A STUDY OF FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHOICE OF FMCG PRODUCTS (DENTAL CARE PRODUCTS)

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ABSTRACT

This research study aims to analyse factors that affect the consumption pattern of dental care products. The existence of various brands of the products and the close competition among them has left the consumer's choice in a dilemma. The present research has been carried out with respondents in and around Pune with an objective to explore and understand the orientation of a consumer towards a particular brand, analyse the impact of pricing in the selection of a particular brand of toothpaste, different factors that affect his perception for a particular brand, in the Indian context, with reference to the Dental Care Products.

Keywords: FMCG, Dental Care Products, Toothpaste, Consumer, Brand Preference.

Introduction

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) or Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) sector satisfies the elemental and day-to-day household needs other than grocery, ranging from packaged foodstuff, dairy products, cooking oil, bread, etc.

FMCG refers to those retail goods that are generally replaced or fully used up over a short period of days, weeks, or months, and within one year. FMCG have a short shelf life, either because of high consumer demand or because the product deteriorates rapidly.

India's FMCG sector is the fourth largest sector in the economy and creates employment for more than three million people in downstream activities. Its principal constituents are Household Care, Personal Care and Food & Beverages. The total FMCG market is more than Rs. 85,000 Crores. It is currently growing at a double-digit growth rate and is expected to maintain a high growth rate. The Rs 85,000-crore Indian FMCG industry is expected to register a healthy growth despite the economic downturn.

Despite inflationary pressures, sale of FMCG products is not adversely affected due to price hikes because demand for these products can never shrink and there is also a scope for FMCG companies to gain through product diversification and introducing new variants of the existing products. For instance, Dabur has a wide range of varying products, Dabur Amla & Vatika hair oil, Dabur Honey, Gulabari, Glucose-D, Dabur, Sharbat-e-Azam, Chyawanprash, Hajmola, Dabur Red Toothpaste, Honitus and so on, that keeps it distinguished from others. Hindustan Unilever is among the best known for its promotional strategies for Kissan, beverages, Lipton, Bru, Brooke Bond Taj Mahal and assorted Knorr soup etc.

Such strategies are very essential for the FMCG companies to excel in performance and establish themselves in the market. Many have succeeded in doing this and many are looking forward yet to achieve a mark in this sector. The FMCG sector has been fourth largest industry in India and Indian FMCG companies have already attained an admirable position in the global market but are yet to hit the bull's eye.

Consumer purchase decision

As buyers of goods and services, consumers purchase items that need, and in the process of doing that they make informed purchase decisions on whether to buy or not to buy. The consumer buying process or simply the consumer purchase decision consists of six distinct stages that make up the whole process.

The consumer buying process steps includes.
1. Problem/need recognition
2. Information search

3. Evaluation of alternatives
4. Purchase decision
5. Purchase
6. Post purchase evaluation

Indian Oral Care Industry

The development of toothpaste began as long ago as 300/500BC in China and India. Toothpowder or dentifrice was first available in Britain in the late eighteenth century. It came in a ceramic pot and was available either as a powder or paste. The rich applied it with brushes and the poor with their fingers. Modern toothpastes were developed in the 1800s. A dentist called Peabody was the first to add soap to toothpaste in 1824. Chalk was first added to toothpaste by John Harris in the 1850s. In 1873, toothpaste was first mass-produced into nice smelling toothpaste in a jar. In 1892, Dr. Washington Sheffield of Connecticut was the first to put toothpaste into a collapsible tube. The 1960's saw the introduction of fluoride into toothpaste. This development was followed in the 1980's with the addition of soluble calcium fluoride to fluoride toothpastes. It is therefore within the last thirty years that toothpastes contain the two ingredients - calcium and fluoride. India's toothpaste tradition is based on its strong background of Ayurvedic medicine. Special twigs were used for brushing and each twig was naturally filled with sweet nectar. The oral care market in India is valued at Rs 3,976 crore and is expected to reach Rs 4,373 crore in 2012. The market can be segmented into mouthwashes, toothpastes, toothbrushes, and tooth powders.

