



CONSUMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

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INTRODUCTION

Consumer preference is an important factor of Marketing Management. Unless a marketing manager has the knowledge of the factors that affect consumer's purchasing patterns, consumers purchasing patterns are likely to be influenced by demographic, economic, psychological and sociological factors. They must find out what consumers want and then translate these desires in to meaningful technical language. It describes what they want in terms of products benefits, functions, characteristics performance criteria and even manufacturing procedures.

The consumer market is the sum of all the goods and services purchased in a given period by all the inhabitants of a given country or a section there of for the satisfaction of their consumption needs. The consumer market actually consists of four components,

- ❖ People
- ❖ Purchasing power
- ❖ Need for a specified product
- ❖ Willing to fill the need with a given product.

The consumer orientation is the fundamental aspect of marketing management concept. Under this orientation market related problems are analyzed as “consumer problems” rather than “fundamental problem”. More over, marketing process involves bringing together of two groups via sellers and consumers.

Statement of the problem

Marketing is intensifying as the various sectors recognize that marketing contributes to the improved performance in the market place. The markets offer a variety of personal care products to the consumers. The media plays a vital role in helping manufactures promote and find market for their product.

Consumers many a time are confused and bewildered in view of the claims made by the different marketers. With the emergence of highly competitive market for personal care products is likely to witness a drastic change. It is time, marketers devise consumer based marketing strategies to pull the consumers towards their brands. Against this backdrop, a consumer research study was conducted to enquire in to the consumer behaviour towards personal care products.

- Bathing soap
- Shampoo
- Talcum powder
- Tooth paste

In this study, the focus is on trying to capture the market by motivating consumers and not the market. Hence a complete understanding as to the consumers’ preference and attitudes to brands of a personal care products or service is necessary.

Scope of the study

In this study an attempt made to throw light on the usage of personal care products, brand awareness, reasons for using personal care products and the priorities given by consumers on product attributes.

Objective of the study

- To study on consumer preference towards personal care products.
- To know the consumer satisfaction level towards price, quality, package, freshness and availability.
- To analyze the satisfaction of the particular brand.

- To suggest suitable market strategy of personal care product.

Limitations of the study

- ❖ The accuracy of the figures and data are subject to the respondents view.
- ❖ The time and cost are two major factors, which limits researcher for having detailed study.
- ❖ Some respondent have been reluctant to provide the necessary information.

Brand types

- ❖ National brands - The same brand used on a national level
- ❖ Regional brand - Brand for particular region.
- ❖ Advertising brand - Brand stressing symbol
- ❖ Blanket brands/Single/family brand – One brand name for all the product of manufacturing eg: Godrej product
- ❖ Multiple brands/individual brands – Brand name given for each variety of products eg: various brand soaps of Tata's.

PROFILE OF THE PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

BATHING SOAPS

The bathing soap market is about 4.5 lakh tons in size. Though there are now more than 200 brands in the bathing soap category, most of the national brands are manufactured by three companies. These are the (a) Hindustan Levers Ltd. (HLL) (b) Godrej Soaps and the (c) Tata Oil Mills Company (TOMCO). TOMCO has been taken over by Hindustan Levers in the early nineties. Godrej had an abortive alliance with Procter and Gamble during the same period. This adversely affected the brands of both the companies initially. In this, we consider on the point of bathing soaps only.

Hindustan Levers is by far the strongest player in the soaps market in India. It has leading brands, the most popular among them being the three 'L's – Lifebuoy, Lux and Liril. Lifebuoy is reportedly the world's biggest bathing soap brand in terms of tonnage. It is one of the cheapest brands in the market and is 102 years old.

Pears is another strong niche brand in the Levers' stable. It is one of the oldest soaps in the market. It is a transparent glycerin soap positioned on 'skin care.' Another strong brand in the Levers' portfolio is Rexona. It is positioned on 'smooth-skin.'

After TOMCO's takeover by Levers, all its brands are reportedly gaining volumes. The biggest among TOMCO's soaps is Hamam, which for a long time was positioned as the 'family soap'. The other brand, which provided some competition for Lifebuoy in the past, was OK Bath.

