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STUDY OF BRAND RECALL OF CONSUMER DURABLES AMONG CONSUMERS IN PUNJAB**BHAVNA PRASHAR****ASST. PROFESSOR****INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES****BADDI UNIVERSITY OF EMERGING SCIENCES & TECHNOLOGY****BADDI****SHWETA DHIR****ASST. PROFESSOR****INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES****BADDI UNIVERSITY OF EMERGING SCIENCES & TECHNOLOGY****BADDI****ANUPAMA SHARMA****ASST. PROFESSOR****INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES****BADDI UNIVERSITY OF EMERGING SCIENCES & TECHNOLOGY****BADDI****ABSTRACT**

The process of political-economic revolution from a semi-controlled economy to a semi-liberalized one began as IMF conditionality in 1992 and twenty years later India is emerging as one of the largest markets for commodities and services. New players have entered the market and many of the older ones have had to make way for them. An era of mergers, acquisitions, hostile bids, de-acquisitions and other forms of strategic alliances has followed. In 1991-2 the business houses which were asking for a level playing field are now asking for some sort of protection against foreign competition (c.f. Sadri 2003, 2007). New barons are entering the foray for a larger slice of the proverbial cake. Brand Identity, Brand Positioning, Brand Personality, Brand Association, Brand Essence, Brand Image, Brand Loyalty, Brand Equity, etc. were, until now, terms used in the postgraduate classroom and executive development seminars are now being heard in the corporate corridors. When the rules of the game have changed, when the raj of licenses and controls has started giving way to a free market, the time is ripe to pose the question: what essentially does Brand Management mean in the Indian context? As we enter the dawn of the new century, specialists in Marketing and a specialist in Finance jointly take up the issue of Branding essentially from a management science viewpoint.

KEYWORDS

Brand Recognition, Brand recall, Consumer behavior.

INTRODUCTION

This methodological paper focuses on how the brand owner could use different facets of brand management through the study of brand recall in order to develop and maintain a sustainable brand. Needless to say, that the perspective adopted for the prognosis is an Indian one. Accordingly, the paper looks at what kinds of consumer preferences exist in the market, the relevant brand positioning statements, the perceived brand personality, and the way this is being communicated through advertisements. Sadri and Jayashree (2007) have argued that business ethics and corporate governance combine to produce conditions for organizational excellence. Sadri and Guha (2007) have argued that excellence cannot be an end in itself but must lead to business sustainability. This paper deduced that a scientific study would help in making (i) companies less vulnerable to marketing mistakes; (ii) increase customer loyalty and improve sales figures; and (iii) enhance the ability to strategize the advertisement and media plan. These were the three tangible and logical benefits that would flow from successful Brand Management so as to enable the organization to attain business excellence and sustainability. This paper also found that not having a complete understanding about branding, a marketing strategist was likely to make a *fatal error*.

BACKGROUND

David Ogilvy had famously declared that *any damn fool can put on a deal, but it takes genius, faith, and perseverance to create a brand*. Hence Ogilvy could observe that *the Brand is a cult object...it has charisma...Brands are a part of the fabric of life*. On the other hand, Stephen King had gone on to argue that *a product is something that is made in a factory; a brand is something that is bought by a customer. A product can be copied by a competitor; a brand is unique. A product can be quickly outdated; a successful brand is timeless*.

The question is then posed: *what was a brand?* The word *Brand* was derived from the Old Norse word *bran* which meant "to burn." It implies in name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to them from those of the competition according to the *American Marketing Association*. The first use of a brand was just that - a mark of ownership on cattle. There are ancient Egyptians mural paintings that picture the branding of different animals. The old Sassing culture depicted two guardians of religion in the form of winged bulls with a lion's mane and a human face called Sarosh and Burgis. These adorned all entrances belonging to the State ever since the reign of Darius. In India ever since the days of Chandragupta Maurya the symbol of the Swastika was placed on all important doorways. Later, trademarks were used to define individual products. The red triangle of BASS, the first trademark registered in England, was designed to help the illiterate drinker recognize and differentiate William Bass's Fine India Pale Ale from other inferior products available at the time. An article in the *Financial Times* (Nov 2008) described a brand as something that *exists in the collective mind of the consumer*. Some others have seen it as the *promise that you make to your customer*.

