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BRAND AWARENESS AND PREFERENCE TOWARDS SHAMPOO PRODUCTS IN THIRUVARUR DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

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Abstract

In the present global market scenario, brand has become vital for the business enterprise. Now a days, consumers are more interested in buying the branded products. Creating brand awareness among the consumers is the challenging job for the marketers. Therefore, it becomes necessary for the marketers or manufacturers to understand the factors attracting purchasers or buyers towards the brand. The aim of this study is to examine the brand awareness in agrarian area of Thiruvarur District and to study the factors influencing the preference for branded shampoo products. This paper has attempted to identify the factors influencing brand preference towards shampoo products. For conducting the research, descriptive and analytical research design were used and data were collected through random sampling of 246 respondents. The data were analysed and hypotheses were tested, by using percentage and chi-square test in SPSS. The result of this paper showed that there was significant difference between age and brand preference and important factors, influencing for brand preference towards shampoo products, were quality, brand name and special offer for promotion.

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1. Introduction

Due to the increasing global market, branding has become more widespread. Brand gives more number of offers and benefits to customers and firms. It is an intangible asset which is managed carefully by the company. The key to success of branding is that consumers perceive differences, among the various brands, in different categories of products **(Philip Kotler, 2009)**. In the market, brand is not a new one because it was used by the ancient Egyptian brick makers, who made the symbols on their bricks, for differentiating them from other competitors' brand **(Farquhar, 1990).** The brand symbol was used in North America, for protecting their cattle farming, quality signal and to proof their ownership of cattle farming **(De Chernatony and McDonald, 2003).** Consumers buy the brands which are familiar because they are quite confident and comfortable with its quality. Therefore, the consumers are giving more importance to recognised or renowned brands over the unknown brand. Hence the study of consumer behaviour. Awareness of brand is the first choice, among other brands available in the market. Brand awareness is crucial to creating a strong brand and it is also one of the important parts of brand equity. Brand awareness is measured by using stimulus material such as name, logo and advertisement etc. It helps customers to identify the value of a brand. Consumers have their own opinion and preference in terms of shampoo products. Hence consumers are not ready to change their brand even if their preferred brand is not available in the marketplace **(Hundal, 2008).**

When the brands are accepted, then those brands enjoy a high degree of brand preference. Consumer brand preference is a vital or indispensable step, to understand the choice of the brand, by the consumers and therefore, it received great attention from marketers **(Horsky et al., 2006)**. Consumers give more attention to those attributes which are connected with their needs. Obviously, they form preference among the brands in the choice set. Hence marketers are compelled to understand the behaviour of consumer choice of the brand and their views of different brand in consumers' perspective **(Jay et al., 2007).**

With various brands being offered, now a days, the consumers are able to compare the attributes or features of the brand such as price, quality, brand image etc. to decide which product they would like to buy in order to get satisfaction. If the consumers want to buy the same brand continuously or repeatedly, it shows that the consumers have become loyal and it shows their favourable attitude towards the same brand. First, the consumers have to be aware of the brand and then they can choose the brand. In order to make a consumer to buy or prefer a brand, the marketers have to create the brand awareness about their brand so that the consumers can easily identify the favourite brand against the competitors' brand. The marketers need to know what are the factors, influencing the brand preference of shampoo product users.

2. Review of Literature

The consumer, who receives the message about the product or aware of the brand, develops the emotions and feelings towards it. Finally, the action in the form of purchase will occur **(Barry and Howard, 1990).** The set of fundamental dimensions of brand equity comprise brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty and perceived quality **(Aaker, 1991).** Aaker suggested that for assessing the brand equity, among the factors of 'brand equity ten', brand awareness is the fundamental one **(Aaker, 1996).** Another aspect is brand equity,

mainly based on customer perspective, which is defined as "different effects of consumer response, based on brand knowledge about the brand". Strong brand can be created in consumers' mind, by means of creating consistent brand image, accessible brand attitude, and positive brand evaluation **(Farquhar, 1989).**

Brand awareness is the vital element of the brand associative network since it is the basis of all other brand associations **(Franzen, G., and Goessens, C. 1999).** It is the first stage of a purchasing process, followed by knowledge of the product. It signifies the brand presence in the minds of the consumers **(Aaker, 1996).** It is the first and prerequisite dimension of brand knowledge and it helps the consumers to identify the brand under various conditions. Obviously, the brand name will come to their mind easily **(Keller, 1993).** Brand awareness is vital in purchase decision-making. As it is important that consumers recall the brand, in a given product category, sometimes the awareness affects the decision-making, even in the absence of any brand association in consumers' minds that form the brand image **(Keller, 1998).**

