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A Study On Consumer Satsifaction Of Hindustan Unilever Limitted Home Care Products With Special Reference To Coimbatore City

Pugazharasu M.S , UG Student, Department of B.Com Professional Accounting, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts And Science, Coimbatore-06

Dr.Vadivel M , Assistant Professor, Department of B.Com Professional Accounting, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts And Science, Coimbatore-06

ABSTRACT

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is one of the largest and most competitive industries in India, significantly contributing to economic growth and employment. Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), a market leader in this sector, has a strong presence across urban and rural markets. This study aims to analyze consumer behavior in the FMCG industry, focusing on the factors that influence purchasing decisions, such as brand image, price, product quality, user recommendations, taste, and advertising. It also evaluates consumer satisfaction levels with HUL products and explores how marketing strategies impact brand loyalty and purchase behavior.

The study further examines the role of advertisements in shaping consumer perceptions and the challenges consumers face in selecting FMCG products amidst a wide array of choices. Additionally, it investigates how changing consumer preferences have led to modifications in the marketing mix, compelling companies like HUL to adopt innovative strategies to stay competitive. By providing insights into the effectiveness of HUL's marketing initiatives and consumer engagement, this research aims to help businesses refine their approaches to better cater to customer needs and enhance brand loyalty in an evolving marketplace.

Key words : FMCG Industry, Consumer Behaviour and Purchasing Decisions.

JEL Classsification Code : I1, I10, I3, I30, I31

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), a subsidiary of global giant Unilever, is one of India's leading FMCG companies headquartered in Mumbai. It operates through various channels, including general trade, modern trade, and e-commerce, with a strong presence in rural India.

FMCG products are low-cost, high-turnover goods replaced within a year, including toiletries, cosmetics, detergents, packaged foods, beverages, and consumer electronics. India's FMCG sector, the fourth largest in the economy, employs over three million people and exceeds ₹85,000 crores, growing at a double-digit rate.

Major players like HUL, ITC, Colgate, Cadbury, and Nestlé have historically dominated the sector, benefiting from high entry barriers. However, economic liberalization has intensified competition, leading to pressure on margins.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Consumers today have numerous personal care product options but struggle to choose a specific brand. To address this, FMCG companies, including Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), use various marketing strategies to influence purchasing decisions. Factors such as brand image, price, quality, and user recommendations impact consumer choices, along with income levels and family size.

HUL continuously introduces new products to attract consumers and encourage brand switching. This study examines consumer satisfaction with HUL products, their willingness to recommend them, and the impact of advertisements on purchasing behavior, along with the challenges faced during product selection.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out the factors that influencing consumer behavior in fast moving consumer goods.
- Understand the overall satisfaction level of respondents using H.U.L products.
- To ascertain the evaluation of alternatives and brand awareness and brand knowledge of rural consumer in Coimbatore area.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The validity of any research depends on the systematic method of collecting the data and analyzing the same in a logical and sequential order. In the present study, an extensive use of both primary and secondary data was made.

Research design

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure.

The Research design used in this study was descriptive research design. It includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. The main characteristic of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variables the researcher can report only what has happened or what is happening. The researcher used this research design to find out the fact of respondents attitude and opinion about satisfaction of customers.

Sampling size

The study was conducted on 200 respondents in Coimbatore city using convenience sampling method.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The data for this study are of two types: -

- Primary data
- Secondary data

Primary data

Primary data is the data is collected from the respondent for the first time, it is original in nature. For the purpose of collection of primary data, a well structured questionnaire was framed and filled by the respondents. The questionnaire comprises of close ended as well as open ended questions. In close ended questions, checklist questions and multiple choice questions are used.

Secondary data

Secondary data are collected from books, magazines, web sites etc, and both open ended & close-ended questions are incorporated in the questionnaire for the collection of data.

