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**A STUDY ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE FOR PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR
IN COIMBATORE CITY**

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ABSTRACT

The author made an attempt, in this research paper, to study about the consumer preference for purchase behaviour on the daily usage product which is identified as regular purchased products. These are the products that are necessary that may be preferred by the consumer's daily requirements. The factors like brand preference, situations and behaviour patterns will play a major role in decision making for the consumers in the purchase process. Hence Consumer behaviour may influence with factors exhibited by their decision in purchasing and consuming the goods and also based on their economic conditions. The study analysis about the factors that influence the consumers related to the preference for the purchase activity. The study makes an attempt to know about the preference given by the consumers for Tooth Paste product and its brand, that were frequently purchased as to their needs and the reasons that force an individual consumer during the purchase process. The consumer behavior may force one's individual preference in the selection process that may be due to the compulsion, these may be reason of the situation and in some cases it may also be the reason of socio-economic factors. The role of an individual consumer in preferring a particular brand in this category of products was studied. The study made an attempt to find out the consumer behaviour while selecting the product and the reason for giving preference towards a particular brand of tooth paste in Coimbatore city. A sample size of 259 respondents was included in the study by applying Convenient Sampling method. The statistical tools Percentage analysis and Chi-square analysis were applied in the study. The respondents age and monthly income were adopted for the relationship with the factors considered shows that brand preferred, influencing level, examine pack and shifting brand are not significant. In the long run, individual's preference for the tooth paste may differ and the manufacturers have to adopt appropriate marketing strategies to influence the consumers for preferring their brand.

Keywords: (i) Brand Image, (ii) Consumer Preference, (iii) Factors Influence and (iv) Purchase Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

The product image for the brand is more important and the availability for the product is considered as an important when

the consumer had practiced with a certain type of product influence the consumer to prefer for the next time and force them to demand for the same brand on the repeat

purchase process. The consumer behaviour is an integral factor in the ebb and flow of all business in a consumer-oriented society. Consumers with higher cognitive ability apparently acquire more product information and are more capable of integrating information on several product attributes than consumers with lesser ability. Individuals also differ in terms of imagery; that is, in their ability to form mental images and these differences influence their ability to recall information (Keren S. Johnson, Mary R. Zimmer and Linda L. Golden, 1987). The initial thrust of consumer research was from a managerial perspective: marketing managers wanted to know the specific causes of consumer behaviour and they also want to know how people receive, store, and use consumption-related information, so that they could design marketing strategies to influence consumption decisions. (John F. Sherry, Jr. 1991). Many firms adopt the vigorous means to maintain the existence in the market. This tendency is a struggle for the producers for the survival, in the modern business world. The literal meaning of business is “Being Busy” but actually it is an economic activity. Some of them are working on a small scale, somehow making both ends meet. Some others are functioning

on a large-scale providing livelihood to thousands. Profit motive is the major factors of the business.

In fact, business activity will flourish and its object will be realized only, when it is able to serve community to its satisfaction, these goods produced may be consumer goods like cooking oil, soap, tooth paste, etc., which were considered as convenience goods. The marketing strategies are getting sophisticated and fine-tuned, to suit the market, consumer and competition. The critical inputs required for the design of a consumer-based marketing strategy should invariably flow from a systematic study of consumer behaviour. Consumer are free to buy goods of the kind they like and the producers have to ascertain the tastes and preferences of their consumer group and have to produce those goods that will help them to satisfy their consumer needs and desires. Brand image refers to a biased behavioural response expressed over time by some decision-making unit with respect to one or more alternative brand out of a set of such brands (Krishnamurthi, L. and Raj, S. P., 1991). The important of marketing strategy revolves around the consumer preference on selecting a particular brand. Brand familiarity captures consumer’s brand knowledge structures, that is, the

brand associations that exist within a consumer's memory. Familiar and unfamiliar brands differ in terms of the knowledge regarding the brand that is consumer has stored in memory