The consumers are expected to know the benefits of the brand, by means of getting the awareness and after that, they can prefer the desired brand. In marketing concept, the brand preference means choice or desirability among the rival brands or alternative ones **(Oliver and Swan, 1989).** Since the brand preference is behavioural tendency of the consumer, it is not important what the individual or consumer thinks or says about the product or brand but how the consumers act towards it **(Zajonc and Markus, 1982).** The preference of the brand is a motivator of brand choice. The consumer choice is based on well-defined preferences by means of which the consumer can find out the set of alternatives from which he will make his choices

(Louviere, 2000). The consumer choices and preferences are likely to be more consistent and therefore, preference provides a more perfect prediction regarding the consumer choice and compares the attitude of the consumer **(Bither and Wright, 1977).**

From the economic point of view, the target of the consumers' choice is to satisfy their preference and choose the alternative, with maximum utility of the product **(Rizvi, 2001).** On the other hand, the consumers' brand preferences are involved in two main things such as cognitive and behavioural responses **(Hsee et al., 2009; Zajonc and Markus, 1982).** Brand preference is related to the distinctiveness of the brand asset **(Anselmsson et al., 2008).** The important thing for the marketers is to understand the consumer purchasing behaviour. The term 'consumer' does not merely refer to the action of purchase but also includes the activities of buying, which involve pre-purchase and post-purchase, when an individual selects, purchases and uses the product to satisfy needs and desires. The success of any firm is to understand the consumers and their purchasing behaviour. Therefore, purchases are indirectly affected by brand awareness. It is related to the recognition of the brand and any component which makes up its image. Hence marketers face challenges in selling their products because they have to create awareness of the brand and influence the consumers to prefer their brand. In order to sustain themselves in the market place, they have to give more importance to their brand and to satisfy the needs of the consumers in the process.

3. Statement of the Problem

Now a days, consumers are more enlightened about the brand. Therefore, the marketers have to pay more attention towards creating brand awareness among the consumers.

In order to sustain themselves in the market, they face many challenges like knowing the consumer and increasing their market share also. The advertising is the biggest choice for them. There has been no previous research in this area so far. As a result, this research paper has attempted to know the factors, influencing brand awareness and preference towards shampoo products, in Thiruvarur District of Tamil Nadu.

4. Need of the Study

To survive in the present global competitive world, it is very important for the marketers, to innovate new ideas, to create awareness among the consumers. Consumers prefer to buy branded products due to high income levels, fascination towards urban culture and good connectivity to nearby towns and cities. Further, the consciousness about personal appearance is increasing especially among the teenagers. Marketers have to find out ways to create brand awareness in order to strengthen the brand and develop competitive advantage with other similar brands and to identify the factor which influences them to purchase the shampoo products.

5. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study were as follows:

a) to identify the factors influencing the brand awareness and preference towards shampoo products

b) to study the demographic and socio-economic conditions of consumers using shampoo products.

6. Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were used in the study.

NH-1: There is no significant difference between age and brand preference towards shampoo products.

NH-2: There is no significant difference between gender and brand preference towards shampoo products.

NH-3: There is no significant difference between education qualification and brand preference towards shampoo products.

7. Research Methodology

7.1 Sample Selection

The sample size consisted of 246 respondents, who buy and use shampoo products. Convenience sampling technique was used.

7.2 Sources of Data

Primary source of data were collected, through structured questionnaire (open and close ended), administered to the users of shampoo products. Secondary data, relating to the study, were collected from various journals and articles, textbooks, websites. The questionnaire was based on the five point Likert scale, with '1' for strongly disagree and '5' for strongly agree.

7.3 Study Period

The period of the study was three months, starting from June to August 2017.

7.4 Tools Used in the Study

The data collected were analysed, by using percentage analysis, ANOVA, t-test and mean ranking.

8. Analysis of Data

In the study, among the various brands available in the market, highly preferred brands of eight were selected for the study. According to **Figure-1,** out of eight most preferred brands of shampoo products, respondents preferred Clinic +, Head and Shoulder, All clear, Dove, Pantene, Sunsilk, Chick and others. Majority of the respondents, i.e. 20.33 percent preferred Chick Shampoo.

