

A Study on Consumer Behaviour towards FMCG Products with Special Reference to Personal Care Products

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Abstract — The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is characterized by rapid turnover and is highly sensitive to evolving consumer preferences. This research paper investigates the consumer behaviour specifically towards FMCG personal care products. The study aims to identify the key factors influencing purchase decisions, assess the level of consumer satisfaction, and understand the diverse demands of customers. A mixed-method approach utilizing both primary and secondary data was employed. Primary data was collected from 128 respondents through a structured questionnaire. Analysis techniques including percentage analysis, correlation, and Chi-square tests were used. The findings reveal that quality is the paramount factor attracting consumers, followed by brand name and durability. While a majority of consumers prefer purchasing from local shops, there is a significant willingness to buy personal care products online. Recommendations from friends and family emerged as the most influential factor, while advertisements are the primary source of product information. The study concludes that to sustain in the competitive market, companies must focus on delivering high-quality products supported by strong brand building and effective word-of-mouth strategies.

Keywords — Consumer Behaviour; FMCG; Personal Care Products; Purchase Decision; Customer Satisfaction.

1. Introduction

Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), also known as consumer packaged goods (CPG), are products that are sold quickly at relatively low cost. This sector includes a wide array of products such as packaged foods, beverages, toiletries, cosmetics, and over-the-counter drugs. The Indian FMCG industry is the fourth-largest sector in the economy, with household and personal care accounting for a significant 50% of the market share [1]. The industry has demonstrated remarkable resilience and growth, expanding by 9.4% in Q1 2021, driven by rising rural consumption and increased penetration of e-commerce platforms [2].

The personal care segment within FMCG is particularly dynamic, with consumer preferences constantly evolving. Understanding how consumers select these products, what motivates their purchases, and their subsequent satisfaction level is crucial for marketers. Consumer decisions are influenced by a complex interplay of factors including brand, quality, price, packaging, and promotions. This study seeks to delve into these aspects to provide a contemporary understanding of consumer behaviour in the FMCG personal care market in India, offering valuable insights for businesses to refine their marketing strategies.

2. Literature Survey

A strong foundation of existing literature informs this research. Geetha Sonkusare (2013) explored the impact of

television advertising on the buying behavior of women consumers towards FMCG products, highlighting the role of advertising strategies [3]. Gomathi (2013) conducted a study in Erode town, Tamil Nadu, focusing on consumer preferences and the factors influencing the purchase of selected FMCG personal care products [4]. K. Kumaravel and P. Vikkraman (2013) investigated consumer behavior with a special reference to personal care products, examining socio-economic backgrounds and satisfaction levels [5].

In more recent works, Parag Joshi (2021) studied consumer perception towards online shopping of FMCG products, analyzing adoption patterns and marketing implications [6]. Geeta Devi (2021) conducted an empirical study on the role of emotions in consumer buying behavior for FMCG products in Solan, Himachal Pradesh, identifying key drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction [7]. This current study builds upon this existing body of work by providing a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing the modern consumer's decision-making process for personal care products.

3. Research Methodology

The study employs a descriptive research design. Both primary and secondary data were used. Secondary data was gathered from journals, articles, company reports, and online databases to establish the theoretical framework.

3.1 Primary Data Collection

Primary data was collected through a well-structured questionnaire distributed to 128 respondents selected through a convenient sampling method. The questionnaire was designed to capture information on demographics, purchasing habits, factors influencing purchases, brand preferences, and satisfaction levels.

3.2 Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using statistical tools including:

Percentage Analysis: To understand the distribution of responses.

Correlation Analysis: To measure the relationship between monthly income and monthly spending on FMCG products.

Chi-Square Test: To determine the association between age and the factors influencing purchase decisions.

4. Results and Discussions

The analysis of the primary data yielded the following key results:

4.1 Demographic Profile: Majority of the respondents (45%) were in the age group of 15-30 years. 38% of respondents had a monthly income between Rs. 10,000 - Rs. 25,000.

4.2 Purchasing Behavior: 63% of respondents purchase FMCG products only "when needed" rather than periodically. A strong majority (69%) stated they prefer price over quality.

4.3 Purchase Location: Local shops were the most preferred point of purchase, with 43 respondents strongly agreeing with this preference.

4.4 Spending Pattern: 58% of respondents spend between Rs. 500 - Rs. 1000 monthly on FMCG personal care products.

4.5 Influencing Factors: Quality was ranked as the most important factor attracting consumers to buy a product (63 respondents), followed by durability and brand name. Furthermore, recommendations from others (41%) were the most influential factor in the decision to buy, while advertisements (43%) were the primary source for learning about new products.

4.6 Brand Preferences:

Beauty Products: Himalaya was the top-ranked brand.

Detergents: Surf Excel was the most preferred.

Oral Care: Colgate was the dominant brand of choice.

4.7 Online Shopping: 64% of respondents expressed a willingness to buy personal care products online.

4.8 Hypothesis Testing:

Correlation: A significant positive correlation ($r=0.250$, $p=0.004$) was found between monthly income and monthly spending on FMCG personal care products. Hence, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

Chi-Square Test: The test between age and factors influencing purchase decisions resulted in a p-value of 0.142 (>0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, indicating no significant association between the age of applicants and the factors influencing their purchase decisions.

5. Conclusion

The study confirms that the consumer is the central focus of the FMCG market. Their preferences and feedback are critical for brands to succeed. The research highlights that product quality, trustworthiness of the brand, and personal recommendations are the cornerstone of consumer decision-making for personal care products. While price sensitivity exists, it does not overwhelmingly trump the demand for quality. The growing acceptance of online channels presents a significant opportunity for brands to expand their reach.

To sustain and grow in this competitive landscape, companies must prioritize manufacturing high-quality products, building strong, trustworthy brands, and leveraging strategies that encourage positive word-of-mouth. Future studies could incorporate a larger sample size and explore specific regional variations in consumer behavior.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the management of KSR College of Arts and Science for Women for their support and encouragement in conducting this research.

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