Review of Literature

Consumer attitude towards marketing activities is important from both a theoretical and marginal standpoint (Gaski and Etzel,1986). Consumers make product choices based on a combination of product attributes that would meet their needs on dimensions of values, cost and prior satisfaction (Kotler, 1997). The advent of an organized consumerism movement in the United States during 1970s led tremendous interest among researchers in studying the attitude of consumers towards business (Gaski and Etzel,1986). As consumer perceptions significantly affect their behavioural responses to marketing activities, consumers attitudes towards marketing have been found to be linked to several key macroeconomic variables and have been used in economic forecasts (Chopin & Darrat, 2000). Barksdale and Dardan (1972) pioneered the research to consumer attitudes towards marketing in the U.S and replicated their study for a number of years in the 1970's. They measured consumer's attitudes towards the 4 Marketing Mix variables as well as consumerism government regulation and consumer responsibility. Overall, they found that consumers had a rather negative attitude towards marketing practices (Chan & Cui, 2004).

In this regard, Snyder (1974) has referred that there are 2 types of self-motivator's i.e., high and low who show different types of behaviour to meet the requirement of a particular situation (Becherer & Richard, 1978; Snyder & Williams, 1982). Moreover, individuals with external locus of control believe their outcome is controlled by luck, fate, or more powerful others (Rotter, 1966). Consequently, their behaviour seems to vary almost randomly across situations. But individuals with an internal locus of control, however, believe that they are masters of their own destinies and are more likely to behave in accordance with their attitude (Sherman 1973).

Sanbonmatsu, Kardes, & Gibson (1991), have manipulated information processing goals and the evaluative implications of the unique attributes of two products. Tversky (1977) has identified unique attributes as those which are included in the description of one product but omitted from the description of the other product. The research conducted in this regard showed that the direction-of-comparisons effect is eliminated when consumers form attitude-based preferences.

Research Methodology
Research Problem

This research study aims to analyse factors that affect the consumption pattern of dental care products. The existence of various brands of the products and the close competition among them has left the consumer's choice in a dilemma.

Objectives

The present research has been carried out with respondents in and around Pune with an objective to –

1. Explore and understand the orientation of a consumer towards a particular brand.
2. Analyze the impact of pricing in the selection of a particular brand of toothpaste.
3. Different factors that affect his perception for a particular brand, in the Indian context, with reference to the Dental Care Products.

Research Design
Research type

Descriptive research as we are describing the current market situation as it exists.

Population

All those who are using oral care products in Pune City.

Sample size: 320
Sampling method: Convenience sampling method.

## Sources and methods of data collection

Primary and Secondary Data

Primary Data: The primary data collected during our study was the information collected by survey using Questionnaire.

Secondary Data: Internet websites like Google, Wikipedia, etc to get general information related to the study.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

Graph 1: Brand Preference by Respondents
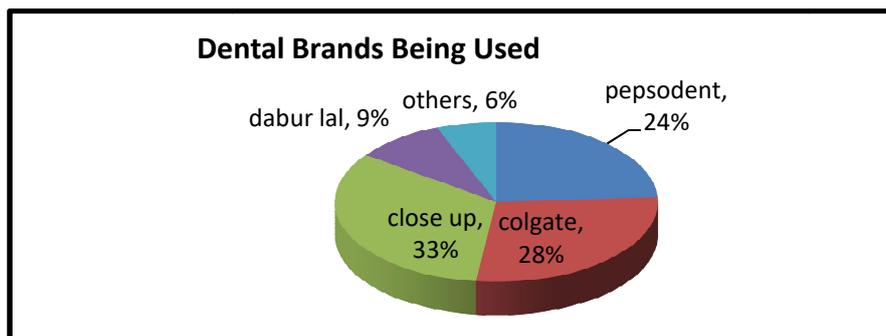
On analysing the customer orientation of a particular brand of different brands available in the market, it has been found that the most preferred brand is Close-up (33% of the total population prefers this brand), followed by Colgate (28%), Pepsodent (24%), Dabur Lal (9%) and Others (6%).

