Volume 13 Issue 4
Originally issued as E4



Global Journal of Management and Business Research
Marketing
Volume 13 Issue 4 Version 1.0 Year 2013
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Online ISSN: 2249-4588 & Print ISSN: 0975-5853

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GJMBR-E Classification : *FOR Code: M31*



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To Examine Whether there is any Significant Difference in Brands' Preference of Talcum Powder used by Different Communities in Four Major Cities of the State of Uttar Pradesh, India

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Abstract - The present study aims at analyzing whether there is significant difference in brands preference among five main brands of talcum powder used by the customers of the four major cities of the state of Uttar Pradesh in India. In this study a set of its 240 sales samples each in every city under study was examined through the retailers and found to be allocated among four communities i.e. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. Brand preferences are usually studied by attempting to profile and understand loyal consumers. The five brands under study are as follows: - Ponds, Lakme, Fa, Wild stone, Cinthol.

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I. Introduction

Branding is a major issue in product strategy. Marketers say that "branding is the art and corner stone of marketing". A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors, (The American Marketing Association). In essence, a brand identifies the seller or maker. It can be a name, trademark, logo or other symbol. A brand is essentially a seller's promise to deliver a specific set of features, benefits and services consistently to the buyers. The best brands convey a warranty of quality. But a brand is an even more complex symbol and conveys up to six levels of meaning: - attributes, benefits, values, culture, personality, user (Patricia, 1998). The question of "why consumers change their brand preferences" has intrigued marketers and consumer researchers for decades. Early attempts to understand brand-switching behavior focused on the effect of past purchases on current purchase behavior (e.g., Morrison 1966). More recent studies have shown that brand-switching behavior is related to three types of factors (Morgan and Dev 1994): consumer characteristics (e.g., Vantrip, Hoyer, and Inman 1996), marketing mix factors (e.g., Deignton, Henderon, and Neslin 1994), and situational influences (e.g., Bucklin and Srinivasan 1991). Malathi (1998) in her study Consumer's Brand Choice Behavior for Television is Salem District emphasized the major findings that Consumer awareness about the brand is created through advertisement and dealer's contact. Further her study focused that durability, brand image price after sales service are the main reasons for preferring particular brand.

Recent studies have revealed that periods of life transitions are associated with significant changes in consumer behavior (e.g., Andreasen 1984; Mehta and Belk 1991; Price and Curasi 1996). Two different theoretical perspectives help us find explanations for these changes: role transition perspective and stress perspective. The first perspective holds that as people change roles, adopt new roles, or give up old roles their consumer behavior also changes. These changes in consumer behavior are either because of their need to redefine their self-concepts as a result of the assumption of a new role (e.g., Mehta and Belk 1991); or due to role relinquishment as people attempt to dispose of products relevant to the enactment of a previous role (e.g., McAlexander 1991). Previous research has shown that possessions are integral to the definition of self and the expression and performance of roles (Belk 1988); and their disposition is necessary in communicating important changes both to the consumer and to others (Young and Wallendorf 1989). The second perspective on behavioral changes is based on stress theory and research. Stress refers to environmental, social, or internal demands which require the individual to readjust his or her usual behavior patterns (Thoits 1995). These demands cause disruptions of previously more or less balanced states. Major life changes and transitions are often treated as "stressors" that create a generalized demand for readjustment by the individual. Thus, the assumption of a new role or its anticipation requires major adjustment of one's lifestyle which can be stressful. People attempt to restore balance and relieve frustrations and tensions accompanying disequilibrium by initiating or modifying behaviors, which are viewed as coping strategies (e.g., Lazarus and Folkman 1984; Pearlin 1982). *Coping* refers to actions and thoughts that enable the individual to handle difficult situations, solve problems, and reduce stress (Lazarus and

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Folkman 1984). Support for the stress perspective is found in previous consumer studies showing that initiation, intensification or changes in consumption habits reflect efforts to handle stressful life events (e.g., Andreasen 1984; O'Guinn and Faber 1989).

