



A STUDY ON BRAND PREFERENCE TOWARDS HINDUSTAN UNILEVER LIMITED IN KARAIKUDI TOWN

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ABSTRACT

Customers in India are also spending more in FMCG as their standard of living is growing. HUL has placed itself successfully in the position of market leader in FMCG products. To maintain their market leadership, it pursues innovative distribution mechanisms to reach the millions of potential consumers in both urban areas and small remote villages. The Individual consumer has a set of preferences and values whose determination is outside the real economics. They depend upon culture, education, and individual tastes. The measure of these values in this model for a particular product is in terms of the real opportunity cost to the consumer who purchases and consumes the product.

Keywords: Consumer Goods, brand preferences, brand awareness, satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) is India's largest Fast Moving Consumer Goods Company. It works to create a better future every day and helps people feel good, look good and get more out of life with brands and services that are good for them and good for others. The company introduced over 35 brands such as soaps, detergents, shampoos, skin care, toothpastes, deodorants, cosmetics, tea, coffee, packaged foods, ice cream, and water purifiers, the Company is a part of the everyday life of millions of consumers across India.

It is the leading household brands such as Lux, Lifebuoy, Surf Excel, Rin, Wheel, Fair & Lovely, Pond's, Vaseline, Lakmé, Dove, Clinic Plus, Sunsilk, Pepsodent, Close-up, Axe, Brooke Bond, Bru, Knorr, Kissan, Kwality Wall's and Pure it etc., To maintain their market leadership, it pursues innovative distribution mechanisms to reach the millions of potential consumers in both urban areas and small remote villages where there is no retail distribution network, no advertising coverage, and poor roads and transport. To maintain their competitive advantage, it has aggressively extended more deeply in India, moving from large to small towns, and from urban to semi-urban areas.

Hindustan Unilever Limited has its presence in India for the last many decades, and with its iconic brands, and dedication towards serving its consumers with quality products had made it the leading Fast Moving Consumer Goods Company(FMCG). The underlying foundation of demand is a model of how consumers behave. The Individual consumer has a set of preferences and values whose determination is outside the real economics. They depend upon culture, education, and individual tastes. The measure of these values in this model for a particular product is in terms of the real opportunity cost to the consumer who purchases and consumes the product.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Consumer choices and decision making process is a complex phenomenon in nature. Making a decision to buy a product or service involves many course of action. There are lots of factors influencing the consumer preferences to select a particular product. The literature on brand preference studies reveals that for the selection of nondurable products, especially HUL products, the consumer has been unable to spend time to evaluate and choose the desired one based on their need. Only a limited number of attempts have been made to study the factors influencing brand preference especially among brands in HUL products.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

FMCG is an important day to day basic requirement of any consumer. It is considered as cleansing and beautifying products which is usually used for cleansing one's body. The FMCG market is dominated by several, leading national and global brands and a large number of small brands. This has made the researcher to take up this study so as to find out the various factors influencing the preference of HUL Products by the consumers. The study is confined to Karaikudi town only.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the socio economic profile of the respondents.
2. To study the preferences of respondents in purchasing of selective HUL products.
3. To study the brand awareness of HUL products among the residents of Karaikudi Town.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has done through the help of primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected through help of direct interview method by questionnaire. The secondary data have been collected from journals, books; magazines, internet, etc.

Data Collection

- Primary data and Secondary data

Sample Size

It refers to the number of items to be selected from the universe to constitute a sample here the sample size is 60 respondents.

Tools Used

- Percentage analysis

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Salesmen, customers, dealers and retailers were reluctant or hesitant to share data.
2. Time, cost and location factors become major difficulties in completion of research.
3. The size of the sample customers is limited to 60. Considering the time and other factors as constrains.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bhatia(2008) found that rural India has a large consuming class with 41 per cent of India's middle class and 58 per cent of the total disposable income. The rural market accounted for 70 per cent of toilet soap users, and almost 50 per cent of TV sets, fans, pressure cookers, bicycles, washing soaps, detergents, tea, salt and tooth powder. The rural market for FMCG products was growing much faster than the urban counterpart.

