

A Study on Brand Loyalty of Women Consumers With Respect to Personal Care Products in Chennai City

**Ms. R. Sundari
Dr. M. Sakthivel Murugan**

Abstract

A brand is an organization's strongest asset. Brands are strongly linked by consumer's emotion. Brand Loyalty is something that every brand and company strives for and believes they can attain. The eternal search for companies has been to identify brand loyal customers who in long run prove to be a valuable asset. The study has been conducted to analyze brand loyalty among 350 women towards personal care products in Chennai city. Findings suggest that Meera, Sunsilk shampoo, Spinz talc, Liril and Mysore Sandal soap and Pepsodent toothpaste has high brand loyalty among women consumers in Chennai city.

Introduction

Successful brands live in the hearts and minds of the consumer. A brand is been defined as, "an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant unique added values that meet their needs most closely." (Freire and Caldwell). People buy products, but which products they buy and how they make a buying decision have a lot to do with how they feel about the brand. Products are what the company makes, what the customer buys is a brand. Brands work by facilitating and making more effective the consumer's choice process. Brands have a social and emotional value for the users. According to a study by Mademoiselle Magazine, today's females are "more likely to know what brands they want before they go shopping." (Parks). In comparison with males, females shop more, and they search for more information when they make purchase decisions. It is assumed that females will pay more attention to brands and place more value on brand names.

Brand loyalty, in marketing, consists of a consumer's commitment to repurchase or otherwise continue using the brand and can be demonstrated by repeated buying of a product or service or other positive behaviours such as word of mouth advocacy. Brand loyalty is more than simple repurchasing, however. Customers may repurchase a brand due to situational constraints (such as vendor lock-in), a lack of viable alternatives, or out of convenience. Such loyalty is referred to as "spurious loyalty". True brand loyalty exists when customers have a high relative attitude toward the brand which is then exhibited through repurchase behaviour. This type of loyalty can be a great asset to the firm: customers are willing to pay higher prices, they may cost less to serve, and can bring new customers to the firm.

A second dimension, however, is whether the customer is committed to the brand. Philip Kotler, again, defines four patterns of behaviour:

- Hardcore Loyals - who buy the brand all the time.
- Softcore Loyals - loyal to two or three brands.
- Shifting Loyalty - moving from one brand to another.
- Switchers - with no loyalty (possibly 'deal-prone', constantly looking for bargains or 'vanity prone', looking for something different).

Personal care products are generally used for personal health and hygiene. It includes products like body talc, body scrub, tooth paste, tooth brush; tongue

Ms. R. Sundari
Assistant Professor,
Department of
Management Studies,
St. Joseph's College of
Engineering
Chennai

Dr. M. Sakthivel Murugan
Professor and Head,
Department of Corporate
Secretaryship and Business
Administration,
DB Jain College
Chennai

cleaner, tooth powder, bathing salts, bathing gel, essential oils, moisturizer, skin creams, face wash, hair oil, hair shampoo, hair conditioner, soap, nail and cuticle care products. The personal care product market was a success on all counts in 2005-2006 with good performances.

The major demand is for the products that are of basic need for the consumers like soap, shampoo, hair oil etc. The personal care products industry consists of four major sub-sectors manufacturing a range of products. These sub-sectors are:

- Face Care Products
- Hand and Foot Care Products
- Hair Care Products
- Cosmetics

Factors Influencing the Growth of Personal Care Products;

The global personal care products industry is growing at a very rapid pace; some of the factors responsible are:

- Rise in consumer spending power,
- Increased demand due to people consciousness,
- Key demographic factors,
- Entry of herbal and organic products,
- Lifestyle and climactic changes, and
- Massive advertising and promotion strategy

Review of Literature

Brand loyalty is viewed as multidimensional construct. It is determined by several distinct psychological processes and it entails multivariate measurements. Customers' perceived value, brand trust, customers' satisfaction, repeat purchase behaviour, and commitment are found to be the key influencing factors of brand loyalty. Commitment and repeated purchase behaviour are considered as necessary conditions for brand loyalty followed by perceived value, satisfaction, and brand trust. Loyalty is primarily an attitude that many a times leads to binding relationship with the brand. Many consultants and & researches argue that there must be "strong attitudinal commitment" for true brand loyalty to exist (Day, 1969; Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978; Foxall and Goldsmith, 1994; Mellars et al; 1996; and Reichheld, 1996). These attitudes may be measured by asking how many people say they like