1.Consumer Preference

Consumers may rely not only on previously acquired product information stored in memory, but also on judgments of brand satisfaction or dissatisfaction which occur in the post-purchase evaluation stage of the decision process. The emphasis on effort is the result of two major factors, (a) these decisions are not important enough to individuals and do not involve a degree of risk large enough to warrant significant decision making effort and (b) consumers have made these decisions numerous times in the past and thus do not need to expend a great deal of decision making effort Consumer behaviour may be defined as that behaviour exhibited by people in planning, purchasing and using economic goods and services (Rajan Nair, 1987). The consumer may also prefer a particular brand due to their knowledge and the awareness about the product that were tempting the mind of the consumer in considering about the factors influence for the purchase process is to be made. In some cases, it may also be due to the forces that have made the consumer to

prefer a particular brand and these forces may be the influence of manufacture, distributor, and retailer and also the family members and friends in certain situation. As a less involvement in decision making process with these variety of the product that may reach in the hands of the consumer as the situation that compels the ultimate user to accept the brand as to the availability. Consumer need is a rapidly growing in field of research and teaching which, in addition to considerable value of marketing managers and others who are professionally concerned with buying activity. Consumer behaviour is a complex, multidimensional process, firms which under-estimate their consumers will have no chance of survival. The study of consumer behaviour will be incomplete if it talks about only one role of the consumer. While some frequently purchase situations involve at least one person acting in one role, in other circumstances a single individual can take on several roles at the same time. Even though it is considered to be incomplete to treat only one consumer role, to simplify the study, mostly one role is emphasized with adequate treatment to the others. The involvement of the consumer during their purchase activity is considered only about their views. This approach is

considered useful because even when told what to purchase, the buyer often makes decisions regarding purchase timing, store choice, package size, and other factors. **Brands** that cater to some market niche are bought in higher quantities, have lower prices, promote to a lesser extent, and have shallower price-cuts and enjoy higher than expected **loyalty** levels (Bhattacharya, C.B., 1997). In fact, one should remember that everyone in this universe in some form or other or a consumer of some goods or service. The markets are customer-driven these days. To study about the customer preference is not an easy as behavior is unique and unpredictable. It is also necessary to understand about the influencing factors that may motivate the buyer to prefer a particular brand.

2. Statement of the Problem

The socio-economic factors may force a consumer to decide about the brand and reflect the cause of the purchase behaviour of the consumer depends as to their income, family structure, culture, etc. With the daily used product like tooth paste, the factors considered by the consumers are not much affected as it may be a less involvement in decision making for the product. Even though these are of low involvement in decision making while purchasing a

particular brand of product, (1) what factors are involved on the purchase decision for daily used product? (2) what preference is considered by the consumer while making a purchase decision for the tooth paste product? The brand may be selected by the consumers due to the influence, in that circumstance, (3) what made the consumer to satisfy on their brand they used?

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To study the factors that influences the consumers in the purchase decision.
2. To examine the consumers preferences on purchase behaviour towards Toothpaste.
3. To study the level of satisfaction of the respondents on the brand they use.

4. Significance of the Study

This study will provide the useful information about the product considered for the research. By and large the consumers can know about the reasons that made them to choose a particular brand of product. It will provide them to evaluate their purchase decisions that were made earlier and while making a repeat purchase process with regard to the same product. The manufacturers are able to know about the preference considered by the consumers to the product that made to select the same brand. The feedback given by the respondents will be more helpful to the

manufacturers to make necessary modifications or improvement in the future, in their product as to the expectation of their consumers, so that the consumers will make a repeat purchase of the same brand. The study also informs about the involvement of the family members in purchase decision making process with regard to the same brand of tooth paste.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Sampling Design and Size of Sample

Convenient sampling method has been adopted for the purpose of selecting sample data. Since the product selected for the study is a commonly used by the respondents in their daily requirement, it allows the researcher to collect the data easily. A sample of 300 consumers was approached for the purpose of study, out of those approached; only 271 have agreed to participate in the study. Among those agreed, only 259 (86.33 %) respondents have given the valuable information and only that information were considered as valuable for the analysis purpose.

5.2 Data Collection

The study is based on the primary data and the data had been collected through a structured questionnaire. A pilot study was conducted among 30 respondents. After getting the response from the pilot study, the

final questionnaire was redrafted with the required modifications and suggestions provided those participated in the pilot study. The study was conducted in Coimbatore city, the third largest city in the State of Tamil Nadu. As one of fastest developing cities in India it provides more job opportunities in small scale engineering units and textile industries, this city was considered as the Manchester of South India. That has encouraged the researcher to conduct the study in Coimbatore city.

