A STUDY OF BRAND LOYALTY ON TOILET SOAPS BUYING BEHAVIOR OF FEMALE CONSUMERS IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI

A. HEMALATHA, M.Com., M.Phil
Head, Department of Commerce, Shrimati Indira Gandhi College, Tiruchirappalli - 2

Dr. VALSAMMA ANTONY, M.Com., M.Phil., Ph.D
Associate Professor (Rtd.), Department of Commerce, Holy Cross College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli - 620 002

Dr. G. SIVANESAN, B.Sc., MBA., M.Phil., PGDMM., Ph.D
Assistant Professor, Jamal Institute of Management, Jamal Mohamed College, Tiruchirappalli - 20

ABSTRACT

Today, marketing is full of competition. Earlier, the marketers used superiority in manufacturing or scale or sales for winning the competition. But in the recent times, sheer superiority of manufacturing does not guarantee success. A good product is essential for entering into market but it is not sufficient. Quality products are very common in the market but very few products succeed. Even though, there are abundant products in the market, a very few products win the consumer’s heart and soul.

Women in today’s market cannot be considered as a homogenous group. Their diversity in terms of psycho-social status must be accepted and taken into consideration by the marketers in segmenting a market. It has been recognized that women who work outside their home are a large and growing market segment whose needs differ from those who are at home. Employment status has given a brand new dimension to the segmentation practices of
female consumers, and its importance is likely to rise as more and more women go in for higher education and also aspire to work.

In the current era of choice and information, it is important to understand the significance of ‘brand loyalty’ as a concept in the marketing fraternity. The women’s buying behavior literature in developing countries is inadequate and ambiguous. The study identified the significant role of brand loyalty factors like Service quality, Product quality, and Brand name, Price of the product, Design of the product, Promotion aspects and Store Environment towards brand loyalty on women’s purchasing behavior of toilet soaps in Tiruchirappalli.

The study indentified that brand name influence brand loyalty towards toilet soaps. In the present changing buying behavior brand loyalty is important for any organization to ensure that their products is kept in minds of consumers and it will reduce the switching to other brands. Marketers should find it useful that loyalty factors can affect women buying behavior in the market place, which can help in segmenting consumers and markets for their brands and marketing communication.

Keywords: Brand Loyalty, Buying Behavior, Service Quality and Toilet.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, marketing is full of competition. Earlier, the marketers used superiority in manufacturing or scale or sales for winning the competition. But in the recent times, sheer superiority of manufacturing does not guarantee success. A good product is essential for entering into market but it is not sufficient. Quality products are very common in the market but very few products succeed. Even though, there are abundant products in the market, a very few products win the consumer’s heart and soul.

There is a very thin line between the category of marketers who are successful in marketing their products and those who are a total failure. The losers start as product and die at store shelves as products. But the winners start as product in the factory and go on to become brands in consumer’s hearts and minds. Brands bridge the gap between the factories where products are produced and the consumer who seeks end goals and values.

True brands stand for forceful values and make them proprietary to their names. They pack unique values which customers in the target group want. Brands are in the consumers’ mind. They signify what they stand for and what they don’t stand for; what to expect from them and what not to expect from them. It is their existence in perceptual space which makes them successfully ward off threats from clones who try to replicate them. Products can be cloned but brands cannot be. From the strategist’s point of view, brands are tools of monopoly creation in competitive arena in a legitimate manner. Thus, modern marketing is all about creation and management of brands. Branding has become all the more essential in these modern days especially after the liberalization which saw the entry of many foreign companies into India. Darwin’s principle of Survival of the Fittest became the necessity during this period.

Loyalty is what defines the quantum leap from ‘like to love’. Winning brands that have succeeded in making themselves loved instead of just well liked.

Brand loyalty never just happens. Brand managers have to make it happen. Sometimes, brand loyalty occurs through no effort of the marketer. In certain other situations, even when a product is not promoted, it presents an attractive image to a particular consumer segment.
1.1 Toilet Soap Industry in India

FMCG industry is the most emerging industry nowadays in Indian as well as global market. In India it is the 4\textsuperscript{th} biggest market, which is very important to the country now and it contributes towards GDP of the country. FMCG includes Soaps and Shampoos, etc. In India bath soap market is steadily developing very fast and day by day many new varieties, flavours, and fragrances are added and new strategies are identified by various companies to exist in the market.