Godrej is a pioneer in the use of vegetable oil technology in making bathing soaps. Because of the average Indian's aversion to animal fat, the founder of Godrej modified the soap making process to use vegetable oil in place of animal fat as input. Its strongest brand is Cinthol with 5 variants. Its comets directly with Hindustan Lever's Liril recently it launched a premium variant called Cinthol ultimate, which promises moisturizing as well as fighting of body odour.

Mysore sandal is regional and strong in the whole of south India. It is positioned on 'sandalwood fragrance' and backed by tradition. However, the brand is now suffering due to organizational problems. Another point of contention was that several soaps were available not as 100gm packs but as 75 gm or 150 gm packs. Some experts feel that a soap costing Rs.7.50 per 150 gm (Lifebuoy) cannot be treated as an equal to another costing Rs.5 per 100 gm, though the per gram cost is the same in both cases. The consumer is buying it as 150 gm soap; hence the cut-off indicated on per 100 gm basis may not be right, it was contended.

It can be argued that distinctive positioning and a product that is very different from the existing ones is the key to success in the bathing soaps market.

Some other familiar brands

Cinthol is rated as successful toilet soap. In marketing terms it can be called a maverick brand. At any point of time cinthol has 5 variants. Those variants keep changing depending upon the changes in the market. There is the old cinthol which has a loyal customer base. There is a low priced variant which brings in the volumes. Its positioning changed from "deodorant" to "macho" (endorsed by vinod khanna) to "freshness"

Hamam is a successful soap. Besides its "family soap" positioning, several reasons are cited for its success. Firstly, it is primarily a south Indian brand and recommended by doctors. This gave the soap credibility. It is one of the oldest skin care soaps in the market.

Lifebuoy is the largest selling soap in India and also probably throughout the world. It is the most successful toilet soap brand in the country. It is a recruiting brand and any non-

user of soap who gets converted is first likely to buy lifebuoy. It is priced low and is hence in the reach of the common man. It is 150 gm soap and therefore offers value for money.

Most experts feel the Liril's success is basically a positioning success. It was probably the only soap launched in the seventies to be successful. Its positioning connotes youth, freshness and freedom. Though positioning was fundamentally the reason for Liril's success, the contribution of the uniqueness of the product, packaging, lime freshness, product delivery etc.

Lux's success is by and large attributed to its positioning. Its positioning in the Indian and the international markets is the same. The theme is basically that Lux holds "the secret to the beauty of film stars."

Mysore sandal is a reasonably successful brand, which could have been more successful. Given the competition in the nineties, it could lose out market share unless it is more proactive. It is successful because it is a unique product. Either in a packed or unpacked condition, it cannot be mistaken for any other soap. Its ingredients, packaging, shape, fragrance are all distinctive.

Pears is a success basically because it is a distinctive, unique product. Besides the product being good, it delivers a relevant benefit. The positioning is single mindedly medicinal and it does not offer any cosmetic benefit. It also does not have a very pleasant smell. But it protects the skin because of its glycerin content.

Rexona's success owes to several other aspects besides being priced reasonably. Its traditional rival in the market has been Hamam, which was TOMCO brand while Rexona is a Levers brand. Both of them compete on the skin care platform.

Hence, there is no reason to believe that brands should be designed only for finite life in the years to come. In sum, though it is agreed that a 12 – 15 year span is good enough for a brand to be counted a success.

SHAMPOOS

The shampoos market in India about Rs.3500 million in size. The leaders in this market are Hindustan Levers brands – Clinic Plus and Sunsilk. Both the brands have several variants and have been remarkably successful for more than two decades now. Clinic Plus has 'medical' or 'health' positioning while Sunsilk is positioned on the 'beauty' platform. But for

some time now both of them are moving towards a central position between ‘health’ and ‘cosmetic’ positions. A brand that has successfully positioned itself centrally is P&G’s Pantene (“Hair so healthy it shines.”) To counter Pantene, Hindustan Levers launched Organics, which has not been too successful so far. But, by and large Pantene has been more successful than its competitors.

The brands launched in the early 90’s in South India have changed the complexion of the shampoo market. Velvette launched a one-rupee sachet (till then sold in bottles only.), which was extremely successful. This was followed by Beauty Cosmetics’ Chick brand which tasted similar success for identical reasons i.e., low price and convenient packaging. However, neither Velvette nor Chick could sustain growth because they failed to upgrade their product.

