

A Study on Brand Preference of Rural Consumers towards Household Goods in Thoothukudi District

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1. ABSTRACT

Household goods that are used in the home in order to ease the work are identified as household goods. They include Mixer Grinder, Refrigerators, Electric Fan, Washing Machines, Televisions and DVD Player etc. The main advantage in household goods eases the consumer's burden of daily routine life. They lead more comfortable life. Refrigerator, Mixer Grinder, Washing Machine, Television etc., which were considered as luxuries a decade ago, have almost become necessities of our life. In fact everyone feels the need for owning these goods.

Manufacturers want to popularize their brand image in the mind of the rural consumers through their quality, durability and advertisement. For this purpose, manufacturers and distributors spend huge amounts of money. All this will become a waste if the rural consumers do not recognize the brands and goods. So it is necessary to pay due attention to consumer's expectations. Not only based on their likes and dislikes but also is mostly based on rural consumer's economic, social and psychological factors.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kalaiselvi and Muruganandam (2013) made a study on, "Consumer Attitude towards Promotional Schemes and Influence of Brand on Purchasing Home Appliances", the main objective of this study is to find the impact of promotional schemes on consumer attitude and to find out the brand loyal consumers and also brand switchers of consumer home appliances only because of promotional offers. The methodology adopted for the study was descriptive research design. Sample size was 200. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, chi-square, ANOVA and Garrett's Ranking were used for analysis. The results indicate that whatever attractive promotional schemes may be, "brand name" plays a dominant role in purchasing the home appliances. Maximum of the respondents have interest in some of the promotional schemes such as price discount, exchange scheme, warranty, etc. It is concluded that whatever attractive promotional schemes may be, "brand name" plays a dominant role in purchasing the home appliances. Most of the consumers in Erode city, Tamilnadu, India have replaced their home appliances at Exchange offer period and also they are satisfied with the home appliances, purchased at the time of offer period.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many brands and different varieties of household durable goods are available in the market. To the consumer, products of different brands seem similar because products of different brands are available at the same rate, same colour, same design and with the same performance. So rural consumers are been confusion to select the right products and right brands. They are facing many problems in rural areas. Illiteracy and ignorance are the main causes for the problems. Illiterate

consumers can easily be cheated as they can neither read the name of the product nor the instructions. Some of them are unfair warranties, misbranding, high pricing, poor quality products etc. Thus it is worth to examine the level of brand awareness, brand preference and brand loyalty of rural consumers.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know about various household durable goods in the market and their reach to the rural consumers in Thoothukudi District.
- To analyse the level of brand awareness, brand preference and brand loyalty among the rural consumers.
- To offer suggestions for realizing the importance of rural consumers, improving their standard of living and the need for developing the rural market.

SAMPLING DESIGN AND STATISTICAL TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

The analysis is based on the responses shown in the form of frequency tables. Simple table and percentage were prepared for understanding the general profile of the respondents. Simple statistical techniques such Kruskal wallis test and Mann whitney test were used for analyzing the data. Simple random sampling method was employed to select the sample respondents. Totally 480 rural consumers were selected randomly from eight taluks of Thoothukudi District.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

In the light of the objectives presented above the study proposes the examine of following specific null hypotheses.

There is no significant difference between mean rank for age of the respondents and attitude towards brand loyalty.

There is no significant difference between mean rank for gender of the respondents and level of awareness about the brands.

SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

The socio-economic status influences the brand preference of rural consumers towards household goods. Therefore the researchers analyse the socio economic status of the respondents.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Sl.No.	Demographic Factors	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Marital status:		
	Married	280	58.3
	Unmarried	200	41.7
	Total	480	100
2.	Occupation:		
	Casual labour	205	42.7
	Self employed	110	22.9
	Private employee	82	17.1
	Government employee	14	2.9
	Others	69	14.4
	Total	480	100
3.	Income (per month):		
	Below Rs.20000	407	84.8
	Rs.20001-30000	56	11.7
	Rs.30001-40000	15	3.1
	Above Rs.40000	02	0.4
	Total	480	100

TABLE
Source:
Data

NO 1
Primary

INFERENCES

- 58.3 per cent of the respondents are married and 41.7 per cent of the respondents are unmarried.
- Most of the respondents are casual labourers.
- Majority of the respondents earn monthly income of below Rs.20000.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS BRAND LOYALTY AMONG DIFFERENT AGE GROUP OF RURAL CONSUMERS

An attempt was made to know the attitude of rural consumers towards brand loyalty based on age. Hence their opinion towards the brand loyalty was analysed among different age group of rural consumers in Thoothukudi district.