The bath soap market is growing steadily 7\% per annum. This growth is comparatively higher than the population growth in India. The reason for this growth is because of consumers increasing awareness towards hygienic standards. The marketers expect that the soap industry could increase at the pace of 8\% in the coming years. Now, the rural market is emerging more than 60\%. This shows there is no significant difference between rural and urban market. But majority of profit share comes from upper end market, the urban areas. Toilet soaps can be classified broadly into men’s soaps, women’s soaps, kids and baby soaps. In India, only few specialty soaps like glycerin soaps, ayurvedic soaps, sandal soaps, new flavored soaps and medicated soaps. But the above mentioned specialty soaps enjoys only small share of the market in value terms.

Soap whether it may be scented or unscented, flavored or not flavored, may be in gel or in bar, liquids, soaps has become a part of daily lives. Soap especially for women’s became as a treasured part of morning or nightly routine.

India with huge population, the penetration of soap is 98\% with the household. The perception towards brand changes from person to person, different income levels, gender levels and finally age level. Interestingly rural consumers demand is increasing, which makes more and more soaps brands being launched in the discount segment. This discount segment mainly concentrate towards lower income strata of consumers. Many soap brand still now focus in removal of body odor and healthy. But now new marketing strategies were in the trend. The soap manufacturers are moving towards skin and value added benefits.

As women were the chief decision makers in the family, soap advertisement mainly concentrated towards women. In recent studies it was identified 75\% of the soap bought through different types of stores outlets. This is the most common source of buying soap because, toilet soaps like other grocery list in family monthly purchase.

1.2 Market Capitalization of Soap Industry

In Indian economy the Soap industry has become as one of the most important significant segment, of which the popular segment contribute 4\slash 5\textsuperscript{th} of the entire soap market. The penetration of toilet soap is about 88.6\%. The Indian per capita consumption of soaps is comparatively lesser when comparing with developed countries. In India there are about 5 million retail store outlets, of which 3.75 million retail stores in rural areas the remaining in urban and semi urban areas. The major players in Indian market in toilet soap industry are HLL, Godrej, Colgate Palmolive and Wipro consumer care.

1.3 Women’s Buying Behavior

Women in today’s market cannot be considered as a homogenous group. Their diversity in terms of psycho-social status must be accepted and taken into consideration by the marketers in segmenting a market. It has been recognized that women who work outside their home are a large and growing market segment whose needs differ from those who are at home. Employment status has given a brand new dimension to the segmentation practices of
female consumers, and its importance is likely to rise as more and more women go in for higher education and also aspire to work.

There are a number of differences in the consumption behavior of women, the way they buy, their priorities and the way they respond to advertisements. Marketers and advertisers are becoming increasingly aware of the larger decision-making roles of women especially for consumer goods and services. A market research report says that women remain the main users and purchasers of goods within the cosmetics and toiletries sector, with around eight in ten women stating that they buy the majority of cosmetic and toiletry goods in their household.

2. BRANDING OVERVIEW

2.1 Benefits of Branding

Brand loyalty is a powerful tool in the business world. It can help a business to keep its customers and even expand his customer base. It is a fierce and persistent commitment to one brand of a product or service. Since the brand meets the entire consumer’s needs, such as price and features, he purchases it again and again. Brand loyalty also occurs when a consumer has a positive opinion about the company that sells the product.

Branding is the process of creating distinctive and durable perceptions in the minds of consumers. A brand is a persistent, unique business identity intertwined with associations of personality, quality, origin, liking and more. The following are some of the advantages of brand loyalty:

(a) Recognition and loyalty

The main benefit of branding is that customers are much more likely to remember the business. A strong brand name and logo / image helps to keep the company image in the mind of the potential customers.

(b) Image of size

A strong brand will project an image of a large and established business to potential customers. People usually associate branding with larger businesses that have the money to spend on advertising and promotion. If a business can create effective branding, then it can make the business appear to be much bigger than it really is. An image of size and establishment can be especially important when a customer wants reassurance that the business will still be around in a few years time.

(c) Image of Quality

A strong brand projects an image of quality in the business. Many people see the brand as a part of a product or service that helps to show its quality and value. It is commonly said that if a trader shows a person two identical products, only one of which is branded, he will almost always believe that the branded item is of higher quality. If company can create effective branding, then over time the image of quality in the business will usually go up. Of course, branding cannot replace good quality, and bad publicity will damage a brand especially if it continues over a period of time.