Beauty cosmetics have two other brands, which are significant. These are Nyle herbal shampoo and Meera herbal powder. Meera herbal powder fares well owing to its pioneer advantage in the powder segment and weak competition from another south-based brand – Raaga. Nyle herbal shampoo though equipped with a reasonable market share is under pressure due to aggressive promoting and spends from MNC brands like Pantene and Organics.

Shampoos, by and large, are seen as a high growth category. Besides, in this market, different types of products like synthetic shampoos, herbal shampoos, herbal powders and Shikkai (herbal) soaps compete. Most organizations are preparing themselves for heavy promotional expenditure and new product launches to corner share in this rapidly growing market.

Some other familiar brands

Though Chik was initially successful, it may eventually end up a failure. There were reasons for its initial success. These were mainly its pioneering of low priced sachets along with Velvette and the excise duty concessions enjoyed by it which gave it flexibility in pricing. Initially, Chik and Velvette took the MNCs by surprise when they piloted the sachet revolution.

Clinic Plus’ success is basically seen as a positioning success because it sold on the “anti-dandruff/health” platform. It later successfully broadened this position to connote “Family” and “Health.” It captured the South Indian market, which is predominantly a

“health” market. Many rural customers identify it as “Doctor Shampoo” because of the “+” sign on the package. Further the biggest achievement of the Clinic family is that it has a distinct identity in the minds of the consumers.

Meera is rated as a success. Though it is a powder and not a shampoo, it still competes with the latter. Herbal powders are popular in the South and it may be because Beauty Cosmetics is a South based company and was the first to launch a herbal powder. Besides, Meera’s distribution is strong in the South.

Pantene’s owes its success basically to its product and its positioning. Even competitor brand managers are agreed that the product per se is good. Positioning also contributed. “Hair so healthy that it shines” was a positioning statement that bridged the “cosmetic” and “Health” platforms. An important reason Pantene’s success was the extensive household sampling conducted to promote the product.

“Sunsilk’s success owes as much to its being a brand on the move as to its “Beauty/Cosmetic” positioning. It has a specific variant for different geographic regions in India. It also brought in the shampoo plus conditioner combination first into the market, and was the first to bring in a black coloured shampoo.

Velvette also had a good beginning but is very likely to end up as a failure. Velvette was the pioneer of the sachet revolution, but like Chik, with the fall in excise duties, it also lost out to MNC brands.

TALCUM POWDERS

The talcum powders’ market is about 20,000 T in size. It is growing much more slowly as compared to the other three product categories. Ponds’ umbrellas of brands are the undisputed leaders of the talcum powder market. The flagship is Ponds’ Dream flower Talc that is the biggest talcum powder brand in the market. Ponds Magic, which has been launched as its brand extension, has also done remarkably well. Ponds’ sandalwood variant is not doing very well largely due to tough competition from South-based brands like Gokul, which have been traditionally strong in the sandalwood segment.

Cinthol is brand extension of bathing soaps. In fact, till recently, all the competitors of Ponds have been brand extensions. In a way this helped Ponds’ because for Ponds’ talcum powders is the lifeline. The standalone brands that are likely to compete vigorously with Ponds are Zee. Zee started as successful South based brand and is now going national.

Ponds is a very strong player in the talcum powder market with more than half the market share. Any competitor who would like to make his presence felt should be prepared to spend extensively on promotion and brand building to compete effectively with Ponds.

Some other familiar brands

Cinthol talcum powder cannot be considered a success owing to its limited market share. This is because of it being treated as a brand extension and not as a brand. Since the brand relies on spill over benefits, frequent changes effected in the soap's positioning may not augur well for the extension. These are some of the reasons for the indifferent performance of Cinthol talc.

Gokul is seen by most observers as a successful brand. Its fundamental strength is its pioneer advantage in the sandalwood segment. South India has traditionally been the home for sandalwood-based products. In this market, Gokul was one of the early entrants. In Tamil Nadu, it sells as "Krishna Powder."

Ponds DFT is a success due to several reasons including early entry advantage. In its early years, it successfully trounced Levers' brand Himalaya Bouquet despite being high priced itself. Ponds is successful due to several reasons including its early entry advantages. Ponds magic seen as one of the most successful brand extensions of the nineties. It was also successful as a brand per se because it is now estimated to be 70% the size of Ponds DFT. This of course caused cannibalization of the mother brand but it upgraded a lot of customers to the high-priced Magic. Ponds Sandalwood is a brand that did not perform to the expectations of the company. Sandalwood segment is a small segment basically concentrated in the South.