the brand, feel committed to it, will recommend it to others, and have positive beliefs and feeling about it relative to competing brands (Dick and Basu, 1994). Research has, by and large, proved that across dozens of product categories and for many diverse countries (uncles et al; 1994), few consumers are "monogamous" (100% loyal) or "promiscuous" (no loyalty to any particular brand). On the contrary, most people are "polygamous" (which basically implies being loyal to a portfolio of brands in a product category). From this perspective, ; loyalty is defined as 'an ongoing propensity to buy the brand, usually as one of several' (Ehrenberg and Scriver, 1999). Several researchers have found satisfaction and attitude to be major antecedents of customer repurchase intentions leading to loyalty over time (Oliver, 1980, 1981, Bearden and Teel, 1983; Innis, 1991; and Roest and Pieters, 1997). A high level of satisfaction is likely to increase the probability that the brand in question will be retained in customer's consideration set and will increase the customer's preference for the brand, thus tending towards loyalty overtime (Westbrook and Oliver, 1981).

Brand loyal consumers reduce the marketing costs of the firm, as the cost of attracting a new customer has been found to be about six times higher than the costs of retaining an old one (Rosenberg & Czepiel, 1983) (Raj, 1985) investigated the relationship between a brand's share of users and its loyal franchise. Based on data on consumer habits covering, 1000 brands in 86 product categories, it was found that brands with a larger share of users have proportionately larger fractions of loyal buyers. Hoyer & Brown (1990) examined two aspects of brand loyalty-purchase loyalty and attitudinal loyalty – purchase loyalty leads to greater market share and attitudinal loyalty leads to higher relative price for the brand. Raju et al (1990) analysed the role played by brand loyalty in determining the optimal price promotional strategies used by firms in a competitive setting. The analysis suggested that a brand's likelihood of using price promotions increase with an increase in the competing brands in a product category. Krishnamurthi and Raj (1991) explored the relationship between consumer brand preference or loyalty and price elasticity in purchase behaviour. They found that loyal consumers were less price sensitive than non-loyal ones in the choice decision but more price sensitive in the quantity decision. Laurent et al (1995) identified three classical measures of brand awareness – aided, spontaneous, and top of mind. The relationships between these measures across asset of brands in the same product category were close, but highly non linear.

Papatla and Krishnamurthi (1996) proposed a brand choice model that provides an estimate of the dynamic effects of promotions on loyalty to the brand and customers sensitivity to the price of the brand, and measures whether promotional purchases reinforce or reduce subsequent response to similar promotions. Results indicated that increased purchases using coupons erode brand loyalty and increase price sensitivity. Lau and Lee (1999) discussed about the importance of brands in the consumer market. The brands are the interface between consumers and the company, and consumers may develop loyalty to brands. The study proposed that trust in a brand is important and is a key factor in the development of brand loyalty. (Thiele and Bennett, 2001) defined brand loyalty as the biased (non – random) behavioural response (re-purchase, referral, price sensitivity) expressed over time by some decision-making unit with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of brands and is a function of psychological processes.

Knox and Walker (2001) developed a measure in which both brand commitment and brand support were found to be necessary and sufficient conditions for loyalty to exist. Based on this measure, four consumer purchasing styles were identified and characterized as loyals, habitual, variety seekers and switchers. Fred Reichheld (2001) Enhancing customer loyalty could have dramatic effects on profitability. Among the benefits from brand loyalty specifically, longer tenure or staying as a customer for longer was said to be lower sensitivity to price Advertising and Marketing Journal's (A&M) Annual Survey of 2002 revealed that "Colgate" remained as India's top brand followed by Dettol, Tata, Lux and Lifebuoy respectively. Vikas Saraf, studied the necessity of branding. The study reveals the basis for brand management and it also revealed that, how to create brand image and brand loyalty. The author concludes that branding is everything and brands are not simply products or services. Brands are the sum totals of all the images that people have in their heads about a particular company and a particular mark. Day G.S.A. had put forth a "Two dimensional concept of Brand Loyalty". He stated that brand attitudes as well as purchase are needed to measure brand loyalty. Analysis on purchases of convenience food brands shows that the true loyal buyers are very conscious of the need of the economies when buying, confident of brand judgement and heavy use of the product. Lau et al (2006) conducted a study on brand loyalty with a sample of 280 students aged from 18 to 24 years. The study explored that brand loyalty behaviour in sportswear and examined key brand

loyalty factors: brand name, product quality, price, style, store environment and service quality.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the most preferred brand in each product category
- To analyze the attributes and benefits expected by women in each product category.
- To analyze the brand loyalty existing among women consumers with regard to the selected personal care products.