(d) Image of Experience and Reliability

A strong brand creates an image of an established business that has been around for long enough to become well known. A branded business is more likely to be seen as
experienced in their products or services and will generally be seen as more reliable and trustworthy than an unbranded business. More people will believe that a business would be hesitant to put their name on something that was of poor quality.

(e) Multiple Products
   If a business has a strong brand, it allows the business to link together several different products or ranges. A company can put brand name on every product or service and sell the product/service.

(f) Increase the life-time value of customers
   The Return on investment (ROI) of a brand loyal customer is hard to gauge because the longer a customer holds onto a brand the higher their value and investment. A brand loyal customer who stays with a business for many years will be the ones who not only improve the bottom-line but cover the initial customer acquisition cost. The cost of obtaining a customer can be very expensive depending on the market. Those customers who stay loyal to a brand pay for themselves after each additional sale.

(h) Brand loyal customers become buzz agents
   Those customers who are passionate towards the brand will promote it every day and defend the brand. These agents will tell everyone and will quickly defend the brand when others attack it.

(i) Increase the overall sales per customer
   Brand loyal customers will be the first ones to tell friends and family about their experiences which, when they join the sales funnel, are more likely to buy more frequently than those that jump on board at random.

(j) It Cost less to serve loyal Customers
   The link between loyalty and lower costs is Industry Specific. There are Industries in which the oldest customers are the cheapest to serve. There are also others in which they are more expensive to satisfy.

(k) Loyal Customers pay higher prices for the same bundle of goods
   It seems that a loyal customer is actually more price sensitive than an occasional one.

(l) Loyal Customers market the Company
   Customers who exhibited high levels of both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty were 44 per cent more likely to be active marketers and 26 per cent more likely to be passive word of mouth marketers.

2.2 Disadvantages in Branding

(a) Overpaying
   When a customer is loyal to one brand, he may miss out on similar products that offer the same features at a better price. For instance, if a person focuses on the brand name of a pain medication alone, he could overlook a perfectly viable generic brand available at a lower cost that provides the same benefits. Sometimes being too loyal to one brand clouds his judgment when shopping for consumer goods.
(b) Discontinuation

A customer should also consider the possibility that the manufacturer of his favorite brand could discontinue the product down the line. At some point, the product manufacturer may find that it’s no longer financially viable to sell that item and choose to either change the product or eliminate it completely. When he becomes too attached to one brand that he has purchased for years, it’s sometimes difficult to change to other options.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The notion brand consideration was first introduced by Howard and Sheth’s theory of buying behavior (1969). According to business dictionary brand loyalty is defines as keeping preferable to a specify product. Loyalty is closely associated with various factors, but the core one is experiencing the product. To reduce the switching behavior consumers must be loyalty to the product which may relate to technical, economical or psychological factors. These factors may be costly and difficult for the customers to change. Aaker and Keller (1990) and Fornell (1992) believe that customers may also be loyal because they are satisfied with the brand and thus want to continue the relationship.

3.1 Brand Name

Keller (2003) recognized that famous brand name can spread product benefits, higher recall of advertisements than non famous brand names. In India there are many unfamiliar and weaker brand names which are flooded in the marketplace. Now consumers have health and hygienic conscious, which lead them towards trust and influence them towards purchase of strong branded products. Cadogan and Foster (2000) suggested that prestigious and strong brand names and their brand image attract and influence consumers to purchase the brand and make the consumers to influence repeat purchasing behavior. For the brand to be more successful, brand should link towards its emotional and self expressive benefits which make differentiation between products. The marketers link the brand, emotionally with consumers which can create visible image about the consumer itself.

Kohli and Thakor (1997) recommended that development or creation of brand name or brand identify is very expensive and time consuming. The process will take huge investment and time. But development of brand name is very essential part, thus name is the basic of brand image. Just the name will attract customers to purchase the specific brand. Brand name will influence the customer for repeat purchase behavior and reduce the switching behavior. Consumers will always perceive the brand name from an overall perspective which associate with the brand name and its attributes and satisfaction experienced by the customers after purchasing and using of the product.