STATISTICAL TOOLS

The following statistical tools are used in the study

- Percentage Analysis
- Chi – square test

Percentage analysis

Number of Respondents

$$\text{Percentage of Respondents} = \frac{\text{Number of Respondents}}{\text{Total Respondents}} \times 100$$

CHI SQUARE TEST

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{O_i - E_i}{E_i}$$

O_i = Observed Frequency

E_i = Expected frequency

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Major limitations of this study are:

- During the collection of data, the researcher have faced the problem of making respondents clearly understand towards their doubts in few questions, which might have been reflected in responses.
- Limitation of this study is that the suggestions and recommendations cannot be generalized.
- The study is limited to the 200 responses of consumers in Coimbatore area. More responses would have thrown adequate light on the entire study.
- The study covers only the HUL Products in use by the respondents of present study. No, Attempt has been made at the products of similar nature as it involves wider area studies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Venukumar (2024), conclude that, it is certain that F.M.C.G. companies will have to really gain inroads in the rural markets in order to achieve double digit growth targets in future. There is huge potential and definitely there is lot of money in rural India. The companies entering rural market must do so, for strategic reasons and not for tactical gains as rural consumer is still a closed book and it is only through unwavering commitment that the companies can make a dent in the market. Ultimately the winner would be the one with the required resources like time and money and also with the much needed innovative ideas to tap the rural market.

Jain and Sharma (2019), analyzed the study found that average awareness of the respondents in the rural market is approximately 75 per cent, 70 per cent, 72 per cent, 64 per cent and 73 per cent in case of shampoo, washing powder, soap, tea, toothpaste respectively, which infers that people in the rural market

have an average awareness about most of the products which infers that advertising and marketing activities have major influences in choices of people in rural market. The study further found that among various factors like quality, price, easy availability, family liking, advertisement, variety, credit attributes of brand preference; the quality is the first preference in case of brand choices and rural people give least preference to variety and credit attributes. It is also concluded that there is a positive impact of media on brand preference of FMCG products among consumers. **Kavitha (2012)**, studied that, the new phase of rural consumption appears to provide a great opportunity for the F.M.C.G. sectors. Marketers will need to evolve new strategies to connect and communicate with a more aware and unreserved consumer than ever before, the study found. With this, product and brand development cycles will need to undergo a dramatic change. Today's rural consumer is not just indulgent, but 'smart' too: she wants products that carry the best of traditional wisdom and modern science, providing her convenience and individualism in one go.

John Mano Raj & Selvaraj (2000) the paper concluded that FMCG companies would have to really gain inroads in the rural markets in order to achieve double-digit growth target in future. The winner would be the one with the required resources like time and money and also with the much needed innovative ideas to tap the rural markets. In the marketing literature, individuals with a high need for cognition have been shown to process and evaluate advertising information more thoroughly than those with a low need for cognition. They tend to be influenced by message relevant thoughts rather than peripheral cues such as endorser attractiveness.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE- 1.01

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Categories	High respondent's area	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	107	53.5
Age	Below 25 years	97	48.5
Marital status	Unmarried	113	56.5
Educational qualification	School level	61	30.5
Occupation	Student	75	37.5
Monthly income	Less than Rs.5,000	61	30.5
Type of family	Nuclear family	123	61.5
Size of the family	3 to 4 members	162	81.0
Earning member in family	2 to 3 members	75	37.5

Sources : Primary data

The table provides insights into the demographic profile of respondents, showing that 53.5% are male and 48.5% are below 25 years, indicating a young consumer base. A majority (56.5%) are unmarried, and 30.5% have studied up to the school level, which may influence brand awareness and preferences. Students make up 37.5% of respondents, and 30.5% earn less than Rs. 5,000 per month, highlighting price sensitivity in purchasing decisions.

Most respondents (61.5%) belong to nuclear families, with 81% having three to four members. Additionally, 37.5% have two to three earning members, suggesting that household income distribution plays a key role in consumer choices. These insights emphasize the need for brands to focus on affordability, quality, and targeted marketing strategies to cater to this demographic.