5.3 Statistical Analysis

With the collected data the statistical tools Percentage analysis and Chi-square analysis was applied at 5% level of significance.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted and restricts to Coimbatore city alone, it may be a drawback while generalizing the result and so more care has to be applied. Any limitation that contains in an opinion survey is bound to be applicable in this study also.

6. Review of Literature

Bhattacharya, C.B., (1997), carried out a study entitled, “Is your **Brand's Loyalty** Too Much, Too Little, or Just Right? Explaining Deviations in **Loyalty** from the Dirichlet Norm.” A two-step modelling procedure where first computes the deviation from the norm for each **brand** and

subsequently conducts a regression analysis of this **brand**-level data to test the proposed hypotheses. The study finds that on average, **brands** that cater to some market niche are bought in higher quantities, have lower prices, promote to a lesser extent, and have shallower price-cuts and enjoy higher than expected **loyalty** levels.

Gurcharan Das, (2002), currently one is also witnessing significant changes in lifestyles and buying habits of Indian consumers. Convenience foods and ready-to-eat foods are now popular. With the nuclear family, there is also a shift in the woman's attitude to cooking and the meals she serves. The average Indian is now spending his money more liberally than ever before. From a marketing man's perspective, the new middle-class buoyancy elaborates as, the most striking feature of contemporary India is the rise of a confident new middle class. It is full of energy and drive and it is making things happen. India is passing from an inward-looking, predominantly rural society to an increasingly integrated and important player in the world economy.

Verma, D.P.S. and Surendar Munjal, (2003), identified the major factors in making a brand choice decision namely quality, price, availability, packaging and advertisement. The brand loyalty is a

function of behavioral and cognitive patterns of customer. The age and demographic variables affect significantly associated with these behavioral and cognitive patterns of the consumers.

Adeolu, B Ayanwale, Taiwo Alian and Mathew, A Ayanlimi, (2005), identified that the brand preference does not exist in the food drink industry. Many customers buy whatever is available or affordable. If a product is good value for its price, it will command brand loyalty. However, advertising helps in projecting product quality and value before the customers. Advertising has a major influence on consumers' preference. Apart from that the stage of product life cycle is a very important factor to a marketer as it helps in determining the types of marketing strategies to be embarked upon in respect of the said product. Manish Mittal, Anisha Daga, Ginnichhabra, and Lilani, (2010), Parents believe that television advertisements are changing the pattern and behavior of children. They have negative impact on children since children demand, nag and pester their parents to purchase the advertised product, Television advertisements are an important factor their product choice and unhealthy habits in them. The present study indicates that

Indian children love watching television and prefer it over social interaction, physical and developmental activities. It demonstrates that children demand more of the product whose advertisement they like. The study was carried out in Indore, a city of central India, using a sample size 300 parents and they were collected through a structured questionnaire.

7. Analysis and Interpretation

7.1 Percentage Analysis

7.1.1: Socio-Economic Profile

The consumer may be classified based on their social status and based on their economic status that may decide in the purchase process of a product. The products that need more investment have more discussion by the consumer among with the family members, friends and relatives. In the case of less involvement while deciding a product the sometimes do not give much importance to the cost of the particular product that the consumer considers or decides to purchase the product. The study considers some of the socio economic status of the respondents was discussed in table no.1, based on the collected data the respondents' age, gender, educational qualification, monthly income and occupational status were considered.

In the table no.1 it discuss about the socio-economic level of the sample respondents, of the total 259 respondents, 45 (17.4 %) respondents are below 20 years, 63 (24.3%) respondents age is between 20 years and 30 years, 86 (33.2%) respondents are in the range between 31 years and 40 years, 40 (15.4%) of the total were between 41 years to 50 years and the remaining 25 (9.7%) respondents were above 50 years of age category. Of the total 259 respondents, 186 (71.8%) of them were male and 73(28.2%) were female. The education level of the respondents shows that, 34 (13.1%) of the total 259 samples were in the category of no formal education, 58 (22.4%) respondents have up to school level education, a majority of 73 (28.2%) respondents were in graduation level, among the total 259 respondents, about 66 (25.5%) respondents have their education level of post-graduation and the remaining 28 (10.8%) respondents, of the total 259 respondents, are with professional educational level.