On the basis of the investigation made thus far this paper could posit that our focus of inquiry is nothing but to understand and explain the process used to define the branding of the product or service. So this paper would ascertain the brand's unique value proposition in the mind of customers and how effectively brand can earn a "Share of Heart" and "Share of Mind" of customers. The next issue is with respect to the management of brands: are brands Advertisement and Brand Promotion, relevant and enduring in line with the customer's personality and henceforth leading to "Brand Identity". There is no two ways about the fact that a brand personality can make or break a brand and can even become the vehicle to express a customer's identity. That is, a brand personality and customer's identity has a close and mutually influencing relationship. A brand without a personality, not unlike a person, lacks friends and may be easily overlooked; it lacks association and tends to lose its essence what then to ask about its positioning. This is especially the case with FMCGs in India whose sale depends on easy brand recall.

DEFINITIONAL PREMISE

This paper, based on empirical research, successfully tables an approach in respect of positioning sustainable brands. Hence it is only logical that certain terms be defined at the very outset. This will enable the reader to place the paradigm in its proper perspective. The moot question this paper seeks to ask is this: can this paper see Brand Recall as an all encompassing phenomenon within which the other facets are subsumed? If the answer is in the affirmative, then the paradigm can be safely posited.

Brand management starts with understanding what 'brand' really means in the mindset of the corporate leaders who define the brand and control its management following top-down to reach to the people who interface with customers or who create the products which customers use.

Brand identity is the complete package of a business to its customers. Identity is essentially the reality, that is, what your brand actually is! This is what you attribute to your brand, what you, as the company, decide to portray the brand as and the messages you determine it represents and conveys.

Brand Personality is the immediate emotional "take-way" or response that people have to a brand. When they hear a brand name or see, smell, taste or touch the product, it's that first involuntary thought that comes to their mind.

Brand Positioning is a comparative concept as to how one brand is perceived relative to others that may be considered. A brand position demonstrates a brand's advantage over its competitors.

Brand Association relates to when people think of your brand and realize whether it is something they want to be associated with.

Brand Image is the market's perception of your brand identity, which may or may not coincide with your intended brand identity. That is, what your customers believe your brand to be (or represent) after taking in all the visual, verbal, and messaging cues they receive from you and other secondary sources.

Brand Recall is the extent to which consumers remember advertising and other messages they have been sent about a brand. It is a type of brand awareness where the consumer recognises or identifies a brand, using information from their memory.

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

The proposed study based upon the empirical research seeks to show what factors impact the decision of a middle class housewife in choosing domestic appliances. Hence, the study concentrates on one hand on the effectiveness of advertisements and on the perception of the middle class consumer which further leads to Brand Recall and therefore has a marked impact on the purchasing decisions.

Brand Identity is essentially a unique set of functional and mental associations that the brand aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand should ideally stand for in the minds of customers, and imply a potential promise to customers. It is important to keep in mind that the brand identity refers to the strategic goal for a brand while the brand image is what currently resides in the minds of consumers. Therefore, *Brand Identity* can be established empirically on formulating scores related to product dimensions such as Marketability (to what extent are the benefits clear to you and believable?), Dependability (to what extent are you sure of its performance), Conformance (to what extent reliability in quality you find), Distinctiveness (to what extent you see unique solutions in its features), and Acceptability (to what extent are you expecting the current gap getting fulfilled on account of design and style). That is, brand identity can be said to be a function of Marketability, Dependability, Conformance, Distinctiveness, and Acceptability.

Brand Image is a unique set of associations within the minds of target customers which represent what the brand currently stands for and implies the current promise to customers. The brand image is what is currently in the minds of consumers, whereas brand identity is aspiration from the brand owners' point of view. Therefore, the Brand Image can be seen as the function of Product Experience, Look and Feel, Experiential Communications, and Customer Service.

Brand recall reflects the potential of customer to recover a brand from his memory when given the product class/category and buying scenario as a signal. In other words, it represents the ability of the consumers to correctly recover brand from the memory when given a clue or to recall the specific brand when the product category is mentioned. With no level of uncertainty it has been accepted in the marketing world that Brand recall is based upon the Brand personality and Brand Image and how well the two does matches with personality and profile of customers. Brand Personality and Image is nothing but the way a brand speaks and behaves. It means assigning human personality traits/characteristics to a brand so as to achieve differentiation. When brand image or brand identity is expressed in terms of human traits, it is called brand personality. For instance - **Allen Solley** brand speaks the personality and makes the individual who wears it stand apart from the crowd. **Infosys** represents uniqueness, value, and intellectualism. The brands which successfully create right set of image and personality among their target customers get a better Brand Recall. The most important aspect of brand recall is the formation of information in the memory in the first place. Besides that for various categories of products, brand recall is sufficient to create sales.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE METHODOLOGY