TABLE- 1.02

**TO FIND OUT THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR
IN FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOODS (HUL PRODUCTS):**

Categories	High respondent's area	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
Aware of HUL Products	Yes	137	68.5%
Medium of advertisement	Television	149	74.5%
Reason for preferred HUL products	variety	87	43.5%
Discount provided by stores	always	87	43.5%
Sales promotions	Price off	62	54.8%
Had used other brands	Yes	162	81.0%
HUL's most used shampoo	Sunsilk	76	38.0%
HUL's most used Bathing soap	Medimix	64	32.0%
HUL's most used toothpaste	Colgate	87	43.5%
HUL's most consumed biscuits	Britannia	86	43.0%
HUL's most used mosquito repellent	Good night	89	44.5%
Frequency of using HUL products	More than 2 years	74	37.0%
Preference of buying HUL products	Department stores	100	50.0%

Sources : Primary data

The above table shows that 68.5% of respondents are aware of HUL products, 74.5% of respondents gathered information of HUL by television, 43.5% preferred HUL due to variety of products and same respondents says they always receives offer, 54.8% respondents says that they receives price off , 81.0% of respondents use other brand products before HUL, 38.0%, 32.0%, 43.5%, 43.0%, 44.5% of respondents mostly uses Sunsilk shampoo, Medimix bathing soap, Colgate toothpaste, Britannia biscuits, Good night mosquito repellent over other variety of HUL products, 37.0% of respondents have use HUL products for more than 2 years and 50.0% respondents preferred to buy from department stores.

TABLE – 1.03

**UNDERSTAND THE OVERALL SATISFACTION LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS
USING H.U.L PRODUCTS:**

Age and Level of Usage Behaviour

H₀ = There is no significant association between age of the respondents and their level of usage behaviour.

Gender	Level of usage behaviour			Total
	High	Moderate	Low	
Male	27	66	14	107
Female	36	46	11	93
Total	63	112	25	200

Sources : Primary data

Calculated χ^2 Value: 44.544

Degree of freedom: 6

Table Value: Five per cent level: 12.592

Since the calculated χ^2 value (44.544) is greater than the table value (12.592). Therefore it is concluded that there is a significant association between age of the respondents and level of usage behavior. Hence, Null hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE – 1.04

Age and Level of Usage Behaviour

H₀ = There is no significant association between age of the respondents and their level of usage behaviour.

Age	Level of usage behaviour			Total
	High	Moderate	Low	
Below 25 years	29	51	17	97
26 to 35 years	01	39	0	40
36 to 45 years	17	09	04	30
Total	63	112	25	200

Sources : Primary data

Calculated χ^2 Value: 44.544

Degree of freedom: 6

Table Value: Five per cent level: 12.592

The Chi-Square test was conducted to examine the association between the age of respondents and their level of usage behavior regarding Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) products. The null hypothesis (H_0) stated that there is no significant relationship between these two factors.

The results show that the calculated Chi-Square (χ^2) value is 44.544, which is considerably higher than the critical table value of 12.592 at a 5% significance level with 6 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated value exceeds the table value, we reject the null hypothesis, confirming that age has a significant influence on the level of product usage behavior among respondents.

TABLE – 1.05

Monthly income and Level of Satisfaction

H₀ = There is no significant association between monthly income of the respondents and their level of satisfaction.

Monthly income	Level of satisfaction			Total
	High	Moderate	Low	
Less than Rs. 5,000	0	49	12	61
Rs.5,001 to Rs.10,000	13	26	0	39
Rs.10,001 to Rs.15,000	37	25	0	62
Rs.15,001 to Rs.20,000	13	0	0	13
More than Rs.20,000	0	25	0	25
Total	63	125	12	200

Sources : Primary data

Calculated χ^2 Value: 111.307

Degree of freedom: 8

Table Value: Five per cent level: 15.507

Since the calculated χ^2 value (111.307) is greater than the table value (15.507). Therefore it is concluded that there is a significant association between monthly income of the respondents and level of satisfaction. Hence, Null hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE – 1.06

Earning members in the family and Level of Satisfaction

H₀ = There is no significant association between earning members in the family and their level of satisfaction