Source: Primary Data

On the basis of monthly income wise the respondents were classified in four categories in this study, of the total 259 respondents, 56 (21.6%) respondents have their income below Rs.15000 per month. Of the total 259 respondents, 68 (26.3%)

respondents were in the category between Rs.15000 to Rs.30000 per month as their monthly income, it was 81 (31.3%) respondents were earning between Rs.30001 to Rs.60000 per month. Of the total 259 respondents and the remaining 54 (20.8%) respondents have income above Rs.60000 per month. In the occupation status, the study reveals that, of the total 259 respondents, a majority of 77 (29.7%) of them were employed, 61 (23.6%) respondents of the total 259 samples have business as their occupation, of the total 259 respondents, it was 56 (21.6%) of them were professional as their occupation like doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc., it shows that 28 (10.8%) of respondents were agriculturists and the remaining 37 (14.3%) respondents were in others category like housewife, retired persons, etc.

7.2 Chi-Square Analysis

The chi-square analysis is used to test the level of significance that influences the respondents over the factors towards the product preference. The demographic factors such as age and monthly income of the respondents were considered in chi-square analysis were compared towards the factors that made the respondents to preferences for purchase of toothpaste product. The factors considered in the study

on the respondents' purchase behaviour for the products were - Knowledge of Product, Brand Preferred, Using the brand, Purchase Frequency, Place of Purchase, Purchase Mode, Influencing Level, Motivated to prefer brand, Examine Pack, Problem faced and Shifting Brand. The chi-square analysis is used to test the independence of two attributes or characteristics. In other words, this technique is used to test the level of significance that influence of one character over the other. All the tests were carried out at 5% level of significance.

7.2.1: Relationship between Age and Purchase Behaviour Factors of the Respondents

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between age and purchase behaviour factors of the respondents.

S[#]-Significance NS^{*}-Non-Significance

A consumer while selecting a tooth paste product use to consider several factors that might be convenient to the conditions of that particular consumer. The consumer use to give preference during the purchase decision process for those products that are not only used by the consumer alone but also by the others in their family. In some cases, the family members may also involve in decision making process, regarding brand of the tooth paste, purchase mode, quantity,

etc. A consumer has to consider various factors that have to be accepted by the family members with regard to this variety of goods.

The above table no.2 discusses the relationship between age of the respondents and with the factors affecting purchase decision taken for selecting the tooth paste product. There is no significance relationship at 5% level of significance, with regard to the factors like Knowledge of Product, Brand Preferred, Place of Purchase, Influencing Level, motivated to prefer brand, Examine Pack, and Shifting brand, the calculated chi-square value is less than the table value. Hence the hypothesis is accepted. The calculated value is more than the table value with other factors such as, Using the brand, Purchase Frequency, Purchase Mode, and Problem faced, so the hypothesis is rejected with these factors.

7.2.2 Relationship between Monthly Income and Purchase Behaviour Factors of the Respondents

The consumer makes the purchase of the product as to need, that have forced them to decide to accept a particular brand because of their monthly income level. The sources that make the consumer to select a brand the income factor plays an important role for giving preference. The product, like tooth

paste, that were frequently purchased by the consumers are not much affected as to that of durable products. Hence, these types of goods though do not affect in the purchase process while selecting the brand of tooth paste, the consumer still consider some of the factor like brand preferred, purchase mode, problem faced by the family members, etc., may affect in the purchase decision with regard to tooth paste. Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between monthly income and purchase behaviour factors of the respondents.

The above table no.3 shows that the relationship between monthly income of the respondents and the factors like Brand Preferred, Purchase Frequency, Influencing Level, Examine Pack, Problem faced and Shifting brand, the calculated chi-square value is less than the table value. There is no significance relationship at 5% level of significance, hence the hypothesis is accepted. In all other factors such as, Knowledge of Product, Using the brand, Place of Purchase, Purchase Mode, and Motivated to prefer brand, the hypothesis is rejected with the monthly income of the respondents as the calculated value is more than the table value.