3.2 Product Quality

Russell and Taylor (2006) defined that product quality as fitness for use or conformance to requirement. The product characteristics and features bears on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs of the consumers. In soap industry, ingredients mixed along with the soap plays a major role, because it affects the hand, feel, texture and other performance aspects of the product. In regard with the product toilet soaps and detergent soaps color plays major role. Consumers personally relate color with them. At majority of the situation, though the product is good, if the color is not appealing, the customer will reject the particular brand. The functional attributes like skin dryness, quick dryness, light weight, size and durability plays major role. Sproles and Jendall (1986) stated that awareness and desire
for high quality products make the best or perfect choice towards buying the first product or the available brand. Thus quality characteristics are directly related to performance of the product.

3.3 Price
Cadogan and Foster (2000) insisted that price is certainly the most important criteria for the average and mid level income group of consumer. At times price may not affect the purchase intention, if the customers are loyal towards particular brand. If the customer is loyal, he/she wish to pay a premium price for the particular brand. At the same time customer possesses with strong value and belief in price of their favorite brands, so that they will compare and estimate with alternative available products (Keller 2003). By comparing price with perceived values and cost, customer’s satisfaction can be developed and built. Preferably customer will enjoy of the perceived values of the product are greater than the cost of the product.

Loyal customers never take risk to switchover to alternative or available products even if the cost of their brand increases. Yoon and Kim, 2000 identified that perceived risk is comparatively higher than premium price which lead to loyal customers to avoid the risk of any change. Retailers are assessed based on the price offered, because price has become the focal point of the consumer’s judgment. Price communicates to the market about their value positioning of their product or brand (De Ruyter 1999).

3.4 Design
Tangible is visual appearance, which will include color, size, and packing affect consumer perception towards a strong toilet soap brand. The above mentioned visual appearance influence repeatedly purchase of their products in stores that are highly attractable. According to Duff (2007) investigated that nice market in women’s cosmetic showed that cosmetic buyers are becoming more fashionable and more attractive. In the changing business dynamics, consumers like new color and trendy designs.

3.5 Store Environment
Omar (1999) suggested that retail marketing success and store existence depends on the single most important factor store environment. The store location and Store layout are considered as the positive attributes which will affect brand loyalty to some extent. Store location will alter the purchasing pattern and shopping. If the store outlet is convenient and easily accessible during their shopping, consumers may become loyal (Lovelock, 2010). Thus, Store environment is one of the core factors which will influence decision making of the consumers. The store stimuli like noises, smells, temperature, signs, display, shelf space noises will affect the consumers, which in turn affect the consumer decision making and satisfaction with the brands. Accessibility of the product or brand in the store is very important when purchasing FMCG products.

3.6 Promotion
In marketing mix promotion is a kind of communication with consumers. Promotion includes sales promotion, Personal selling, advertisement and publicity. Advertising affects consumer’s images, beliefs and attitude towards particular brand which will influence the purchase behavior. Promotion in the means of advertising will help in developing ideas and perceptions about consumers mind as well as it will help in differentiating products against their brands. In firms marketing strategy promotion is considered as the most important
element (Clow 2010). Product offerings and discounts are the ways used in promotion, which will encourage the customers to purchase the product. In relation to advertising and public relation, sales promotion is considered as the tool to support.

3.7 Service Quality

In general service quality is considered as customer’s expectations and ways to satisfy their needs and requirements (Lovelock, 2010). Like personal selling, service quality is a kind of direct interaction between sales people and potential buyers. Service privileges and mode of service provided are assured factors which will make the consumers to like and shop at the specific stores. The relationship between salespeople and consumer will result in long term association of consumers towards the particular store or brand. To and Leung (2001) stated that Sales people trust will be related to overall perceptions of the store service quality. Specifically, Customer and product Personalization influence customer experiencing which will affect the brand loyalty of the customers.

4. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

In the current era of choice and information, it is important to understand the significance of ‘brand loyalty’ as a concept in the marketing fraternity. There has been a continuous erosion of brand loyalty over the past few years and very few brands can claim consumer loyalty, and fewer customers who might be willing to go that extra mile for a specific brand. The women’s buying behavior literature in developing countries is inadequate and ambiguous. The study will identify the significant role of brand name, Product quality, Price, Design, Store Environment, Promotion and Service Quality towards brand loyalty on women’s purchasing behavior of toilet soaps in Tiruchirappalli.