Zee is rated by most marketed observers as a likely successful brand. Its effective marketing program was as responsible for its success as its focused positioning ("For Men"). The initial success of Zee was due to good management of the marketing mix. It initially concentrated in the southern cities of Bangalore and Madras.

To sum up, while it is important that the positioning of new talc is very different from Ponds, it being relevant and meaningful is as important as its differentiability.

TOOTH PASTES

The toothpaste market is about 55,000 tons in size. The leader in the toothpaste market is by far Colgate with its flagship brand – Colgate Dental Cream that alone accounts for nearly 50% of the tonnage of the Indian toothpaste market. In the nineties, however, Colgate has been under sustained attack from Hindustan Levers' brands – Close-Up and Pepsodent. Close-Up launched 'gel' toothpaste and aggressively promoted it on the 'youth' platform. It holds about one-fifth of the market now. Colgate launched its own gel version called Colgate Gel to get back volumes. Colgate also has niche brands under its umbrella like Calciguard, Total etc. after several relaunches on the part of Hindustan Levers; Pepsodent is reportedly doing well on the 'toothcare' platform. Together, Close-Up and Pepsodent can mean a formidable challenge to Colgate in the future. In the seventies, Colgate faced tough competition from Balsara's brands namely, Promise and Babool. Both the brands are performing somewhat indifferently now.

Most other toothpaste launches did not meet with success of which some are Signal (Hindustan Levers), Forhans (Geoffrey Manners) and Prize (Balsara Hygiene products) because they were 'FLOURIDE' toothpastes. Fluoride was feared to cause flourosis. Forhans also lost due to organizational dithering. Vicco-Vajradanti (Vicco labs) is a regional brand, which is possibly not aiming at becoming a national player.

It is true that breaking morning habits is difficult and hence, dislodging a strong brand like Colgate Dental Cream may not be easy. But trial can be forced through good promotion schemes. Therefore, trial per se may not be the key to success. For instance, one important reason for Vicco Vajradanti's poor performance was that its taste was not accepted. How the toothpaste tastes while brushing is important in determining whether the consumer would prefer to continue using the brand. Also, the benefits offered by the toothpaste should be relevant.

Babool is a brand that can fare better than what it does as of now. It has the ingredients of being a successful brand i.e., herbal protection at an affordable price. Babool initially tried to be a national brand but then found merit in being a brand confined to a few states like Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharastra, MP, UP (it is in these states that the 'Babool' tree is found and hence people there know of its benefits.)

Cibaca failed because of several market related reasons. Firstly, it lost valuable time explaining to the market that it was the same as Binaca, its earlier incarnation. Also, the fact

that it had a fluoride variant did not help its brand image. Cibaca had therefore to concentrate on 'cibaca top', a non-fluoride variant, after the fluoride controversy.

It is generally felt that close-up's success is basically because of its positioning. There are other reasons that contributed to its success. Firstly, the product "GEL" was novel. Secondly, enough advertising and promotional support was given to close-up after its '87 launch. Thirdly, its in-use experience had positive response from consumers. It was refreshingly different from Colgate.

Colgate dental cream is very successful toothpaste but it now faces formidable competition from other brands. Pioneer advantage and family habit put together make Colgate a formidable brand. Being a pioneer gave CDC the advantage of being everything to everybody. Colgate Gel is a successful toothpaste as well as successful brand extension. Colgate would have lost its market position if it had not introduced the 'gel' version. 'Gel' was a redefinition of the market. Several non-gel toothpastes (eg: Babool, Promise, Forhans) lost out after the relaunch of close-up.

Pepsodent emerged successful in the nineties reportedly after its seventh relaunch. This shows that brand success is as much a function of organizational persistence as it is of what the brand offers. Several reasons contributed to Pepsodent's recent success.

Expert opinion is that Promise failed because there has been no product up gradation or support for long. There was also confusion in the positioning in later stages. For a long time not much was done to the product. Balsara's resource problems might also have prevented it from launching a gel version. Promise was usually priced 10% lower than Colgate's. In the interregnum its price equaled Colgate's. Thus, promise's failure was a result of lack of overall up gradation and prudent management of the marketing mix.