### Graph 2: Various Sources of Brand Information
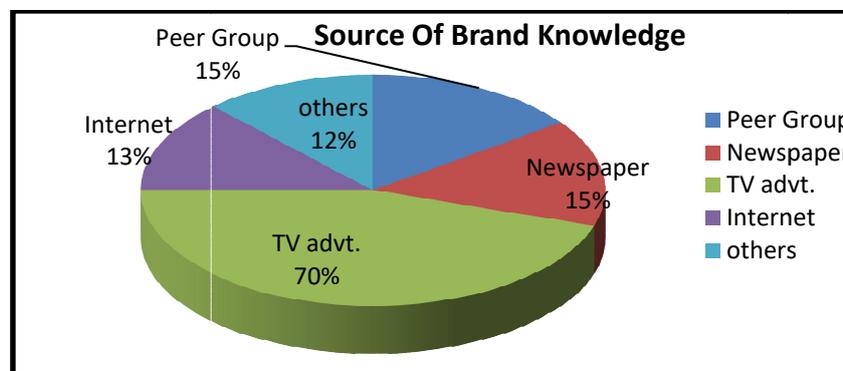
In terms of source of knowledge of the brand, it has been found 70% of the total sample obtains information about the brands from TV advertisements, 15% from groups of friends, 15% from newspapers, 13% from the internet and 12% from other sources. It is found that

the impact of the TV advertisements is the most, as it reaches easily to the consumers. By means of the effective advertisement about the

brand, sellers try to create maximum awareness about the product.

Graph 3: Various Factors affecting Consumer Buying Behaviour
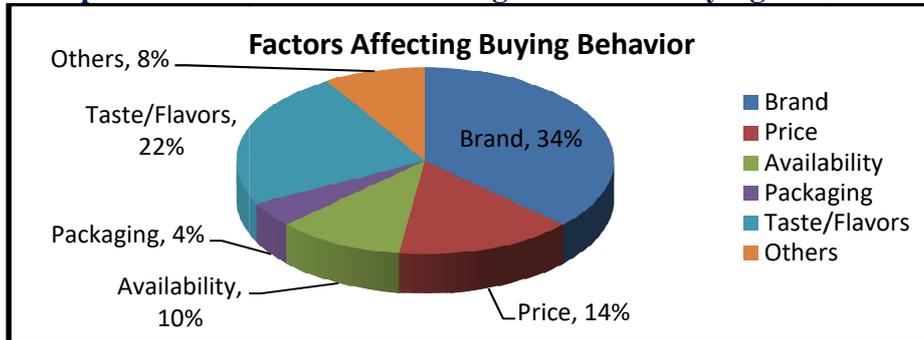
On analysing the factors affecting the buying behaviour of dental care products we came to know that the Brand itself is a major factor influencing buying behaviour (34%) followed by taste/flavours (22%), price of the product (14%), then availability (10%), packaging

(4%), and others (8%). This clearly indicates that the Brand image and price creates a powerful impact on buying behaviour of consumers. Hence, creating and maintaining the Brand and proper pricing strategy plays a crucial role.