Research Methodology

Descriptive research was used for the study. The data was collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected with the help of a structured and undisguised questionnaire among 350 women consumers in the age group 18 and above, who use personal care products who are residing in Chennai. Secondary data was collected from previous dissertations/research papers/marketing journals/magazines/text books and websites. Convenience sampling technique was employed and the statistical tools used were chi square, correspondence analysis, and weighted average.

Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the respondents consists of majority of the women under the age group of 26 – 35 years, having a post graduate qualification. They are married, housewives having a family income less than Rs.5000. *Table I*

Attributes and Benefits

Five important attributes were considered for each category of personal care products

Shampoo

Five important attributes in shampoo category were considered for the study and they are a) Keeps hair root healthier, b) Hair strand strong, c) Protects dandruff, d) Removes stickiness e) Prevents grey hair. The respondents were asked to select those attributes that they perceive in shampoo as being present in the brand they use. The highest score is given to keeping their hair roots healthier and second highest to hair strand strong followed by protecting dandruff, removing stickiness and preventing grey hair. (*Table II*). Loyalty level of shampoo brands was tested using correspondence Analysis. It was found that women show high loyalty towards Meera and Sunsilk brands. (*Figure I*)

Talcum Powder

Five important attributes in talcum powder category were considered for the study and they are a) Smoothens Skin, b) Avoids sunburn, c) Keeps body cool, d) Prevents skin disease, e) Protects from bacterial infection; the respondents were asked to select those attributes that they perceive in talc as being present in the brand they use. The highest score is given to avoiding sunburn and second highest to keeping body cool followed by smoothening skin, preventing skin disease, and protecting from bacterial infection. (Table III) Women are highly loyal to Spinz talc, Lifebuoy has medium loyalty and Gokul sandal has low loyalty. (Figure II).

Bathing Soap

Five important attributes in soap category were considered for the study and they are

a) Fragrant b) Sensuous, c) Attractive colours d) Provides glowing and clean skin, e) Feel refreshed; the respondents were asked to select those attributes that they perceive in soap as being present in the brand they use. The highest score is given to providing glowing and clean skin and second highest to feeling refreshed followed by attractive colours, fragrant and sensuous. (Table IV). In soap category women are highly loyal to Liril and Mysore sandal soap and medium loyalty is found in Medimix brand. This is evident by using correspondence analysis. (Figure III)

Toothpaste

Five important attributes in tooth paste category were considered for the study and they are a) Whitening and fresh breath, b) Taste and Foaminess, c) Gum disease control d) Tooth strengthening, e) Anti tooth decay; the respondents were asked to select those attributes that they perceive in tooth paste as being present in the brand they use. The highest score is given to Anti tooth decay and second highest to Gum disease control followed by Tooth strengthening, Whitening & fresh breath and Taste and Foaminess (Table V). By using correspondence analysis it was found that

Women are highly loyal to pepsodent brand and medium loyalty is found in promise and Colgate brand. (Figure IV)

Chi Square Analysis

Chi square technique was employed to know whether or not there exists a significant association between i) age and loyalty of women consumers ii) marital

status and loyalty of women consumers iii) Family income and loyalty of women consumer. It was found that brand loyalty has a highly significant association with age, marital status, and family income of women. (Table VI)

The major findings of the study are summarised below:

- The demographic profile of the respondents consists of majority of the women under the age group of 26 – 35 years, having a post graduate qualification.
- Majority of the women were married, housewives having a family income less than Rs.5000.
- Women while choosing shampoo brand consider the attribute of keeping their hair roots healthier and hair strand strong. They show high loyalty towards Meera and Sunsilk brands.
- In talcum powder category, the highest attribute score is given to avoiding sunburn and keeping body cool followed by smoothening skin. Women are highly loyal towards Spinz talc.
- Liril and Mysore sandal soap has high loyalty score and provides glowing and clean skin.
- The highest attribute score is given to Anti tooth decay and to Gum disease control while selecting tooth paste brand. The most preferred brand among women is Pepsodent.
- Chi-square test reveals that there is a significant relationship between age, marital status, family income and brand loyalty among women consumers.
- Correspondence analysis was used to find the link between the level of brand loyalty and various brands of shampoo, talcum powder, soap and tooth paste.