Several reasons are cited for Vicco Vajraanti's failure. The word failure is being used keeping in view the potential of the brand. The organization itself, it appears, is satisfied with the performance of the brand. Besides, like Babool, the in-use experience of Vicco was not seen as pleasant by consumers. Thus, if Vajradanti is not faring well, it is possibly because of the organization, which is sufficiently not aggressive in the market.

In sum, though sachets have not been successful in toothpastes as of now they might have a promotional role to play in the future.

TABLE NO – 1.1

**TABLE SHOWING THAT THE BRAND NAME OF BATHING SOAP WISE OF
CLASSIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS**

S.No	BRAND NAMES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
01.	My sore sandal	27	18%
02.	Hamam	42	28%
03.	Cinthol	15	10%
04.	Lux	27	18%
05.	Lifebuoy	6	4%
06.	Liril	Nil	Nil
07.	Chandirika	6	4%
08.	Manjal	Nil	Nil
09.	Pears	3	2%
10.	Rexona	9	6%
11.	Medimix	3	2%
12.	Dove	6	4%
13.	Anyother	6	4%
	Total	150	100%

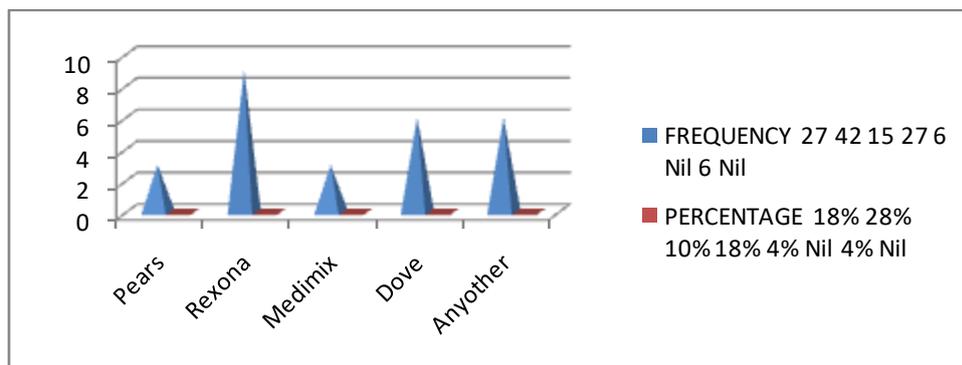
Source: Primary Data

From the above table, it can be inferred that about 18% of the respondents are preferring mysore sandal, 28% of the respondents are preferring hamam, 10% of the respondents are preferring cinthol, 18% of the respondents are lux, 4% of the respondents are preferring lifebuoy, none of them prefer lilil, 4% of the respondents are preferring chandirika, none of them prefer manjal, 2% of the respondents are preferring pears, 6% of the rexona, 2% of the respondents are preferring medimix, 4% of the respondents are preferring dove and 4% of the respondents are preferring others.

From this analysis it is found that majority of the respondents are Preferring Hamam.

CHART NO 1.1

CHART SHOWING THAT THE BRAND NAME OF BATHING SOAP WISE OF CLASSIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS



The suggestion about the bathing soaps for the consumers is mainly dependent on the quality, basis of freshness, good fragrance, avoiding skin diseases and for effectively body cleaning. In this product, most of the peoples are satisfied on the performance of product by its returns. From the analysis, we can suggest that to improve the personal care products of consumer's views on highly satisfied with the help of decreasing the price level by giving more importance to the skin moisture for the attracting features of bathing. Because they expected to get more benefits from the brand in order to changing has more beauty at a moderate level of prices. Hence, we can develop the improvement of product has differently in size, shape, colour, quality according to the consumer's thinking for maintaining to status level of Talcum powder.

CONCLUSION

Consumers desire an altruistic lifestyle that is rich in relationships and belonging Individualism, self expressive consumers want more personal and customized brand experience. Consumers seek more pleasure, intensity and sensation from products comfortation. Consumers want safety, simplicity, trust and indulgence in response to rising stress and uncertainty Convenience. People increasingly feel that they need to fit in many competing demands on time Income complexity and consumers are increasingly mixing luxury and value. Life patterns are becoming less predictable Gender behaviors are polarizing in a way that compound and traditional gender truisms

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