5. OBJECTIVES

1. To study the brand loyalty factors of toilet soap
2. To study the brand loyalty of women’s towards toilet soaps.
3. To identify the relationship between brand loyalty factors and brand loyalty

6. HYPOTHESES

There is significant and positive relationship between brand loyalty factors and brand loyalty of toilet soaps.

7. METHODOLOGY

The working women’s in Tiruchirappalli are considered as the population of the study. The women customers who made purchase of Toilet soaps in the leading stores was identified, the purpose of the research was explained, and the customer who accepted to participated in the survey, questionnaires were distributed. Out of 450 questionnaire distributed, 324 questionnaire were received, out of which 319 questionnaire were fully usable. Thus purposive sampling technique will be suitable for the study. The study is descriptive, correlative and cross sectional in nature. The questionnaire consists of 8 dimensions. Both primary and secondary data were considered for the study. The 5 point
likert Scaling technique was used in the questionnaire. The first point indicates the strongly disagree and the 5th point indicates strongly agree.

8. RESULT

The reliability of the data was checked with Cronbach’s Alpha. All the eight variables show the high degree of reliability. The dimension Brand name (.8031), Product quality (.7572), Price (.6961), Design (.7842), Store Environment (.7741), Promotion (.6521) and Service Quality(.8053) and brand loyalty (.7896).

8.1 Significance of Brand loyalty factors with brand loyalty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01.</td>
<td>Brand Name</td>
<td>.661</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.</td>
<td>Product Quality</td>
<td>.402</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>.566</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>.320</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05.</td>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>.522</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.</td>
<td>Service Quality</td>
<td>.428</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.</td>
<td>Store Environment</td>
<td>.498</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows the significant relationship between brand loyalty factors with brand loyalty. Brand name found to have strong positive relationship with brand loyalty and it is significant at (.000) level. Product quality founds to have moderate correlation with brand loyalty and it is significant at (.000) level . Price found to have high correlation with brand loyalty and it is significant at (.000) level. The design is found to have mild correlation with brand loyalty and it is significant at (.001) level. The loyalty factors promotion found to have high correlation and it is significant at (.000) level. The service quality dimension found to have moderate relationship with brand loyalty and it is significant at (.000) level. The dimension store environment of brand loyalty factors found to have moderate relationship with brand loyalty and it is significant at (.000) level.

8.2 Cause and Effect of Brand Loyalty factors with Brand Loyalty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>ANOVA (Sig)</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimension 1</td>
<td>.725</td>
<td>.626</td>
<td>.621</td>
<td>109.603 (.000)</td>
<td>.401</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The multiple regressions are shown in the above table. The model summary table shows R-Square for this model is .626. This means that 62.6 percent of the variation in Employee Loyalty (dependent variable) can be explained from the 7 independent variables. The table also shows the adjusted R-square for the model as .621. The ANOVA table, as displayed in the above table shows the F ratio for the regression model that indicates the statistical significance of the overall regression model. The ANOVA value ensures the significant relationship with independent and dependent variables.
### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Beta Loadings</th>
<th>T – value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Brand Name</td>
<td>.484</td>
<td>&gt; 1.96</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Product Quality</td>
<td>.235</td>
<td>&gt; 1.96</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>.331</td>
<td>&gt; 1.96</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>&gt; 1.96</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>.302</td>
<td>&gt; 1.96</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Service Quality</td>
<td>.216</td>
<td>&gt; 1.96</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Store Environment</td>
<td>.364</td>
<td>&gt; 1.96</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The beta loading shows that brand name has the highest beta loading, followed by Store environment and significant at (.000) level. The third highest value is found to be price, followed by fourth place promotion. The fifth highest beta value is found to be product quality followed by the six highest beta value found to service quality. The least value of beta loading found to be design.

### CONCLUSION

This study brand loyalty factors on brand loyalty provided insight into women’s consumer behavior in Tiruchirappalli. Marketers agree that developing and understanding the target customers are very important and segment wise inputs will differentiate products and will increase selling propensity. The study indentified that brand name influence brand loyalty towards toilet soaps. In the present changing buying behavior brand loyalty is important for any organization to ensure that their products is kept in minds of consumers and it will reduce the switching to other brands. Marketers should find it useful that loyalty factors can affect women buying behavior in the market place, which can help in segmenting consumers and markets for their brands and marketing communication.

### REFERENCE