Table-1 depicts the socio-economic conditions of the respondents. Majority of the respondents were in the age group of 18 to 27 years. This shows that the young consumers were more interested in shampoo products because of its fragrance, revitalisation of dull hair etc. Majority of the sample were female. This shows that female respondents were greater in number than male respondents. Majority of the respondents were married. Out of the total respondents, 104 respondents had studied Degree/Diploma. Majority of the respondents were homemakers.

From the **Table-2,** it is observed that the significance value was i.e. 0.001< 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis **NH-1,** There is no significant difference between age and brand preference towards shampoo products, cannot be accepted. In other words, there was significant difference between age and brand preference towards shampoo products.

Analysing the data, by applying the t-test **(Table-3),** it is inferred that the significance value was i.e. 0.143 > 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis **NH-2,** There is no significant difference between gender and brand preference towards shampoo products, is accepted. In other words, there was no significant difference between the gender and brand preference towards shampoo products.

Examining the **Table-4,** it is found that the significance level was 0.082 < 0.10. Hence the null hypothesis **NH-3,** There is no significant difference between education qualifications and brand preference towards shampoo products, cannot be accepted. In other words, there was significant difference between the educational qualification of the respondents and brand preference towards the shampoo products.

It is observed from the **Table-5** that 'Quality' (mean = 4.69) was ranked the most important factor, influencing the purchase decision of shampoo products, with a total score 1156 points. It was followed by 'Brand Name', with mean score of 4.52. The factor, 'special offer for promotion', was placed in the third rank (mean = 4.29), Price (mean = 4.18) was the fourth important factor for preferring shampoo products. The other factors, which had significant influence for preferring shampoo products, were 'easy availability' (mean = 3.89), 'Quantity' (mean = 3.72), Packaging (mean=3.59).

9. Findings of the Study

In the study, 83 respondents were from the age group of 18-27 years and these youngsters were interested in shampoo products, for being silky and soft. Majority of the respondents (i.e. 136) were female. Mostly, the female consumers were more fascinated by shampoo products than the male. Both literate and illiterate purchased branded products and they were not worried about the price of the product. They were willing to pay for the highly priced branded products at any cost. Also it was found that the majority of the respondents preferred to buy Chick shampoo. Majority of the consumers were influenced by advertisements, especially by celebrity. Only sound advertisement can draw the consumer attention and stimulate their preference for a particular brand.

The research found that there was significant difference between age and brand preference. Majority of the consumers, especially youngsters, preferred shampoo because they thought that by applying the shampoo, they would look smart. By analysing the mean ranking, there were some important factors, influencing brand preference. Quality, brand name, special offer for promotion greatly influenced the purchase of shampoo products. The consumers expected a lot from the

manufacturers. By knowing the expectations, the marketers could take more effort, to satisfy the consumer, by means of providing extra quantity, offer price and availability of the product. Companies have to analyse these factors and find out the best suitable tool for promoting the shampoo products.

10. Suggestions

Consumers give more importance to branded products. Awareness of the brand has increased by leaps and bounds. Overall findings of the study of brand preference represented a vital step in understanding the consumers. Marketers have to understand the consumers' preference dynamics and design better marketing program to build a strong and long term relationship with the consumers. This study has identified the factors, influencing the brand preference towards shampoo products, in Thiruvarur District, Tamil Nadu, as quality, brand name and special offer for promotion. If the quality was high, the consumers did not consider high price. In order to satisfy and retain the consumers, the company has to focus on the quality of the product, by analysing the consumers' requirements.

11. Conclusion

This study revealed that the awareness of the shampoo products was limited. Therefore, the manufacturers should create awareness and promote or increase the consumption of shampoo, by means of providing advertising campaign because it is a part of social responsibility of the firm. The companies can change the habits of consumers by means of taking effective marketing strategy and may use celebrities like film stars and sports stars to endorse their products. At present, many respondents purchased shampoo products, based on the endorsement. This research can help local marketers to initiate promotional activities, for improving brand awareness among the consumers and they may change their marketing programme in accordance with the present marketing scenario.

12. Limitation of the Study

This study observed only the factors, influencing the brand preference towards shampoo products, only in one district, Thiruvarur District in Tamil Nadu.

13. Scope for Further Research

The research can help marketers in framing new strategies, to retain the existing customers and to attract new customers also. This research may assist the marketers to study the different demographic factors and to develop their marketing strategies. The future research can be performed at other regions of the country, with different demographic factors, at various products because this study was limited to Thiruvarur District of Tamil Nadu and hence the results may differ in various cities and towns of other regions.

