

A Comparative Study on the Importance Given To the Model and Brand by Consumers When Purchasing Consumer Durables and FMCG Products

Awin Russel and B. Chandrachoodan Nair

Management Studies, Noorul Islam University, Thuckalay, India

*Corresponding Author: E-Mail: awinrussel@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Every consumer exhibits a predetermined behavior when it comes to dealing with consumer durables and FMCGs. This study has given an understanding into how a consumer is able to recognize models with respect to their buying behavior when it pertains to the selection of consumer durables and FMCG products. How consumers define their perceptions and purchase decisions with respect to consumer durables and FMCGs has also been discussed, by carrying out comparisons based on the data regarding various products emanating from the same sampling units.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior; Consumer Loyalty; Branding; FMCG products; Consumer Durables

1. INTRODUCTION

Comparison between various consumer durables and FMCG products provides new insight regarding consumer validation and assumptions toward products. When it comes to products that are easy to choose, such as toothpastes with simple specifications, it has been demonstrated that these specifications have neither been read nor recognized by the consumer. The effort that a consumer undertakes while choosing a brand differs with respect to both durables and FMCGs, and it can be explained on what basis the consumer has a particular perception while choosing that particular product. For the study, two consumer durable products and one FMCG were chosen, and different responses with regard to consumer views while choosing these products were analyzed. The study has taken into consideration how a brand name influences a consumer's selection, and if the consumer has actually taken the effort to validate whether his/her choice meets the requirements.

This approach of direct comparison can help bring out knowledge on consumer perception, and the role they have in a consumer either validating a consumer durable or an FMCG or selecting it out of habit.

Literature review: Various literature exist that concentrate in studying individual products and a consumer's preference for it based on its different characteristics. With respect to automobiles (Carlson, 1976) studied the extent to how income and related preferences affect a consumer's automobile purchase. The extent to which gasoline prices affect automobile selection was studied by (Greenless, 1980). Studies pertaining to imported cars were categorized. When a study regarding various middle class cars was undertaken by (Manish Kumar, 2013), they came to the conclusion that consumers in general, gave utmost importance not only to safety, but also to the name of the brand, the seating capacity and the comfort achieved during driving. A study by (Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2013) suggested that consumers gave a lot of importance to the exterior design and the reliability of SUVs and MUVs. (Nikhil Monga and Bhuvender Chaudhary, 2012) defined brand personality as an important factor in order to extend brand loyalty of particular products. (Keilko I and Power, 2006) carried out a study with respect to a consumer's emotional involvement while purchasing a car. Consumer perception with respect to luxury cars was studied by (Rosecky and King, 1996). The reasons behind consumer loyalty and switching brands were described by (Lapersonne, 1995). (Kellar, 1993) in a study analyzed consumer behavior regarding a car's performance and its specifications. (Butz, 1996) stressed on the importance of service and dealers coordination with the consumer in order to build brand loyalty. (JD Powers Survey, 1998) demonstrated that when consumers purchased new automobiles with a high emotional appeal, such as sporty coupes, complex cars, they would be greatly benefitted when there existed ease in processing a particular brand's design features and appeal, and it carried great effect when they were found to have a great aesthetic sense, but was not the case for simple designs where the ease of processing aesthetically features would not be of any great informative value.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The three products, comprising of two consumer durables, namely, cars and mobile phones, and a fast moving consumer good (FMCG) namely, toothpaste were taken into consideration for the present study. These products were selected in order to analyze different range of emotions involved, and whether consumer durables products involve more of a consumer's time when it comes to analyzing the product features before selecting those products. In order to collect primary data, a structured questionnaire was utilized, and the survey was conducted in the UAE. The questions were framed in such a manner that consumers were able to provide answers for identical attributes with respect to the three products. The questions that were formulated aimed at analyzing different types of emotions, varieties and end needs. The study also depended on secondary data from

published literature. After the pilot study was conducted, the determination of the sample size carried out with the assistance of statistical methods. The sample size worked out as 412 that comprised individuals from different nationalities. Utilizing the random time interval method, the survey was conducted among various consumers in public places like parks and shopping malls. The researchers analyzed the feelings of the customers when using the particular product and the reasons for switching over to another. . The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics with the application of SPSS.

Data analysis:

A. Recognition by the Consumer With Respect to the Model That They Consume (Car, Mobile and Tooth Paste): The analysis that was carried out below was framed to determine if the consumer was able to remember the model of the product that they used that would interfere their buying behaviour.