Earning members in the family	Level of Satisfaction			Total
	High	Moderate	Low	
Upto 1 members	38	36	0	74
2 to 3 members	25	50	0	75
4 to 5 members	0	39	0	39
Above 5 members	0	0	12	12
Total	63	125	12	200

Sources : Primary data

Calculated χ^2 Value: 232.158

Degree of freedom: 6

Table Value: Five per cent level: 12.592

Since the calculated χ^2 value (232.158) is greater than the table value (12.592). Therefore it is concluded that there is a significant association between earning members in the family of the respondents and level of satisfaction. Hence, Null hypothesis is rejected.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**Percentage Analysis**

- Most of the respondents are male.
- Majority 97 (48.5%) of the respondents are belong to the age group of below 25 years.
- The majority 113 (56.5%) of the respondents are unmarried.
- The majority 61 (30.5%) of the respondents are educated upto school level.
- The majority 75 (37.5%) of the respondents are students.
- majority 62 (31%) of the respondents monthly income level between Rs.10,001Rs.15,000.
- The majority 123 (61.5%) of the respondents are belongs to nuclear family.
- The majority 162 (81%) of the respondents said that 3-4 members in their family.

- The majority 75 (37.5%) of the respondents have between 2 to 3 members are earning in their family.
- The majority 137 (68.5%) of the respondents are aware of HUL products.
- The majority 149 (74.5%) of the respondents are know the HUL products through television advertisement.
- The majority 87 (43.5%) of the respondents are variety reason for preferred store.
- 87 (43.5%) of the respondents said always discounts and incentives are provided by the departmental stores.
- The majority 62 (54.8%) of the respondents are avail Price offer schemes. The majority 162 (81%) of the respondents are used other brand before this current brand.
- The majority 76 (38%) of the respondents are prefer sunsilk shampoo.
- The majority 64 (32%) of the respondents are prefer medimix soap.
- The majority 87 (43.5%) of the respondents are prefer colgate tooth paste.
- The majority 86 (43%) of the respondents are prefer Britannia biscuits.
- The majority 89 (44.5%) of the respondents are prefer good night mosquito repellent.
- The majority 74 (37%) of the respondents have using this brand in more than 2 years.
- The majority 100 (50%) of the respondents are prefer departmental stores to buy HUL products.

Chi-Square test

- There is no significant association between gender of the respondents and level of usage behavior. Hence, Null hypothesis is accepted.
- There is a significant association between age of the respondents and level of usage behavior. Hence, Null hypothesis is rejected.
- There is a significant association between monthly income of the respondents and level of satisfaction. Hence, Null hypothesis is rejected.
- There is a significant association between earning members in the family of the respondents and level of satisfaction. Hence, Null hypothesis is rejected.

SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

The suggestions from the study are as mention below

- As per collected data it can be said that, the consumers are using television as their main source of information. So H.U.L. should focus more on television advertisement.
- Majority of the respondents give preference to the price of the products and subsequently they give importance to quality of products, quantity of products, awareness of products, and availability of products.
- Customers needs good quality of products at low price.
- Use of televisions and newspapers are more planners also should use these media to reach to maximum number of viewers/readers.
- Quality in FMCG products may be achieved through acquiring training in business development, quality product development, and marketing external monitoring of quality
- FMCGs should create impression of being premium for a given price.
- To maintain a competitive edge in the FMCG sector, HUL should invest in training programs for business development, quality assurance, and external monitoring of products.
- Continuous R&D efforts should be made to introduce new, innovative, and sustainable products.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the FMCG sector is growing rapidly and is expected to continue its expansion. Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) has established a strong market presence in the home care segment, with consumers preferring its products primarily for their quality, brand reputation, and availability. While price and promotions influence consumer decisions, they are secondary to product quality. HUL's ability to introduce new products and maintain reasonable pricing has helped it retain its top position in the market. To sustain its competitive edge, HUL should continue focusing on quality, brand image, and strategic pricing while enhancing its promotional efforts.

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