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Figure-1: Brand Preference of Shampoo Products
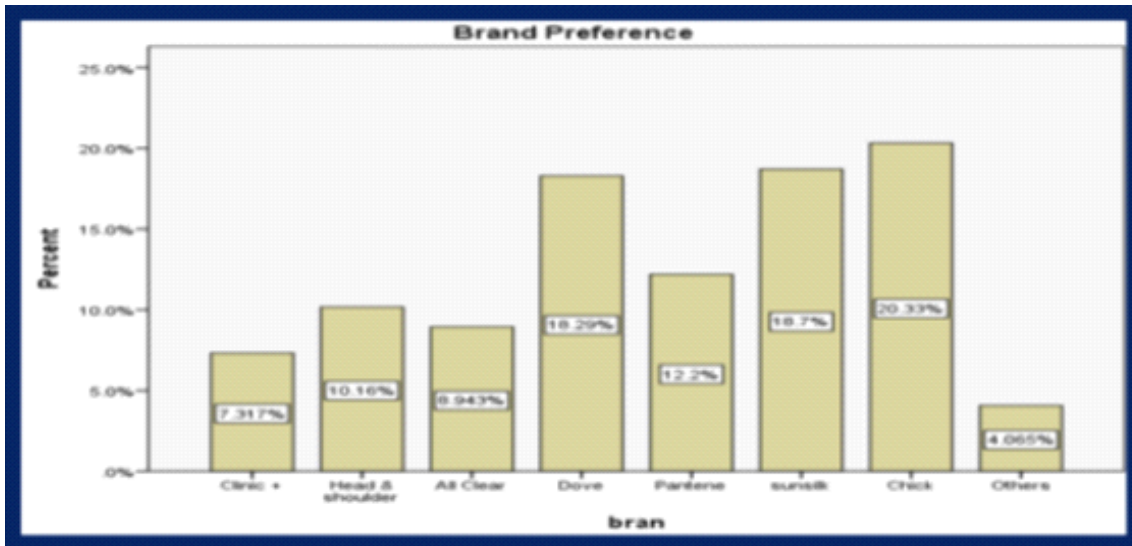
Table-1: Socio-Economic Conditions of the Respondents

S. No.		Factors	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Age of the Respondents	18-27 years	83	33.7	33.7
		28-37 years	50	20.3	54.1
		38-47 years	53	21.5	75.6
		48-57 years	42	17.1	92.7
		58 & above	18	7.3	100
		Total	246	100	
2	Gender	Male	110	44.7	44.7
		Female	136	55.3	100
		Total	246	100	
3	Education	No formal Education	16	6.5	6.5
		School education	62	25.2	31.7
		Degree & Diploma	104	42.3	74.0
		Post Graduate	30	12.2	86.2
		Professionals	24	9.8	95.9
		Others	10	4.1	100
		Total	246	100	

Source: Primary Data (2017) using SPSS (version 20.0)

Table-2: Results of One Way ANOVA for the Age and Brand Preference

	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig
Brand Preference	18-27	83	5.0843	1.71936	4.910	0.001*
	28-37	50	4.2400	2.21829		
	38-47	53	4.0377	2.01878		
	48-57	42	5.2857	1.82511		
	Above 58	18	5.5556	1.91656		
	Total	246	4.7561	1.98707		

Source: Primary Data (2017) using SPSS (version 20.0)   *1% Significance Level

Table-3: T-test Results for Gender and Brand Preference

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig
Brand Preference	Male	110	4.7273	2.07612	-0.204	0.143
	Female	136	4.7794	1.91946		

Source: Primary Data (2017) using SPSS (version 20.0)

Table-4: One Way ANOVA for Educational Qualification and Brand Preference

	Educational Qualification	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig
Brand Preference	No Formal Education	16	4.5000	2.03306	1.980	0.082**
	School Education	62	5.1613	1.96021		
	Degree & Diploma	104	4.8365	2.01504		
	Post Graduate	30	4.1000	1.91815		
	Professionals	24	4.8333	1.68540		
	Others	10	3.6000	2.17051		
	Total	664	4.7561	1.98707		

Source: Primary Data (2017) using SPSS (version 20.0)   **10% Significance Level

Table-5: Factors Influencing Brand Preference towards Shampoo Products

S. No.	Factors	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
1	Quality	1156	4.6992	1
2	Brand name	1113	4.5244	2
3	Price	1029	4.1829	4
4	Easy availability	957	3.8902	5
5	Quantity	916	3.7236	6
6	Packaging	885	3.5976	7
7	Special offer for promotion	1055	4.2886	3

Source: Primary Data (2017) using SPSS (version 20.0)