Graph 4: Factors Affecting Brand Switching Behaviour
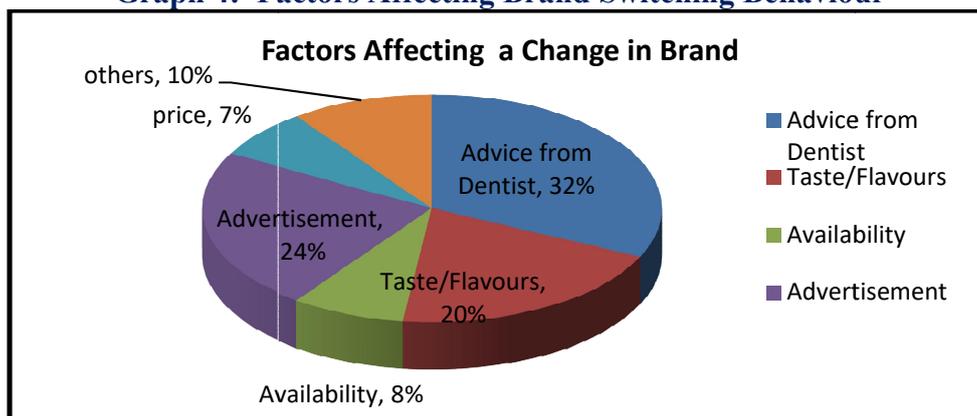
On analysing the reason for switching to another brand, it was calculated that 32% of the sample switched due to advice by dentist, 24% due to advertisements, 20% taste/flavours, 8% due to availability, 7% due to price and 10% due to other reasons.
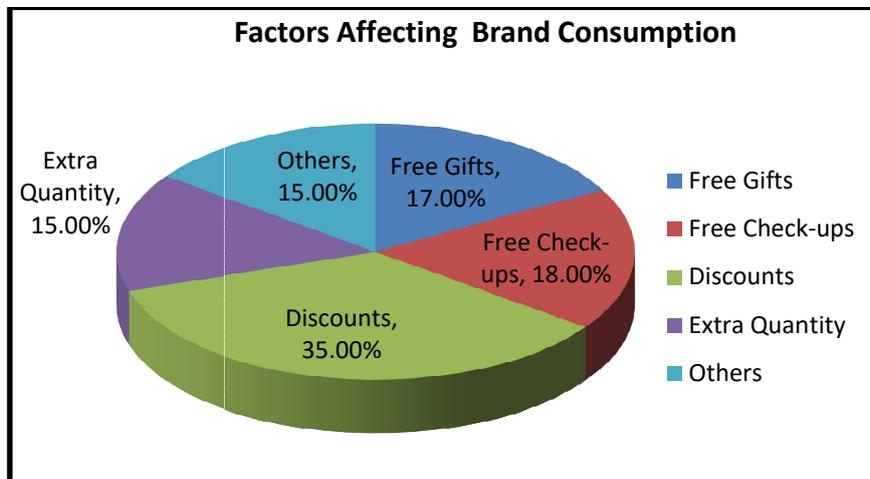
Graph 5: Factors Influencing Buying of Brand.
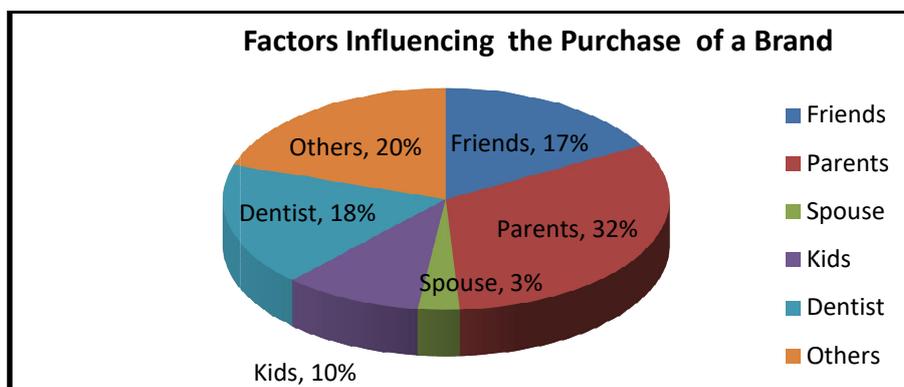
In order to evaluate the factors responsible for purchasing a particular brand it was found that maximum respondents were influenced by parents (32%), followed by dentists (18%), friends (17%), kids (10%), spouse (3%), and others (20%).

Graph 6: Factors Affecting Consumption of Brand

In terms of analysing the reason affecting brand consumption pattern, it was found that maximum people prefer a brand due to discounts (35%), free checkups (18%), followed by free gifts (17%), extra quantity (15%) and others (15 %).