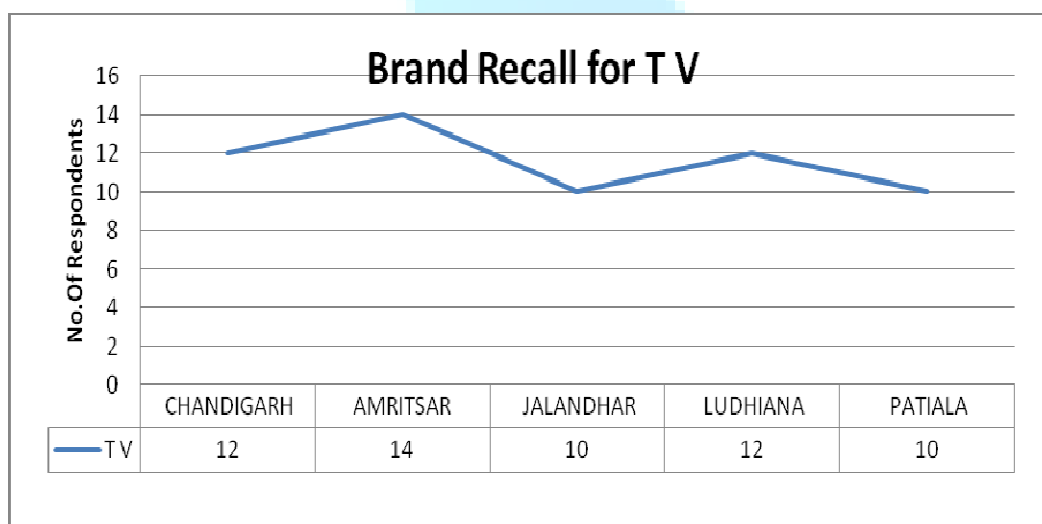
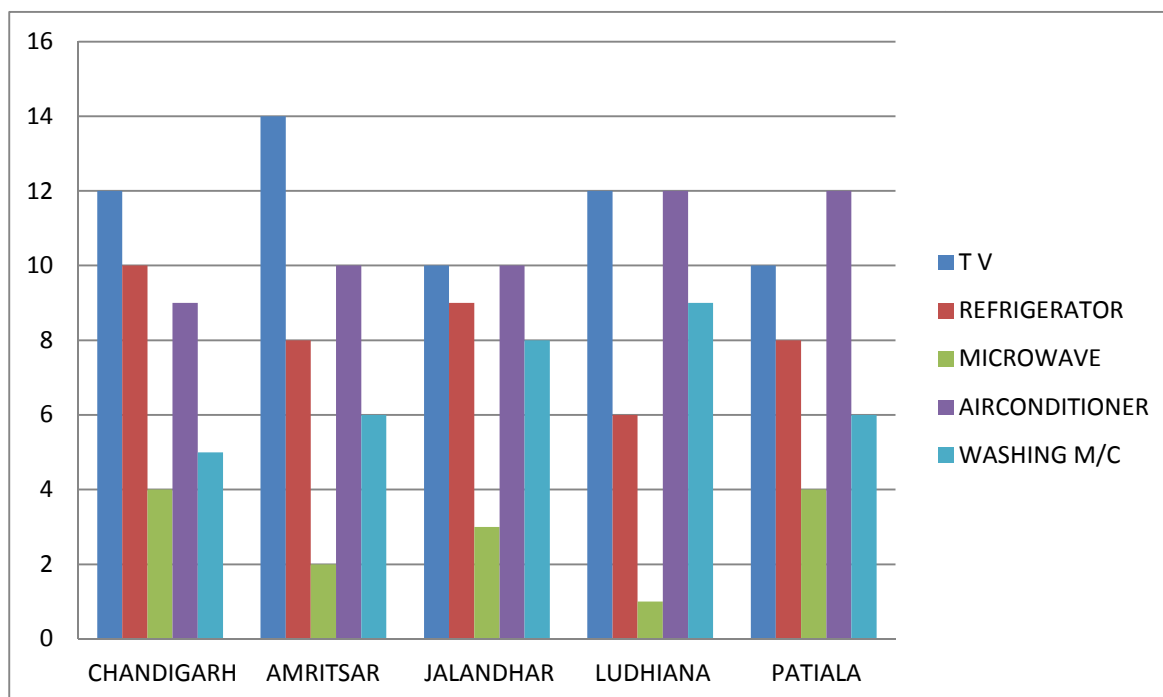
FMCG Industry accordingly was divided along five product lines covering five cities in Punjab. The emerging matrix is as follows:

TABLE 1

PREFERENCE INDEX OF CONSUMER DURABLES						
	CHANDIGARH	AMRITSAR	JALANDHAR	LUDHIANA	PATIALA	Total
T V	12	14	10	12	10	58
REFRIGERATORS	10	08	09	06	08	41
MICROWAVE	04	02	03	01	04	14
AIRCONDITIONER	09	10	10	12	12	53
WASHING M/C	05	06	08	09	06	34
TOTAL	40	40	40	40	40	200

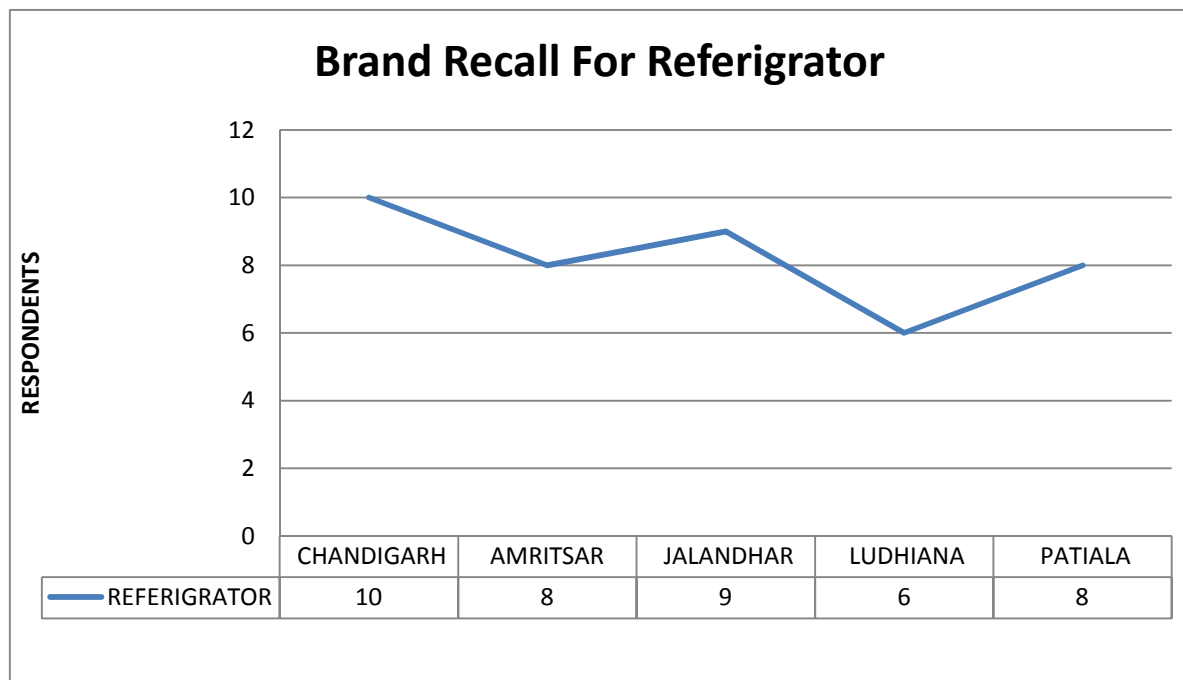
The *research question* was thus framed asking: Brand Preference in each category of FMCG Products & Relating Brands with respective advertisements and Brand Ambassadors in each category. The total number of respondents was 200. The pilot study covered 20 randomly selected housewives from five cities and on the basis of their feedback a working matrix was formulated representing the varying levels of brand recall among different cities. It also represents the relative brand recall of these five FMCG products among consumers within each city.

This index shows the total preferences in terms of durables household goods in the five major cities of north India.