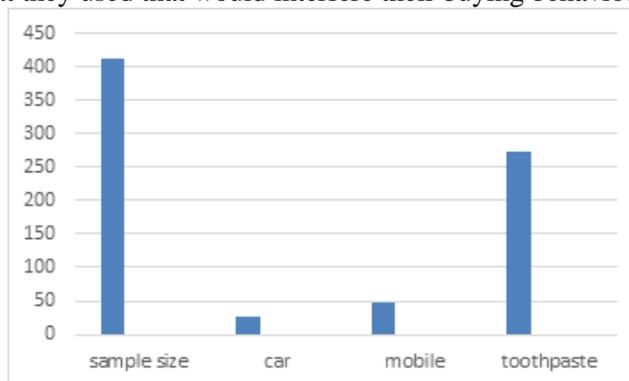


Fig. 1. Consumers who have not recognized the model used

The comparison Fig.1 depicted above provides information regarding the involvement of consumers with respect to how buying behaviour differs with respect to consumer durables and FMCG products. With respect to consumer durables, only a fewer than 50 samples could not recognize the model that they used, but when it came to toothpastes, 333 samples could not recognize the model used. When it came to buying consumer durables, the consumer attached greater importance to the specification and model of the product that they used. It can be inferred that when studying specifications and the aesthetics of durables, the consumer desire was that their emotional needs had to be satisfied. Consumers purchased tooth pastes just for its utility value, and the dependence on a particular brand was just to have an easy way to confirm the quality of the product and as a result did not involve direct involvement of emotion with respect to searching for aesthetics or specifications.

B. Consumer Brand Switching Behavior (Car , Mobile and Toothpaste): The following Tables 1 and 2 helps in determining the continuity of using the same brand with respect to cars, mobiles and toothpastes.

Table.1.The product currently used by the consumer

Current Car Used Brand Switching Information	Frequency	Percent
Same brand from beginning	209	50.7
Switched over from another brand	162	39.3
Same brand, but another model	41	10.0
Total	412	100.0
Current Mobile Used Brand Switching Information	Frequency	Percent
Same brand from beginning	113	27.4
Switched over from another brand	264	64.1
Same brand, but another model	35	8.5
Total	412	100.0
Current Toothpaste Used Brand Switching Information	Frequency	Percent
Same brand from beginning	173	42.0
Switched over from another brand	188	45.6
Same brand, but another model	51	12.4
Total	412	100.0

The analysis provided details on how brand switching was done by a consumer with respect to the products that they used. When it came to cars, mobiles and toothpastes, mobiles were seen to have the highest preference with 64% of those surveyed wanting to switch brands. Of three products that were considered, car, which was the most valued of the three categories, offered consumers a tendency to switch, which could be due to the loss aversion that the consumer would have to avoid any mistakes regarding performance while switching brands. While on the other hand toothpastes, which was a low value product, had a lesser tendency on the consumer's part to switch brands, and it could not be attributed to wanting to make an effort to switch

brands, but rather to avoid the headache in finding a new product and thus preferring to go with the same brand which they are convinced of and confident with. But with respect to mobiles, whose value and prices lay in between the other two products, consumers were willing to overcome loss aversion and they developed an emotional appeal that tempted them to try and switch brands.

C.Period of Usage of Products (Cars, Mobiles and Toothpastes): The duration that a consumer uses the same brand and their frequency of switching has been analyzed.

Table 2: The Duration of Ownership of the Model What Consumer Used

Usage of Car in Years	Frequency	Percent
Below 2	226	54.9
2-4	95	23.1
4-8	59	14.3
Above 8	32	7.8
Total	412	100.0
Usage of Mobile in Years	Frequency	Percent
Below 2	252	61.2
2-4	110	26.7
4-8	39	9.5
Above 8	11	2.7
Total	412	100.0
Usage of Toothpaste in Years	Frequency	Percent
Below 2	178	43.2
2-4	66	16.0
4-8	64	15.5
Above 8	104	25.2
Total	412	100.0

When comparing the three products with respect to switching brands, the products wherein the same brand was used for more than 8 years were as follows - car 6.1%, mobiles 2.7% and toothpaste 25.2%. This information points to the fact that the consumer prefers relying on certain brands in order to avoid fear or the aversion towards loss and not wanting to put much effort in selecting. Another important consumer behavior that this study brings out is that they have an emotional approach while purchasing durable products through which the utilities have been defined, but when it comes to FMCG products, this emotional approach does not affect their buying behavior much, and it is found to be more adaptable convenience based.

3. MAJOR FINDINGS

Consumer were not able to recognize the model of the toothpaste they used, but a majority of them were able to recollect the brand used. But, when it came to cars and mobile phones, the consumer was mostly aware of the model that they possessed. This helped to understand that with respect to FMCG products, consumers desired buying brands that proved that they desire quality products, but at the same time, they were not really interested in defining the specifications of the models that they owned. The consumer desiring to make a purchase with respect to FMCGs that were based on its quality can be considered a myth. With respect to FMCG products, consumers comparatively allot lesser emotional value when compared to durable products.

4. CONCLUSION

The comparison between consumer durables and FMCG products in this study shows how the consumer gives a higher emotional importance on the durable products when compared with FMCGs. Most of the FMCH products that the consumer has in his/her possession are based on certain rules of thumb that they have devised in order to safely make purchases in a habitual and comfortable manner. Durable products involve emotional purchases that they wish to change for its betterment and also for seeing variety. Moreover, when it comes to FMCG products, the consumer bases his/her choices on the brand rather than on the model. It thus helps to provide a clear insight into the fact that specifications rather than differentiation that define the model of a durable product can be detailed, but it should be very simple and more differentiated because the efforts that have been made on studying FMCG products are far lesser when compared to durable products.

This study can be further extended to comparing different products by studying the emotions and adaptability that are involved in the purchase decision making.

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