

Brand Popularity And Brand Usage Of Women Consumers Towards Bath Soap

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Abstract

India is a country with a population level of 1,030 million people. With the household penetration of soaps is 98%. People belonging to different income levels use different brands. Soap is primarily targeted towards Women. They are the chief decision makers of purchase of bath soap. Soap manufacturers originally targeted their products to the lowest income strata in urban as well as rural consumers, positioning their brands as a way to remove dirt and clean the body. The major players in the market for bath soap are HLL, Nirma and P&G. This paper tries to research the brand popularity and brand usage of bath soap that is commonly used both by urban and rural women consumers. It also examines the attributes of bath soap.

Keywords: Bath soap, Brand Popularity, Brand Usage, Customer Satisfaction.

I.INTRODUCTION

Today's brands are more visible than those in the past. They are everywhere on the TV hoardings posters and print media. Brands while proclaiming their positive qualities pull down those of their rivals. Intangible assets such as brands patents and know-how have become increasingly dominant elements of company value. Brands are widely recognized as corporate assets but have been historically evaluated based on non financial attributes like awareness, recognition and perceived value. Every marketer is instinctively knows that his or her brand is valuable. Brand value is represented by the premium price a company gets at the time of transfer of ownership. However, the value for ongoing business is determined by the important financial term "goodwill".

India is a country with a population level of 1,030 million people. With the household penetration of soaps is 98%. People belonging to different income levels use different brands. Soap is primarily targeted towards Women. They are the chief decision makers of purchase of bath soap. Soap manufacturers originally targeted their products to the lowest income strata in urban as well as rural consumers, positioning their brands as a way to remove dirt and clean the body. The major players in the market for bath soap are HLL, Nirma and P&G.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. GIHAN WIJESUNDRA (2010) in this article “ Factors influencing the demand of beauty soap among female consumers in the greater Colombo region” purpose of this study is to explore how the marketing mix & demographical factors influence the brand preference & purchasing behavior of beauty soap among the among the female consumers in the greater Colombo region. The results indicated that there were statistical relationship between price, product, education, occupation and brand preference and there was no statistical relationship between place, promotion, age, income level, marital status, skin type, social factors and substitute product with the brand preference.

Thus the research concludes that the price, product, education & occupation are only having a statistical relationship with the brand preference of female consumers in the greater Colombo region.

2. ANKIT KATIYAR & NIKHA KATIYAR, (2014) “An Empirical study of Indian Consumer Buying Behavior of FMCG products (With Special Reference of Bathing Soap)”, bathing soap are fast moving consumer goods that have seen a surge in their sales in the past few decades in India more and more people are opening up to the idea of experimenting and trying out newer bath soap. This study is attempt to cover the various factors that influence the buying decision of consumers who plan to purchase and or used bath soap. FMCG sector is the fourth largest sector in India touching everybody life’s in every day. The FMCG goods sector is vital contributor to India’s gross domestic products.
3. G.LAXMI PRABHA (2007) Studied about consumer behavior towards bathing soaps and found that advertisements proved to be very useful in selling the products and the study also revealed the importance of brand loyalties.
4. KULDEEP SINGH & VARSHNEY (2003) Studied about consumer behavior of toilet soaps and concluded that consumers preferred lower rank brands (economy brands).

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH ON BRAND

Brand is a valuable, renewable and lasting asset capable of producing a sustainable competitive advantage for the company. For instance, certain brands like Colgate, Dettol, Britannia, Life Buoy, Ariel, Lux, Pond’s etc., are held in high esteem by the Indian consumers. The companies owning such brands have a good image in the market.

IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The consumer's mind can be thought of as a geometric space where brands are plotted as points to represent consumer judgements. The task of the marketer is to mould consumer perceptions so as to occupy the desired position for his brand. Consumer's attitudes, beliefs and experience play a vital role in forming opinion about brands and buying decisions. In this context, the following questions arise.

- ❖ In the FMCG market flooded with a variety of brands what are the brands consider to be most popular in respect of bath soap?
- ❖ Do the consumers use the same brand that they consider as popular in the market?
- ❖ Do the products possess the attributes that the consumers expect?

Hence the researcher has chosen this topic in order to know brand popularity and brand usage of bath soap that are commonly used both by urban and rural women consumers.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study

- ❖ To know the Brand popularity of bath soap among respondents.
- ❖ To study the Brand Usage of customers.
- ❖ To assess the attributes of the product as perceived by the user.
- ❖ To offer suggestions on the basis of results of the study.