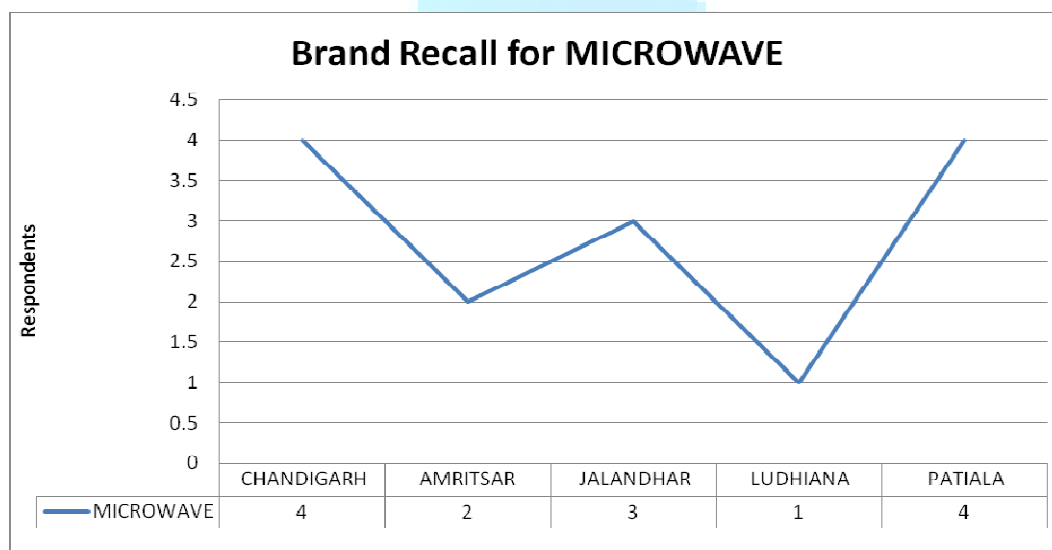


It can be deduced from the data plotted above that Chandigarh respondents had relatively higher recall for TV brands as compared to other four FMCG items whereas across cities the respondents from Amritsar have shown highest recall for various brands of TV. Hence marketers of TV ads should concentrate more on attracting customers from Ludhiana, Jalandhar & Patiala whereas can easily plan for higher budgets in Chandigarh and Amritsar.

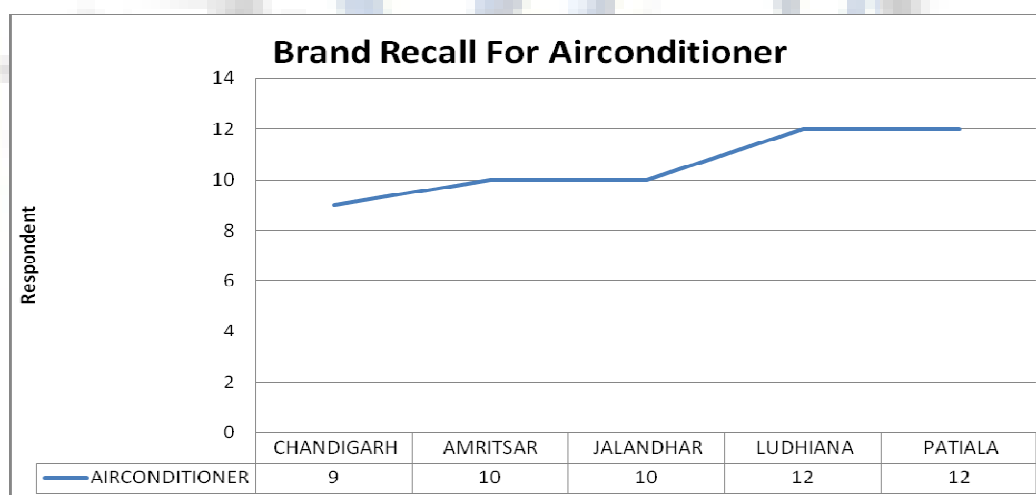
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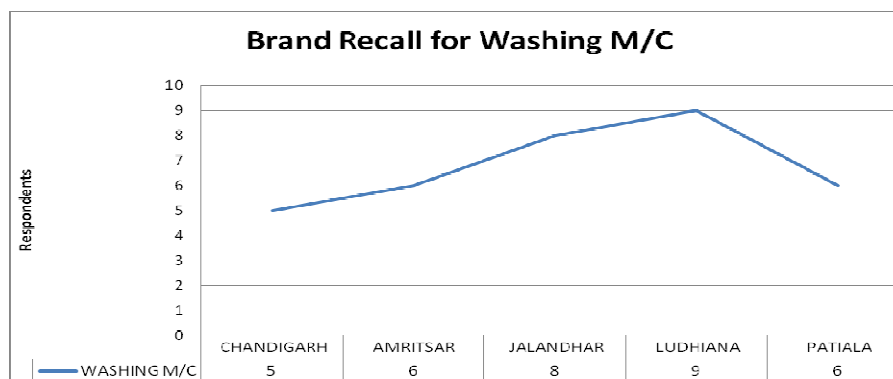
From the data plotted above it can be deduced that Chandigarh respondents are once again relatively more able to recall various brands of refrigerators among the respondents from the five cities under study whereas respondents from Ludhiana have least brand recall among cities in case of refrigerators.