KRUSKAL WALLIS TEST – MEAN RANK FOR AGE AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS BRAND LOYALTY

Sl. No.	Statements	Mean Rank			
		Upto 25	26 - 35	36 - 45	Above 45
1.	Purchase the brand even if price increases	210.87	267.06	246.68	232.25
2.	Recommend the brand to others	209.04	257.84	246.99	259.27
3.	Purchase the same brand even in case of absence of sales promotion	228.31	257.64	238.28	228.83
4.	Confirm to use the brand	230.31	254.05	234.05	239.84
5.	Waiting for same brand even if particular model is not available	226.40	253.83	240.37	239.62

TABLE NO 2

Source: Computed data

There is no significant difference between mean rank for age of the respondents and attitude towards brand loyalty.

RESULTS OF KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST AGE AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS BRAND LOYALTY

Statements	Chi-square value	p Value	Significant / Not significant
Purchase the brand even if price increases	14.630	0.002	S
Recommend the brand to others	13.258	0.004	S
Purchase the same brand even in case of absence of sales promotion	4.509	0.211	NS
Confirm to use the brand	2.818	0.421	NS
Waiting for same brand even if particular model is not available	3.240	0.356	NS

TABLE NO 3

Source: Computed data

S - Significant ($p < 0.05$); NS - Not Significant ($p > 0.05$)

The table 3 lists out the result of the Kruskal-Wallis test. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5 per cent level of significance. Hence, this means that all the respondents have almost given similar rank to attitude towards brand loyalty except ‘purchase the brand even if price increases’ and ‘recommend the brand to others’. It can be concluded that age of the respondents does not affect the ranking given to attitude towards brand loyalty except ‘purchase the brand even if price increases’ and ‘recommend the brand to others’.

GENDER AND LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT THE BRANDS

An attempt was made to know the level of awareness about the brands based on gender. To test the level of awareness about the brands based on gender, the following null hypothesis was proposed.

There is no significant difference between mean rank for gender of the respondents and level of awareness about the brands.

MANN-WHITNEY TEST – MEAN RANK FOR GENDER AND LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT THE BRANDS

Brands	U-value	Z-value	p-value	Mean Rank		Significance/ Not significance
				Male	Female	
LG	28204.50	-0.381	0.703	238.27	242.90	NS
Samsung	25471.00	-2.268	0.023	227.29	254.74	S
Preethi	28476.50	-0.194	0.846	241.64	239.27	NS
Videocon	27407.00	-0.922	0.357	235.07	246.35	NS
Whirlpool	27522.00	-0.837	0.403	235.53	245.86	NS
Godrej	28037.50	-0.490	0.624	237.60	243.63	NS
Others	27245.00	-1.024	0.306	246.58	233.94	NS

TABLE NO 4

Source: Computed data

S - Significant ($p < 0.05$); NS - Not Significant ($p > 0.05$)

The table 4 lists out the result of the Mann-Whitney test. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5 per cent level of significance. Hence, this means that all the respondents have almost given similar rank to level of awareness about brands except ‘Samsung’.

It can be concluded that gender of the respondents does not affect the ranking given to the level of awareness about brands except Samsung.

FACTORS HELPING TO IDENTIFY THE BRANDS

The table 5 shows the factors which help the respondents to identify the brands. The factors considered for the study are logo, design / appearance, trademark and other symbols.

FACTORS HELPING TO IDENTIFY THE BRANDS

Sl. No.	Factors	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	Logo	150	31.2
2.	Design / Appearance	162	33.8
3.	Trademark	142	29.6
4.	Others	26	5.4
Total		480	100

TABLE NO 5

Source: Primary data

The above table 5 indicates that out of 480 respondents, 31.2 per cent of the respondents opined that logo is a helping factor to identify the brands, 33.8 per cent of the respondents opined that design / appearance is a helping factor to identify the brands, 29.6 per cent of the respondents stated that trademark helps to identify the brands and only 5.4 per cent of the respondents say various other factors.

Hence it can be concluded that most of the respondents give preference to design / appearance to identify the brands.

SUGGESTIONS

- Some respondents opined that they have not identified their brand of household durable goods because their packing, colour, size and designs imitates or resembles that of other branded household durable goods. The manufacturers should concentrate on the package design and models so as to clearly differentiate it from the other brands of household durable goods.
- The Majority of respondents felt that the popular brands are not available in their residential area. The manufacturers can take good measures to distribute their brands in all places of Thoothukudi district and in particularly to distribute their brand in rural areas.
- Majority of the sample respondents strongly agreed that branded goods will be the best quality. So the manufacturers must try their level best to keep up their reputation.

3. CONCLUSION

There are number of brands of durable goods available in the market of urban but selected brands only are available in the rural market. The updated brand or advance model takes much time to reach the rural. The preference of the rural consumers lay much and more on the brands like LG, Samsung, Preethi. The perception changes in the case of electric fan, DVD player like buy giving preference to the local brands. While purchasing household durable goods they compare prices of the local brand and also they collect information from the users. Design and appearance helps them to identify the particular brand. They feel that branded goods are free from risk. Rural consumers are not only cost conscious but also a quality conscious. They expect satisfaction from the preferred brand. The rural consumers’ level of awareness is increasing day by day.

4. REFERENCES

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