Lokhande (2009) observed that rural India has progressed from the popular perceptions, and owing to public as well as private options, there was considerable progress in the communities, both economically and socially. Government schemes like the mid-day meal scheme and National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) have increased the availability of disposable income among the rural consumers. Moreover, younger generations were looking at alternative sources of income to supplement the income generated through agriculture.

Sharma (2010) found that there were hardly any shops in the 2.30 lakh villages. As a medium of promotion, 'haats' were very relevant for almost all brands since they provided a medium to engage an average of 4600 people. Moreover, 17 per cent of Indian villages accounted for 50 per cent of rural population in India and 60 per cent of rural wealth.

Hagargi (2011) found that rural markets offered immense growth opportunities like untapped market, large population, first mover advantage, huge scope for penetration etc, at the same time these markets poses some challenges also. Rural markets were an important and growing market. And it had become an important one especially for telecom operators in India. Though characteristics features such as thin population situated at distance from one another, heterogeneity, low literacy rate limited purchasing power, cyclical cash flows of rural consumers made them less attractive, but suitable marketing strategy such as bottom of pyramid. 4A's mode availability, acceptability, affordability, and awareness and adopting some innovative marketing strategies there by creating a win-win situation, can help companies in tapping the vast rural market.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table No. 1
Simple Percentage Analysis

	Factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	33	55
	Female	27	45
	Total	60	100
Age	Below 25 years	11	18
	26 to 35 years	19	32
	36 to 45 years	14	23
	46 to 55 years	16	27
	Total	60	100
Educational Qualification	Upto HSC	9	15
	Graduates	19	32
	Post-graduates	13	21
	Professionals	8	14
	Others	11	18
	Total	60	100
Occupation	Businessmen	7	12
	Govt. employees	15	24
	Private employees	32	54
	Professionals	4	6
	Others	2	4
	Total	60	100
Monthly Income	Below Rs.10000	16	27
	Rs.10001 to Rs.20000	15	24
	Rs.20001 to Rs.40000	18	30
	Above Rs.40000	11	19
	Total	60	100
Sources of Information	Television	29	49
	Radio	1	2
	Digital board	13	22
	Newspaper	7	11
	Internet	10	16
	Total	60	100
Factors Attracting the Consumers	Colour	11	19
	Quality	14	23
	Price	13	22
	Brand name	17	28
	Advertisement	5	8
	Total	60	100

Table No. 2
Reasons for preferring a particular HUL brand of Product

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Brand name	14	24
Lesser price	10	16
Quality	6	10
Quantity	11	18
Company's image	8	13
Latest technology	8	13
Availability	3	6
Total	60	100

FINDINGS

- 55% respondents are male and the remaining 45% respondents are female.
- 11 respondents (18%) fall in the category of below 25 years while 19 respondents (32%) fall between the 26 to 35 years age group.
- 19 respondents (32%) are Graduates, 13 respondents (21%) are Post Graduates and 9 respondents (15%) have passed HSC.
- 32 respondents (54%) are private employees, 15 respondents (24%) are government employees and 7 respondents (12%) are businessmen.
- 18 respondents (30%) earn a monthly income of Rs.20001 to Rs.40000 and the remaining 11 respondents (19%) earn a monthly income of above Rs.40000.
- 29 respondents (49%) know of the HUL products through TV advertisements and 7 respondents (11%) through newspapers.

- 17 respondents (28%) are attracted by brand name of the product and 5 sample respondents (8%) are attracted by advertisement.
- 14 respondents (24%) are purchase in brand name and 8 respondents (13%) are purchase in latest technology.

CONCLUSION

This study is an attempt to focus attention of the brand preference towards HUL products. HUL is striving to lower the cost of our sourcing. Consumer wants the brand names to help them in quality, quantity, price, style, package, difference and shop. In the present study, factors and issues relating to brand awareness and prevailing for the HUL has been discussed. The finding help to identify the strong and weak points of various brand and suggestion have been framed with a view to generating higher degree of brand awareness, preference and satisfaction towards the Hindustan Unilever Limited.

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