Association between various attributes

The Tables below shows the association between the use of brands and age.
Using SPSS we have formulated the values of Chi Square Test and Contingency coefficient.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents according to Age and Brand used

Age * Brand Cross tabulation							
		Brand					Total
		Colgate	Close up	Pepsodent	Dabur La	Other	
age	below 20	12	10	13	5	3	43
	21-30	40	46	35	11	8	140
	31-40	29	42	14	8	5	98
	40 above	7	9	16	4	3	39
Total		88	107	78	28	19	320

Table 2: Results of Chi Square Test

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.948[a]	12	.152
Likelihood Ratio	17.088	12	.146
N of Valid Cases	320		

The Chi square value is 0.152 which is greater than 0.05. This shows that there is no association between age and the brand used.

Association between the purchase frequency and the brushing pattern of the consumers.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents according to Purchase frequency and Brushing Frequency.

		Brushing Frequency				Total
		once	twice	thrice	4	
Purchase frequency	monthly	105	158	1	1	265
	quarterly	25	26	0	0	51
	yearly	0	4	0	0	4
Total		130	188	1	1	320

There is a positive relation between the brushing pattern and the purchasing frequency of the consumers since r=0.120.

Findings

Out of all the brands available in the market, it is seen that Close-up is the most preferred brand. Majority of the consumers (70%) buy a particular brand of toothpaste based on the TV advertisement. The TV advertisement is the best source of knowledge for the brand.

Brand is a major determinant that makes a consumer buy a particular product. Brand name carries the maximum weightage in selection of a product.

43% of the consumers have shifted to another brand. And when asked for the reason for this change, it was seen that they have done this because of the advice from the dentist. This shows that consumers have become health conscious.

Parents are the ones who influence the purchase decision of a brand. They are the ones who take the decision which brand to get. It is generally followed in most of the households.

Discounts attract the consumers to buy a particular dental care product. The more the discounts offered, the more is the number of consumers.

Limitations

Although Social Science problems are continuous and have a past and a future, the research ends up getting wholly immersed in the current situations.

In this type of research, data collection takes a lot of time and when it was taken up for analysis, some data was proved to be useless. This method is likely to be the slowest of all.

As we are using, questionnaire as a source of data collection, only educated and co-operating respondents were useful.

Our study only identifies a relevant variable which restricts the research to aim for testing hypothesis.

It was difficult to know whether willing respondents were truly representative or not.

Suggestions

1. It was found that maximum brand knowledge was through TV advertisements, so for popularising the brand company should make simple and understandable advertisements to connect to more population. Popular celebrities can be used as Brand Ambassadors to attract maximum consumers.

2. Government intervention is required by organizing oral health care awareness camps among the masses. Maximum number of consumers change their brands because of the dentist's advice so routine checkups should be organised regularly.

3. Using social networking sites and newspapers as a tool to target the consumers in order to provide dental care service, Snap deals

4. Association of the company as a sponsor with leading Beauty Contests or Award functions.

5. Flavours and Packaging can be altered according to the age groups especially for kids.

Conclusion

In case of FMCG products, the marketer must take due care on making his brand popular among the consumers. A few of the following things need to be kept in mind:

1. Deciding on a brand is not an easy task. There are various factors that a consumer considers before making his choice for the selection of the dental care product.

2. TV advertisements are the best source for brand knowledge. The basic aim of a TV advertisement should be to make the consumer aware of the basic characteristics of the product. The advertisement should be a guide to the consumer. The attributes of the product should match with the consumer needs.

3. Once the consumer selects a particular brand, he believes in sticking to the same brand. He follows Brand Loyalty. A few factors, mainly Price might influence him to purchase another brand, but still the popularity of the brand counts more than anything else.

4. Parents are the main factor on whom the brand purchase decision is based. They are the ones that directly influence the purchase decision of the consumer.

The purchase of a product is a very important decision taken by the consumer. He evaluates the brand image, compares the price between alternatives, takes into consideration his friends' opinions and then arrives at the decision. The main aim of the FMCG products should be to give value for money to the consumers. This would increase the number of customers for a particular brand. The consumer plus the marketer both would be satisfied.

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