It can be deduced from the data plotted above that respondents from Chandigarh and Patiala are more brand specific and have better Brand Recall for Microwave ovens. Also it has to be noted that among all consumer durable items, the recall for microwave oven has been significantly low. The marketing managers must redesign their advertising and promotion strategies to have better brand recall.



The above graph shows the highest brand recall for Air conditioner among the respondents from Ludhiana and Patiala. Surprisingly the brand recall for AC has figured out been lowest in the city Chandigarh. Despite of the highest literacy rate and highest service class sector in the city, the reason for lowest brand recall in Chandigarh could be the subject of further study for researchers



The above graph shows that the respondents from Ludhiana have highest brand recall for washing machines followed by Jalandhar as compared to respondents from other cities whereas the respondents from Chandigarh have lowest brand recall.

ADVANTAGES OF THIS STUDY

This particular study has been oriented towards understanding the relative demand for five consumer durable products in the five major cities of Punjab including the capital city Chandigarh and the variation in Brand Preference on the basis of Brand identity and brand recall among customers of five cities with respect to these consumer durable items. The study of the relative demand would help the planners to effectively use their advertising budget and the study of brand preference tries to correlate the different facets of brand management to give it an insightful strategic angle which can be commercially exploited while managing strategies for risk in branding. Such analytical study would help companies to identify most lucrative market in the state and estimating the demand per market. Besides this, it would provide a bridge to brand-managers to connect with customers, and multiply the forms of value that a brand can deliver. Above all, this study provides an aid to simulate the brand before actually putting it to test in the hands of the customer thus bridging the gap between theory and practice.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Even though based on a non-representative sample of subjects and a small number of brands, the items generated in study may serve as a fruitful collection of attributes for future replications. Also the size of the sample could be a grey area in the study but the efforts have been made to collect the most genuine responses from the respective respondents. Since the locations were distant the problems in approaching respondents and collecting their response has been another limitation in the study.

CONCLUSION

The trend in the data reflects the responses of housewives in the five cities. The result in the study has the reflection of psychological, economical, social as well as geographical aspects of the respective cities. Due to the busy schedules and highly competitive working environments it has been observed that the stress levels among the consumers have significantly raised and therefore almost every person falls short of leisure time when they could sit in front of Television and absorb the advertisement message. Resulting to these factors the dependency of marketers on brand recall has itself become a matter of question. This very study reflects that the fall in the brand recall has been highest in Jalandhar. The average brand recall has been found lowest in the city Jalandhar. The reasons for the same could be highly competitive business world of city. Also it has been observed that residents of Respondents chose outdoor activities as a better medium to set them on after a long hectic day and therefore hardly spare time in front of TV. That could also be one of the reasons that the brand recall for Television in specific has also been low in Jalandhar.

Almost every house has a TV and Refrigerator in Chandigarh and Amritsar and this would explain why demand for these new goods is falling. Given the service class domination and the rise of nucleus families the brand recall for microwave ovens in Patiala and Chandigarh is rising. Also the people in the two cities are more health conscious and therefore consider the advertisement messages in more serious fashion. In the case of air conditioners the hot and humid summer days and high pollution in Ludhiana, Amritsar and Jalandhar raise the interest of consumers. Also the liquidity of money in Ludhiana, Amritsar and Chandigarh is high.

High levels of humidity and pollution force people from Ludhiana to wash their clothes more regularly than the persons living in Chandigarh, Jalandhar and Patiala. For middle class housewives the washing machine was increasingly seen as a necessity rather than a luxury.

Thus this paper can be seen as a contribution to the theory of household demand affected by the brand recall on the one hand and towards an understanding of the public perception of domestic appliances and advertisement message on the other. It therefore equips the marketing manager with an instrument and a methodology to make their sales pitch that much more effective.

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