Chandra (1997) in her study Consumer preferences in washing powder. A study in Erode District, had analyzed the attributes of the product, reasons for brand selection, brand loyalty and factors influencing brand choice behavior. The main findings that the Advertisements are the largest source of information to the consumers are that because the major part of consumers maintains brand loyalty, product quality plays a vital role in brand preference, Consumer brand preference is influenced by demographic variables. Consumer's preference involves a complicated series of stimulus and response reactions to many factors or motives. These motives may be expressed or unexpressed and are based upon deep seated needs or more openly felt wants. The number of decisions involved in a particular buying project varies with the type of buying situation. The buying preference will have to determine:- Product specifications, Price limits, delivery terms and times, Service times, Payment terms, Order quantities, Acceptable supplier and the selected supplier. "Consumer behavior is of the outcome of both individual and environmental influences". To be specific, consumer's behavior refers to the act of consuming goods or service (Boonefkurzu, 2003). Both men and women have been using cosmetics for thousands of years. Cosmetics are those articles which are intended to be rubbed, poured, sprinkled, or sprayed or otherwise applied to the human body or any part for beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering the appearance. Cosmetics may cleanse the skin or change its color but they do not prevent or cure any dermal condition. Talcum powder is one of the popular cosmetics used both by men and women. It has been traditionally used for its fragrance and feeding of freshness. There are numerous companies marketing the talcum powder under different brand names the major ingredients are more or less the same. However, the brand name of the product plays an important role in determining the product success or failure. Human attitudes are complex in nature. In this complex world, consumer behavior changes from person to person. The preferences differ from one consumer to another. Hence an attempt is made to analyze the various reasons for preferring particular brand and the extent to which those factors affects the satisfaction level of consumer on talcum powder purchase decision .

II. Hypothesis Under Study

Let the null hypothesis be H_0: There is no significant difference in the brand preference of five main brands of talcum powder used by four different communities in four major cities.

The alternative hypothesis is H_1: The difference is significant in the brand preference of five main brands of talcum powder used by four different communities in four major cities.

The objectives under study:-

1. To study the extent of brand loyalty among consumers.
2. To study statistically consumers buying behavior for different talcum powders.
3. To study retailers sales of talcum powder.

III. Research Methodology

The present study is an empirical one based on survey method. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected from customers as well as retailers by means of interview schedule. The primary data have been collected through the consumer survey and discussions were carried out with the consumer personally. The secondary data has been collected from various published literature (like text books, magazines, news papers) and internet. The information regarding the organization has been collected from report and record provided by the dealers of talcum powder.

IV. Sampling Design

The study aims at analyzing the customer's satisfaction level of talcum powder. The customer's of four cities of state of Uttar Pradesh i.e. Allahabad, Lucknow, Varanasi and Kanpur are large in number and hence a comprehensive list of customers could not be prepared. Therefore, the respondents inclusive of all type are selected from convenient random sampling method with the help of agencies and retailers. There are 240 consumers from each city that were selected randomly as sample respondents which were studied for this purpose.

V. Data Interpretation

In the following subsequent section, the data obtained from the respondent are analyzed statistically. A convenient sampling technique was made use for this survey and the number of respondents chosen was 240 from each city.

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Table 1 : Number of consumers preferring different brands of talcum powder belonging to different communities in Allahabad city

Brands of talcum powder	Communities				
	Hindus	Muslims	Sikhs	Christians	Total
Ponds	12	16	13	08	49
Lakme	13	08	05	14	40
Wild stone	15	11	13	18	57
Cinthol	10	12	08	12	42
Fa	11	19	12	10	52
Total	61	66	51	62	240

Analysis of variance table

Source of variation	SS	d.f	M.S	F(test statistics)
Between sample	49.5	4	12.37	
				F=12.37/8.725=1.52
Within sample	174.5	15	8.725	
Total	224.0	19		

The above table of at 5% level with 4df and 15 df is 3.06, and 1.52<3.06 i.e. calculated value of F< the table value. Hence significant. We accept the Null HypothesisH_0 at 5% level and conclude that there is no significant difference in the brand preference of main brands talcum powder used in four major cities of the state of Uttar Pradesh, India.