Conclusion

Companies are fiercely contesting every bit of the marketing space available. The new market focused on women as primary consumers and the need of the day was to promote the 'cult of domesticity' in order to sell their products. However, this promotion required a certain number of women to enter the professional sphere in order to sell and teach women the task of making a home and the science of consumption. Women today are extremely aware of

the various brands in the market and are conscious of the products they use or consumer. They pick & choose carefully according to their needs. Style preferences, etc. Marketing to women delivers a better return on the marketing dollar through both higher customer acquisition and greater customer retention. Because women are more inclined to long term brand relationships, enhanced loyalty means every marketing dollar invested in acquiring female customers' results in a higher retention rate (Barletta, 2003). From the present study it is evident that the Analysis of attributes scores reveals that even the most popular brands do not possess all the attributes expected by the users. There is a significant relationship between age, marital status, and family income and brand loyalty. Correspondance analysis further reveals the level of brand loyalty existing among various brands. Hence market players have to see that their product possess the required attributes to attract strong loyal women consumers in Chennai.

References:

- Aaker DA (1996a), "Building strong brand", Free press, Newyork, pp136 – 174
- Philip Kotler (2003), "Marketing Management", Prentice Hall of India.
- Dr.D.Kamalaveni, Kalaiselvi, and S.Rajalakshmi (2008) "Brand loyalty of Women consumers with respect to FMCG's, Indian Journal of Marketing. September, 2008. Vol. 38, No:9, pp 44 – 51
- A Sarangapani and T Mamta,(2008) "Rural consumer behaviour with regard to selected FMCG's consumption patterns and Brand usage: A Study", The ICFAI University Journal of Brand Management, September 2008, Vol.5,No:3,pp 22-50
- Pallabi Mishra and Biplab Datta (2006) "The Wheel and its spokes: Mapping the relationship between the key elements of brand management, A literature Survey" September 2006, The ICFAI University Journal of Brand Management, Vol.3, No: 3, pp 15 – 27.
- Thiele SR and Bennett R (2001), A Brand for all seasons "A discussion of Brand loyalty approaches and their applicability for different markets", Journal of Product and Brand management, Vol.10, No:1, pp 25 – 37.
- Dr.Neeraj Kaushik and Deepak Gupta, (2009) "A Study of consumer's buying pattern of cosmetics products in south Haryana", Indian Journal of Marketing. September, 2009, Vol.34 No:9, pp 27 – 33.
- Reichheld, Frederick F, Teal, Thomas A.2001. "The Loyalty effect: The Hidden force behind growth, profits and lasting value". Harvard Business School Press.
- Jacoby, Jacob and Chestnut, Robert W. (1978). "Brand Loyalty: Measurement and Management". John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- "Consumer learning and Brand Loyalty, when the brand is unknown", Dissertation, Abstract International, 1983.

Table I : Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Description	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Age		
Less than 25	12	3.4
26 – 35	191	54.6
36 – 45	50	14.3
46 – 55	47	13.4
Above 55	50	14.3
TOTAL	350	100
Educational qualification		
School level	44	12.6
Diploma	29	8.3
Under graduation	52	14.9
Post graduation	153	43.7
Professional	72	20.6
TOTAL	350	100
Marital Status		
Married	235	67.1
Unmarried	115	32.9
TOTAL	350	100
Occupation		
Govt.Employee	39	11.2
Private Employee	32	9.1
Business	30	8.6
Self employed	77	22.0
House wife	117	33.4
Student	19	5.4
Others	28	10.3
TOTAL	350	100
Family Income		
<5000	113	32.3
5000 - 10000	90	25.7
10001 - 15000	60	17.1
15001 – 20000	52	14.9
Above 20000	35	10.0
TOTAL	350	100

Table II : Attributes and Benefits Score - Shampoo

S.No	Attributes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Avg. Score
1	Keeps hair root healthier	0	6	59	130	155	1484	4.24
2	Hair strand strong	0	0	41	162	147	1506	4.30
3	Protects dandruff	0	23	119	75	133	1368	3.90
4	Removes stickiness	17	6	96	105	126	1367	3.90
5	Prevents grey hair	14	14	94	121	107	1343	3.83

