

A STUDY OF BRAND AWARENESS AND BRAND PREFERENCES FOR SOAP & TOILETRIES PRODUCTS AMONG RURAL CUSTOMERS IN AMRAVATI REGION

* Prof. Pratiksha Ashokrao Kalmegh

**Prof. Ashish V. Deshmukh

*Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, PRMIT&R, Badnera-Maharashtra-444701

*Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, PRMIT&R, Badnera-Maharashtra-444701

ABSTRACT:

There is a huge potential in the rural markets companies are trying to tap in rural areas because there is a tight competition in urban markets if we look the present situation of the rural consumer. In this research work efforts has been taken to analyze the behavior of rural consumer while purchasing toiletries items.

Keywords- Rural consumer, brand reference, brand awareness, consumer behavior.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brand:

A brand is defined as a "name, term, sign symbol (or a combination of these) that identifies the maker or seller of the product". Brand is a marketing tool which allows consumers to recognize the maker of product. A brand name helps an organisation differentiate itself from its competitors. In today's competitive world customers expect products to have branding. Customers often build up a relationship with a brand that they trust and will regularly purchase products from that brand. Some people will only purchase a particular brand even though there are acceptable alternatives on the market.

1.2 Brand Awareness:

Brand awareness refers to the extent to which customers are able to *recall* or *recognize* a brand. Brand awareness is a key consideration in consumer behavior, advertising management, brand management and strategy development. The consumer's ability to recognize or recall a brand is central to purchasing decision-making. Purchasing cannot proceed unless a consumer is first aware of a product category and a brand within that category. Awareness does not necessarily mean that the consumer must be able to recall a specific brand name, but he or she must be able to recall sufficient distinguishing features for purchasing to proceed. For instance, if a consumer asks her friend to buy her some gum in a "blue pack", the friend would be expected to know which gum to buy, even though neither friend can recall the precise brand name at the time.

1.3 Brand Preference:

Brand preference is the brand that a customer chooses for a particular product category. It is often expressed as the percentage of target customers who prefer your brand. Brand preference can be measured by self-reported unaided survey questions such as "what is your favorite type of orange juice?" It can also be tested with user interfaces that ask a customer to pick a product from several competitors. The position of choices may be randomized.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

- 1) To identify process of developing brand preferences among rural consumers.
- 2) Identify the brand experience dimensions induced by consumers from different types of brand interactions.
- 3) To identify the basic mentality or tendency of the rural customer to select the product.
- 4) To study the impact of branding of product on overall buying behavior.
- 5) To identify the factors those affect rural customer buying behavioral intention

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

3.1 Research Design:-

This research topic is classified as **Descriptive Research**; it is design to describe the present situation of rural customers buying behavior of soap and toiletries. The descriptive research design will be adopted to study the brand preferences for soap and toiletries product among rural customer in Amravati region.

3.2 Data Sources & Methods:-

Data collection took place with the help of filling of questionnaires. The questionnaire methods has come to the more widely used and economical means of data collection. The common factor in all variety of the questionnaire method is this reliance on verbal responses to question, written or oral. It found it essential to make sure the questionnaire should be easy to read and understandable to all spectrums of people in the sample.

- **Source of Data collection:-**

The primary sources consist of information collected from a shop keeper of different villages and the end users of that product. The secondary data collected from encyclopedias, survey of rural areas, books, technical journals and news paper reports.

3.3 Sampling Procedure:-

- **Universe**

Rural areas of Amravati region.

- **Sampling Method:**

Non-probability method

Convenience sampling technique is chosen for selecting samples.

- **Sample size:** - 100 respondents from rural areas of Amravati region.

4. FINDINGS:

1. From the research it is found that, all the respondents (100) are use soap, 93 respondents using shampoo, 38 respondents using hair conditioner and 58 respondents are using hand wash.
2. It is found that most of the respondents are using soap and shampoo as their daily life products.
3. The main purpose of using toiletries product is to maintain personal hygiene.
4. It is found that the awareness of hair conditioner in rural areas/people is very less.
5. Dettol hand wash is highly use in rural areas as compare to others.
6. It is found that 63 respondents say yes, that hand wash is beneficial for maintain hygiene, where 14 respondents says no and 23 respondents are still don't know.
7. The majority of frequency of purchasing toiletries product is fortnightly.
8. It has identified that the mentality or tendency of the rural customers to select any product is to easy availability and low prices.
9. It has found that attractive branding like packaging creates an impact on rural consumers buying behavior.
10. It has found that the factors those affect the rural customers buying behavioral intention is easy availability, low prices, attractive packaging, schemes and most important availability of credit.
11. It has found that majority of respondents are buy toiletries products from local store because of trust and relationship and availability of credit.
12. It has found that the endorsement by favorite celebrity is not work on 83 respondents buying decisions.
13. It has found that 58 respondents say yes, advertisement influences them to buy toiletries products and 42 says no.
14. Those who said yes, the television and newspaper advertisement somewhat attract them.
15. And as per personal observation it has found that the hoarding, mela's and retailer's word of mouth attract them most of the time to purchase toiletries products.
16. It has found that majority of respondents have switch their brand.
17. The reason of switching the brand is changes in price and degrades in quality.

5. CONCLUSION:-

From the research it clear that the majority of rural customers is give a preference to any brand as per some factors which is availability at nearest retail shops, low prices, availability of credit and by shinier advertisements by the company or retailers.

Most of the respondents use any FMCG product because they need it only, they just don't compare any product brand with themselves or we can say with their personality. As per the observation of personal interactions it has found that the buying decision technique of rural customers is so deferent from urban customers. Most of the respondents are not consider any special feature while purchase any toiletries product, as most of the urban people consider before purchase like, quality, hygiene's, brand and so on.

But those who are educated or literate people in rural areas, they know about brands and like to use branded products and consider some special features while going to purchase any toiletries product. They know about hair conditioner and how it works they know it too. They use deferent type of brand in all the 4 toiletries products(soap, shampoo, hand wash and hair conditioner).

All the respondents know about soap and shampoo products and they use it too. But if we talk about hand wash so the majority is lesser than soap and shampoo products but most of the rural respondents are aware about it. But in the case of hair conditioner very rarely rural people know about it. And some of those who know, they are still not using it.

Endorsement by celebrities has not impact on rural customers buying decision, because as we discussed in above that most of the majority is don't take any toiletries product as a brand, they just use it because they need it.

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