VI. METHODOLOGY USED IN THE STUDY

Tirupur district of Tamilnadu state has been taken as the area of the study.

Primary data were collected from women who are residing in rural and urban area of Tirupur district, through interview schedule. The entire women population of Tirupur district constitutes the sample frame. Due to time and resource constraints it was decided to restrict the sample size to two hundred. As the sample was to be drawn from both rural and urban area, 100 respondents were selected from Tirupur town (urban respondents) and the rest 100 respondents were selected from Veerachimangalam and Mulanur villages of Dharapuram block (rural respondents). The Dharapuram block was selected by drawing lots from the Taluks of Tirupur District.

For the purpose of detailed analysis, percentage analysis has been used in the study.

VII. BRAND POPULARITY

There may be many reasons for a brand to become too popular, some of the reasons suggested by theorists are advertisement, free sample packets, sachets, word-of-mouth, etc. Here the researcher presents the popularity list of bath soap collected from women who are

living in both rural and urban areas, in the form of table in percentage. This popularity figure is collected / counted irrespective of their usage, i.e. the usage is not considered for these tables, but only their opinion of the most popular brand in the market has been listed in the forthcoming tables.

Table 7.1
POPULAR BRANDS – BATHING SOAP

(Figures in %)

S. No.	Brands	No. of Res.	Rural	Urban	Age			Education		Occupation		Income		Family size	
					18-30	30-40	Above 40	School	College	House Wife	Emp/pro	Low	High	Small	Large
1.	Hamam	72	30	42	30.14	36.14	45.45	37.25	34.69	30.77	45.71	33.33	38.61	37.42	31.11
2.	Lux	48	27	21	30.14	21.69	20.45	18.63	29.59	27.69	17.14	21.21	26.73	23.87	24.44
3.	Pears	20	13	7	12.33	7.23	13.64	6.86	13.27	10.00	10.00	12.12	7.92	10.32	8.89
4.	Mysore Sandal	12	4	8	5.48	6.02	2.27	4.90	5.10	5.38	7.14	2.02	9.90	6.45	4.44
5.	Cinthol	9	5	4	5.48	2.41	6.82	5.88	3.06	2.31	8.57	5.05	3.96	4.52	4.44
6.	Lifebuoy	9	3	6	-	8.43	-	7.84	1.02	6.15	1.43	6.06	2.97	4.52	4.44
7.	Liril	9	8	1	9.59	1.20	2.27	5.88	3.06	4.62	4.29	8.08	0.99	3.87	6.67
8.	Rexona	8	3	5	1.36	6.02	2.27	2.94	5.10	4.62	2.86	4.04	3.96	3.87	4.44
9.	Others	13	7	6	5.48	10.84	6.82	9.80	5.10	8.46	2.86	8.08	4.95	5.16	11.11

Table 7.1 shows that among various brands of bathing soap, Hamam is the most popular brand and the next popular brand is Lux and third place goes to pears. Irrespective of age, education, occupation, income and size of the family Hamam has emerged as the leading brand. Fourth place goes to Mysore Sandal; Cinthol, Lifebuoy and Liril have been rated as the fifth place by equal number of respondents (i.e. 9 in each case).

VIII. BRAND USAGE

In this study, data calculated to find the present usage of brand, are presented in the form of tables. These tables contain the total users of the particular brand, with the subdivisions of original users (who are using the brand continuously for a long period of time) and new users from other brands (swingers). This swinger's data is divided into rural and urban area in numbers as well as in percentage. WOM (Word-of-Mouth), Influencer and Decision maker plays a very big role in purchasing a product / brand or switching from the particular brand to other.

Table 8.1
BRAND USAGE – BATHING SOAP

S. No.	Brands	Original Users		New users From other Brands		Area				Total Users
						Rural		Urban		
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1.	Hamam	50	38.46	15	21.43	7	33.33	8	16.33	65
2.	Lux	30	23.08	13	18.57	-	-	13	26.53	43
3.	Pears	9	6.92	9	12.86	5	23.81	4	8.16	18
4.	Mysore Sandal	10	7.69	6	8.57	1	4.76	5	10.20	16
5.	Cinthol	6	4.62	5	7.14	-	-	5	10.20	11
6.	Lifebuoy	3	2.31	6	8.57	4	19.05	2	4.08	9
7.	Rexona	5	3.85	3	4.29	-	-	3	6.12	8
8.	Liril	7	5.38	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
9.	Medimix	3	2.31	2	2.86	-	-	2	4.08	5
10.	Others	7	5.38	11	15.71	4	19.05	7	14.29	18

From the above table shows that, Swingers data show that Hamam users are more in number than other brand users and it also have the highest number of original users. Lux and pears rank as the second and third in respect of usage. The percentage of swingers to the present brand is high among urban respondents in all brands except for Pears and Lifebuoy.