Table III : Attributes and Benefits Score - Talcum Powder

S.No	Attributes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Avg. Score
1	Smoothens Skin	19	26	72	103	130	1349	3.85
2	Avoids sunburn	6	0	14	120	210	1578	4.50
3	Keeps body cool	0	14	47	187	102	1427	4.07
4	Prevents skin disease	6	0	195	107	42	1229	3.51
5	Protects from bacterial infection	6	6	99	167	72	1343	3.83

Table IV : Attributes and Benefits Score - Bathing Soap

S. No	Attributes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Avg. Score
1	Fragrance	0	6	133	118	93	1348	3.85
2	Sensuous	11	26	103	26	84	1296	3.70
3	Attractive colours	0	8	70	165	107	1421	4.06
4	Provides glowing and clean skin	0	0	23	183	144	1521	4.34
5	Feel refreshed	0	6	63	117	164	1489	4.25

Table V : Attributes and Benefits Score - Tooth Paste

S.No	Attributes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Avg. Score
1	Whitening and fresh breath	8	14	127	70	131	1352	3.86
2	Taste and Foaminess	32	0	121	113	84	1267	3.62
3	Gum disease control	17	16	13	150	154	1458	4.16
4	Tooth strengthening	8	15	52	171	104	1398	3.99
5	Anti tooth decay	0	0	70	98	182	1512	4.32

Table VI : Relationship between Demographic variables and Brand Loyalty of Women

Description	Chi square value	df	Significant value
Age	1.718	8	.000*
Marital status	19.206	4	.000*
Family Income	2.481	10	.000*

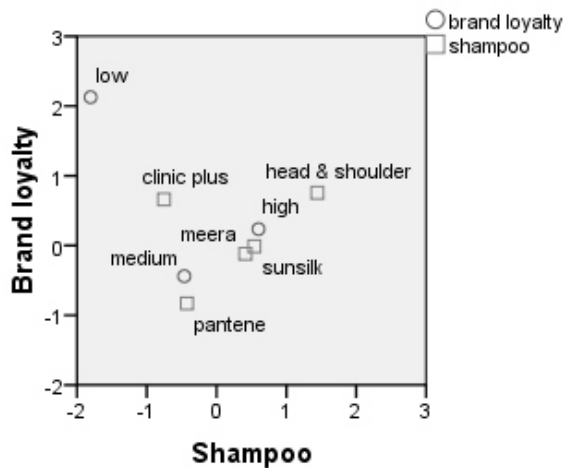


Figure I : Brand Loyalty for Shampoo

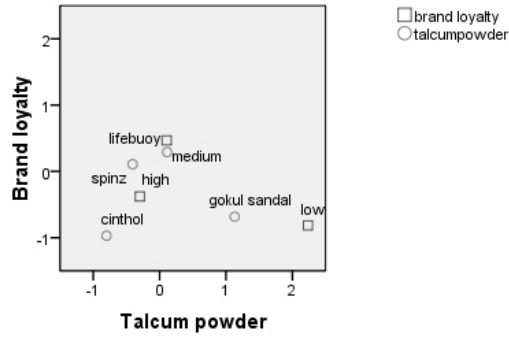


Figure II : Brand Loyalty for Talcum Powder

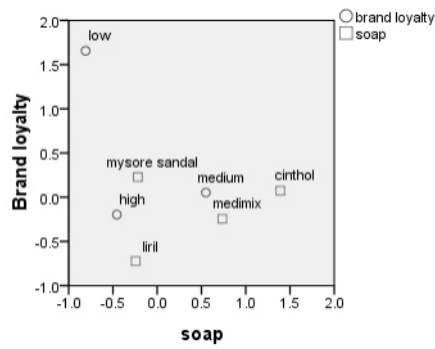


Figure III : Brand Loyalty for Bathing Soap

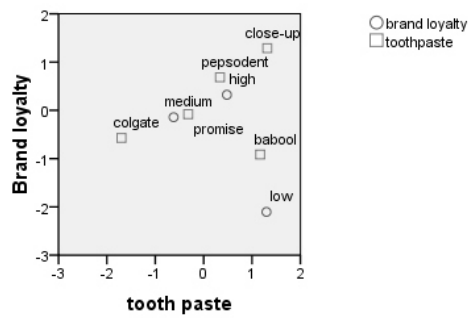


Figure IV : Brand Loyalty for Tooth Paste