Table 2 : Number of consumers preferring different brands of talcum powder belonging to different communities in Varanasi city

Brands of talcum powder	Communities				
	Hindus	Muslims	Sikhs	Christians	Total
Ponds	19	16	15	10	60
Lakme	15	12	13	08	48
Wild stone	09	21	12	07	49
Cinthol	08	11	02	12	33
Fa	12	15	18	05	50
Total	63	75	60	42	240

Analysis of variance table

Source of variation	SS	d.f	M.S	F(test statistics)
Between sample	93.5	4	23.37	
				F=29.37/22.43=1.04
Within sample	336.5	15	22.43	
Total	430.0	19		

The above table of at 5% level with 4df and 15 df is 3.06, and 1.04<3.06 i.e. calculated value of F< the table value. Hence significant. We accept the Null HypothesisH_0 at 5% level and conclude that there is no significant difference in the brand preference of main brands talcum powder used in four major cities of the state of Uttar Pradesh, India.

Table 3 : Number of consumers preferring different brands of talcum powder belonging to different communities in Lucknow city

Brands of talcum powder	Communities				
	Hindus	Muslims	Sikhs	Christians	Total
Ponds	10	15	19	16	60
Lakme	12	11	08	09	40
Wild stone	14	04	15	11	44
Cinthol	17	13	09	06	45
Fa	06	16	21	08	51
Total	59	59	72	50	240

Analysis of variance table

Source of variation	SS	d.f	M.S	F(test statistics)
Between sample	60.5	4	15.1	
Within sample				F=21.9/15.1=1.45
	329.5	15	21.9	
Total	390.0	19		

The above table of at 5% level with 4df and 15 df is 3.06, and 1.45<3.06 i.e. calculated value of F< the table value. Hence significant. We accept the Null HypothesisH_0 at 5% level and conclude that there is no significant difference in the brand preference of main brands talcum powder used in four major cities of the state of Uttar Pradesh, India.

Table 4 : Number of consumers preferring different brands of talcum powder belonging to different communities in Kanpur city

Brands of talcum powder	Communities				
	Hindus	Muslims	Sikhs	Christians	Total
Ponds	16	12	08	11	47
Lakme	10	09	13	08	40
Wild stone	18	12	14	10	54
Cinthol	19	08	06	17	50
Fa	04	21	15	09	49
Total	67	62	56	55	240

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Analysis of variance table

Source of variation	SS	d.f	M.S	F(test statistics)
Between sample	26.5	4	6.625	
				F=24.6/6.625=3.71
Within sample	369.5	15	24.6	
Total	396.0	19		

The table value of at 5% level with 4df and 15 df is 3.06, and 3.71>3.06 i.e. calculated value of F> the table value .Hence we reject the null hypothesis.

VI. Result and Discussion

The results generally support the notion that changes in brand preferences may be viewed as outcomes of stress, mediated through consumption-related lifestyles, as individuals try to adapt to stressful life conditions or role transitions marked by life events. The result of at 5% level with 4df and 15 df is 3.06, and 1.52<3.06 i.e. calculated value of F< the table value. Hence significant. We accept the Null HypothesisH_0 at 5% level and conclude that there is no significant difference in the brand preference of main brands talcum powder used in four major cities of the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. The Kanpur city of at 5% level with 4df and 15 df is 3.06, and 1.45<3.06 i.e. calculated value of F< the table value. Hence significant. We accept the Null HypothesisH_0 at 5% level and conclude that there is no significant difference in the brand preference of main brands talcum powder used in four major cities of the state of Uttar Pradesh, India.

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