A very high percentage of rural respondents have switched over to Hamam from other brands and urban respondents have switched over to Lux. Swingers of Lux, Cinthol, Rexona and Medimix are from urban area.

Table 8.2
INFLUENCERS OF PURCHASE OF BATHSOAP

S. No.	Influencers	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
1.	Family Members	53	41
2.	Friends	8	7
3.	Advertisement	25	37
4.	Doctor	14	15

Table 8.2 shows that, among all the factors selected to be influencing the brand selection of rural women, “Family member” get the top score for all the products and “Advertisement” gets the next highest score. In respect of urban women also the factor, “Family members” bags the highest score.

Table 8.3
DECISION MAKERS OF PURCHASE OF BATHSOAP

S. No.	Influencers	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
1.	Family Members	31	43
2.	Friends	7	6
3.	Own Decision	62	51

From the above table shows that, among decision makers of rural consumers, “Own decision” gets the highest percentage. Next highest percentage of decision makers is family members and the role of friends is the least. In the case of urban consumers also “Own decision” gets the top score. Family members are the next highest decision maker and the friends get the lowest percentage.

IX. ATTRIBUTES

Among various attributes, the following five attributes were selected for bath soap. The process commenced with a check on attributes with brand. The respondents were asked to answer either “Yes” or “No” to 5 attributes of bath soap considered in the study.

The attributes were

1. Good Appearance
2. Fragrant
3. Good for skin
4. Full satisfaction and
5. Quality justifies the cost

COMPUTATION OF SCORES

The final score for a brand was obtained by adding up the number of agreements to each of the five attributes. The total was divided by the total sample size to arrive at average score on a scale of 0 to 5.

TABLE 9.1
ATTRIBUTES OF RURAL & URBAN WOMEN CONSUMERS

Sino	Attributes	Rural	Urban
1	Good appearance	85	91
2.	Fragrant	80	87
3.	Good for Skin	90	78
4.	Full satisfaction	75	69
5.	Quality justifies the cost	78	80
Average score		.816	.810

From the above table, Good for skin is an important factor for influencing the rural women for selection of a bathing soap. 75 respondents have complete satisfaction with their bathing soap. As in the urban category, 91 respondents have stated that bathing soaps appear to be good.

X. FINDINGS

- ❖ As a part of the study, the popularity of bath soap among rural and urban women consumers have been analyzed and the conclusions are arrived at Hamam is the most popular brand among soaps.
- ❖ To find out the present usage of brand, Hamam get the highest percentage (38.46%) of long period users than other bathing soap brands as well as swingers from other brands (15 respondents).
- ❖ The percentage analysis of influencers reveal that bath soap purchase is mostly influenced by “Family members”, and the decision makers are the individuals themselves in case of both rural and urban respondents.
- ❖ Among rural women consumers, bathing soap gets the attribute score of 0.816. Among urban respondents, it secured 0.810.

XI. SUGGESTIONS

The manufacturers of bathing soap have tried various tricks to satisfy the consumers by using different flavours, attractive colours, convenient packages, styles, advanced techniques for effective advertisements, and also by introducing new varieties to cater to the needs of different segments of consumers. Some important suggestions arising out of the study are presented below:

- ❖ Now a day the sales strategy is moving towards giving free gifts, offers etc, for the products.
- ❖ Most of the chemicals used in soaps are harmful for skin. Now a day's people prefer herbal soaps because of their therapeutic value.
- ❖ Manufacturers are introducing soaps in different sizes and ranges, targeting consumers from low income groups.
- ❖ Customers can come to know about a brand through a various range of contacts and touch points: personal observation and use, word of mouth, meeting company personnel, seeing the web page and so on.
- ❖ Growing awareness about sanitation and increasing disposable income in rural areas will be key drivers for the growth of soap market.

XII. CONCLUSION

Perception of the respondents as to the popular brands in the market and their selection of brand of bathing soap are analyzed in the study. The study revealed that the brands considered to be popular by the respondents are also the brands chosen and used by them. Brand choice of bath soap is respondent's own decision. The analysis of attribute scores lead to the conclusion that even the most popular brands do not possess all the attributes expected by users. It is concluded that the market players have to see that their products possess the required attributes so as to make consumers highly satisfied.

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