSUMER BRUSHING PATTERNS

Using Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Once	40	32.25
Twice	80	64.51
Thrice	4	3.22

As observed from the Table-3, the brushing frequency of consumer, the data revealed that 64.51% of the respondents use toothpaste twice a week, 32.25% of the respondents use only once and 3.22% use toothpaste thrice a day i.e. after every meal.

TABLE-4: FREQUENCY OF BUYING PER MONTH

Buying Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Once	64	51.61
Twice	56	45.16
Thrice	4	3.22

Table 4 shown above indicates the frequency of purchasing toothpaste per month by the users. The given data revealed that half of the respondents buying toothpaste only once in a month (51.61%), 45.16% buy twice in a month and 3.22% respondents buying toothpaste thrice in a month.



TABLE-5: AWARENESS OF BRANDS

Brands	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Colgate	52	41.93
Close Up,	36	29
Pepsodent	20	16.12
Dabur	12	9.67
Others	4	3.22

Table 5, examined awareness of the people regarding various brands of toothpastes like Colgate, Close up, Pepsodent, Dabur and others. Most of the respondents (41.93%) aware of Colgate, as it is considered to be a generic name for the toothpaste. 29% of the respondents aware of Close up, followed by Pepsodent (16.12%), Dabur (9.67%) and others constitutes (3.22%).

TABLE-6: USAGE OF TOOTHPASTE BRANDS

Usage of brand	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
One	68	54.83
Two	36	29
More than three	20	16.12

Table 6 identified the usage of different brand by the respondents. An examination of the data revealed that most of the respondents (54.83%) used only one brand, 29% respondents used two brands and 16.12% respondents used more than three brands.

TABLE-7: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUYING TOOTHPASTES

Recommendation	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Dentist advice	76	61.29
Taste makes me to Change brand	36	29
Not interested in oral care	4	3.22
Promotion technique	8	6.45

The above Table-7 shows the recommendation for buying toothpastes by different people; the data pertaining to this revealed that about 61.29% of the total respondents i.e. more than half of the respondents accept Dentist advice to use toothpaste. About 29% respondents agreed that taste makes them to change brand. 6.45% of the respondents consider it as a promotion technique to increase the sale of the product and 3.22% of the respondents are not interested in oral care and gum related problems.

TABLE-8: FACTORS WHICH MAKES CONSUMER TO BUY TOOTHPASTE

Factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Price	36	29
Availability	62	50
Packaging	6	4.83
Others	20	16.12

Table- 8 shows the reasons to buy toothpaste by the respondents. The consumers are influenced by the Price, availability and Packaging of the product. It has been seen that half of the respondents (50%) buy toothpaste depending upon the availability of a particular brand, 29% influenced by the price, followed by 16.12% influenced by the other factors, and 4.83% influenced by packaging.

TABLE-9: PREFERENCE OF TOOTHPASTE

Preference	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Brand	24	19.35
Quality	84	67.74
Flavor	12	9.67
Others	4	3.22

The given Table-9 presented data to find the reason for the preference of buying toothpaste. An examination of the data revealed that most of the respondents preferred brand, quality, and shine. In the above table 67.74% of the respondents preferred quality, 19.35% of the respondents preferred brand name, 9.67% of the respondents preferred flavor of the toothpaste, and 3.22% of the respondents preferred other factors.

TABLE-10: PREFERENCE OF AN ATTRIBUTE

Attribute	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Healthy tooth& gums	60	48.38
Long lasting freshness	20	16.12
Prevention of tooth decay	32	25.8
Whiteness	8	6.45
Use of natural herbs	4	3.22

Table-10 shows the reasons to buy a toothpaste based on attribute, the data pertaining to this revealed that most of the respondents preferred healthy tooth& gums, Long lasting freshness, prevention of tooth decay, whiteness and use of natural herbs. The above table clearly shows that 48.38% of the respondent's preferred healthy tooth& gums, 25.8% respondents preferred prevention of tooth decay, 16.12% respondents preferred long lasting freshness, 6.45% whiteness and 3.22% respondents preferred use of natural herbs.

TABLE-11: PERSON WHO INFLUENCED CONSUMER TO PURCHASE TOOTHPASTE

Persons	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Friends	12	9.67
Parents	36	29
Self	68	54.83
Spouse	8	6.45

Table-11, indicates the persons who influenced consumer to purchase toothpastes. An examination of the table revealed that the people who influenced more are parents, friends, spouse and self decision. Based on the above data, more than half of the respondents (54.83%) decide themselves for using a toothpastes, followed by parents (29%), friends influenced (9.67%) and spouse (6.45%).

TABLE-12: TO WHICH MODE OF PROMOTION CONSUMER GETS ATTRACTED

Mode of promotion	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Advertisement	48	38.7
Celebrity	32	25.8
Banner	12	9.67
Others	32	25.8

Table-12 shows that by which mode of promotion consumer gets attracted. An examination of the table reveals that, most of the consumers preferred advertisement, celebrity, banners. Majority of the respondents 38.7% get attracted by advertisements, 25.8% of the respondents by celebrity endorsements and other means of promotion, followed by banners (9.67%). Advertisement creates attention and stimulates the consumer to buy a particular brand.

TABLE-13: FACTORS WHICH MAKES CONSUMER TO BUY TOOTHPASTE

Promotion tools	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gift	20	16.12
Discount	12	9.67
Extra quantity	20	16.12
Price off	12	9.67
Others	60	48.38

The above Table-13 shows the promotion tools preferred by the consumers while purchasing the toothpastes. An examination of the above data reveals that, consumers preferred gift, extra quantity, discount, price off. The data revealed that gifts and extra quantity attracted more respondents (16.12%), followed by discounts and price off (9.67%). It has been observed that besides these, there are other factors also (48.38%) which make consumers to buy toothpastes.

TABLE-14: SWITCHING TO OTHER BRAND

Reason for switching	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Impact of packaging	12	9.67
Price rise of current brand	16	12.9
Scheme of brands	34	27.41
Advertisement impact	22	17.74
Brand not available	9	7.25
To try new option	18	14.51
Influence by other	13	10.48

Table-14, given above shows the reasons for switching to other brand by the consumers. The data revealed that about most of the respondents switch to other brand because of scheme (offer) associated to it (27.41%), followed by advertisement impact (17.74%). 14.51% respondents switched to other brand to try new options, followed by due to price rise (12.9%), influence by others (10.48%). Also, 9.67% respondents get attracted by packaging and 7.25% respondents changed due to non-availability of product in the market and switch to other brands.

## CONCLUSION

Thus, it has been concluded that usage rate of toothpaste among the select individuals has been high and their buying behaviour is also very frequent. It has been seen that most of the people are aware of toothpastes like Colgate, Close up, Pepsodent, Dabur and others. Price, availability and Packaging of the product also plays an important role in buying the toothpaste products. Most of the consumers get attracted by advertisement, celebrity, banners of a particular brand. It has been found that most of the consumers preferred gifts, extra quantity, discount, price off while making decision for buying the toothpastes. Also, it has been seen that various factors influence the switching behaviour of the consumers like impact of packaging, price rise of current brand, scheme of brands, impact of advertisement, non-availability of brand, to try new option and influence by others etc.

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