8. Result

It was found out, of the total 259 respondents, that the majority 86 (33.2%) of respondents were in the age category of between 31 years and 40 years. Of those approached the maximum (71.8%) is the male respondents, the respondents education level were maximum (28.2%) with graduation level as their educational status, only 54 (20.8%) of the respondents have their monthly income of above Rs.60000 per month and the majority 81 (31.3%) respondents monthly income is ranging between Rs.30001 to Rs.60000 per month. In the occupational category, of the total 259 respondents, a majority, 77 (29.7%) respondents, were employee.

Of the eleven factors considered, in the Chi-square analysis, the factors like Brand Preferred, Influencing Level, Examine Pack and Shifting brand were not significant with both the variables age and monthly income of the respondents and it is evident that the remaining seven factors are significant from the analysis.

9. Conclusion

In the research, that the consumer preference for the frequently used products like tooth paste which is of less involvement in purchase decision do not affect in the respondent's selection process. As a commonly used product the price factor do

not play a much important role in preferring the brand, since the purpose of the product is important and the cost involvement in procuring these types of products is not much affecting, as it is necessary in the daily requirement. Even when the family members are involved in the decision-making process in some occasion, it may not affect the respondent's selection process, as the tooth paste brand may be considered more important than the other factors. In general, the consumer preference for the purchase behaviour of the less involvement product, it will be considered that the decision and in some occasions the product availability to the consumer as to the expectation will be of more important than those of other reasons. It is essential that an effective communication is necessary for consumers not only in providing information about product but also educating them regarding the use of products. Though, consumer behaviour remains constant at least for a particular period, it cannot be taken for granted that they will not change when better opportunities are given to them.

It was concluded that, the information available to the consumers may be the reason for selecting or preferring the particular brand. Therefore, it is necessary

that consumers have to be thoroughly assessed so as to have better knowledge on marketing and work out appropriate marketing strategies. The parties, those are involved in supplying the product to the ultimate consumer, should keep in mind that studying the minds of the consumer is much difficult, as the consumer taste and fashion may change and that could not be controlled by any factor. Hence, the marketing methods or strategies have to be adopted as to the demand prevailing and as to the market conditions.

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Table No.1: Socio-Economic Profile

Socio-Economic	Variables	Frequency	Per Cent
Age	Below 20 Years	45	17.4
	20-30 Years	63	24.3
	31-40	86	33.2
	41-50	40	15.4
	Above 50 Years	25	9.7
Gender	Male	186	71.8
	Female	73	28.2
Educational Qualification	No Formal Education	34	13.1
	Up to School Level	58	22.4

	Graduation	73	28.2
	Post-Graduation	66	25.5
	Professional	28	10.8
Monthly Income	Below Rs.15000	56	21.6
	Rs.15001-Rs.30000	68	26.3
	Rs.30001-Rs.60000	81	31.3
	Above Rs.60000	54	20.8
Occupational Status	Employed	77	29.7
	Business	61	23.6
	Professional	56	21.6
	Agricultural	28	10.8
	Others	37	14.3

Source: Primary Data

Table No. 2: Relationship between Age and Purchase Behaviour Factors

Purchase Behaviour Factors	Calculated Value	Table Value	S[#]/NS[*]
Knowledge of Product	24.22	26.296	NS
Brand Preferred	15.13	21.026	NS
Using the brand	27.42	26.296	S
Purchase Frequency	24.73	21.026	S

Place of Purchase	24.31	26.296	NS
Purchase Mode	14.52	9.488	S
Influencing Level	17.14	26.296	NS
Motivated to prefer brand	23.43	26.296	NS
Examine Pack	10.24	15.507	NS
Problem faced	11.63	9.488	S
Shifting brand	9.15	9.488	NS

Source: Primary Data

Table No. 3: Relationship between Monthly Income and Purchase Behaviour Factors

Purchase Behaviour Factors	Calculated Value	Table Value	S[#]/NS[*]
Knowledge of Product	22.54	21.026	S
Brand Preferred	11.22	16.919	NS
Using the brand	25.43	21.026	S
Purchase Frequency	14.84	16.919	NS
Place of Purchase	28.51	21.026	S
Purchase Mode	12.12	7.815	S
Influencing Level	19.23	21.026	NS
Motivated to prefer brand	24.72	21.026	S
Examine Pack	11.57	12.592	NS

Problem faced	7.37	7.815	NS
Shifting brand	6.92	7.815	NS

Source: Primary Data

S[#]-Significance NS^{*}-Non-Significance