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## A STUDY ON FACTORS INFLUENCING YOUTH'S BUYING BEHAVIOR TOWARDS SOAPS

Prof. R. Sudhakar\*

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**Abstract:** *In the present situation of the world, consumer's buying behavior plays a major role. Business performance can be improved by understanding customer's preferences and desires. In the present scenario of growing competition there are numerous brands selling the same products. Customers have numerous options and many diverse factors influence their buying behavior. Hence in such situations, this analysis can help in devising different strategies for obtaining maximum profits. Consumers make purchase decisions mainly by considering countries of origin, quality and also the brand. This study made an attempt to find factors that affect consumer's buying behavior with the main focus on commonly used product soaps. Variables like packaging, cost, availability, ingredients, popularity, brand value, fragrance, moisturizing feature etc were surveyed that influence the choice of a brand among those in the consideration list. This research helps to put into practice the theoretical aspects of the study and to create various marketing programs to reach the expectations of customers.*

**Key words:** *soaps, customers, factors, buying behavior*

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\*Assistant Professor, VIT Business School, VIT University, Vellore



## **INTRODUCTION**

Consumer is person with unfulfilled needs and wants. This is the reason for a business firm to come into progress aggressively. To fulfill these consumer needs an organization is set up. The most challenging questions for marketers are who are the customers? Why should they buy our products and not that of the competitors? How do they perceive our product? Are they satisfied? Such knowledge is critical for marketers, to have a strong understanding of buyer's behavior which sheds light on what is important for the consumer and also suggests the important influences on decision making of consumer. Factors like influence on consumer from family, friends and society occur in general. Consumer's buying behavior result from deeply held values and attitudes, their place in world from common sense, from impulse or just plain take, personal factors such as age, stages of lifecycle, profession, economic situation and education and also some psychological factors like perception, motivation, learning, beliefs, behaviour and personality of the consumer.

Consumer's decision process begins when he/she realizes his/her needs, wants or desires. They will next undertake search for information on possible solutions. It may lead to a set of options from which a choice can be made. The purchase decisions can then be made based on the possibilities like from whom to buy, when to buy, and also not to buy. If the product performs below the expectations then consumer reevaluates which at its extreme may result in consumer returning the product. If the consumer is satisfied with the product's performance he/she may purchase it repeatedly.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To find out the buying attitudes, needs, tastes and priorities of consumers towards the soaps
- To find out which price slots are preferable.
- To analyze competitors activities.
- To find out the factors for selling soaps in consumer market.
- To study the cross cultural behavior of the consumers.
- To find out the extent of impact of media on buyer's decision.



## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to offer an effective service, it is important to identify the segments of consumer , and taking into the account of the benefits which is the consumer seeks. The Consumers seek is benefits or the solutions, but not the products (Rowley, 1997). Faber and O’Guinn T C (1992) reported a seven-items scale and assessed its reliability and validity. An earlier version of this scale used a subset of three items (Faber and O’Guinn, 1989b) while, Faber and O’Guinn (1989a) used a superset of 15 items for operational compulsivity. The second approach is mainly used a nine-item scale(Youn and Faber, 2000) , which is developed earlier by Rook and Fisher (1995). Thus compulsive buying is a very important aspect in consumer’s behavior research. It has been defined as “chronic, repetitive purchasing, that becomes a primary response to negative events or feeling” (Faber and O’Guinn, 1992). Previous studies in this area have highlighted the fact that compulsive buyers tend to have self-esteem in lower level, and a higher level of tendency to fantasize, higher level of depression anxiety, and obsession, as compared to other consumers .

Consumer’s purchasing decisions are normally based on their own perception and representations of quality and safety. However, quality and safety are the concepts that cannot be easily defined. (i.e., product attributes that cannot be verified by the consumer). Consumers are most likely to derive quality or safety perceptions from other product cues, either intrinsic (e.g., appearance of the product) or extrinsic cues (e.g., a quality label) (Nelson, 1970).

Consumer behavior is also affected by the socioeconomic conditions of the markets namely, income, mobility, media access (Tse *et al.*, 1989). It has been observed that per capita income and disposable income indicates the amount of resources consumers allocate to consumer goods (Johansson and Moinpour, 1977). As more resources become available in future, consumers may desire the more emotional image attributes in the products or brand (Kim *et al.*, 2002). Personal values have been found to be the underlying determinants of various aspects of consumer attitude and behavior (Homer and Kahle, 1988). Thus, values are one of the most important influential factors that affect the type of needs consumer tries to satisfy through purchase and consumption behaviors (Tse *et al.*, 1989).

Brand of a particular product plays a fundamental function in consumer’s perception of a product. In situations when consumers are unable to defer the product choice decision, they



may have the experience of overload and anxiety at worst or develop simplifying decision heuristics to help them to make the product choices (Swait and Adamowicz, 2001) at best. Observing the purchase behavior of unknown or known consumers (Park and Lessig, 1977) is one such readily apparent heuristic which will help to simplify the consumer's decision-making process by providing information. (Park and Lessig, 1977). They have explained that consumers are influenced by "others" mainly because of three reasons—informational, utilitarian and expressiveness of value. The consumer accepts the source of information only, if it enhances his/her knowledge of the environment or ability to cope up with some aspects of this environment (Park and Lessig, 1977) e.g., purchasing of product. The consumer tends to observe the purchase behavior of other consumers and to incorporate these observations while making their own decisions in purchasing, is called consumer's propensity, which is to observe. It consists of direct observation of other consumers, and the indirect observation of other consumers or both types. Direct observation is watching the actual purchase behavior of other consumers (Price *et al.*, 1989; and McGrath and Otnes, 1995) and indirect observation involves the analysis of trace evidence of shopping behavior. An organization which embraces the marketing concept tries to provide products that satisfy consumer needs through co-ordinated sets of activities that also allow the organization to achieve its goals.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

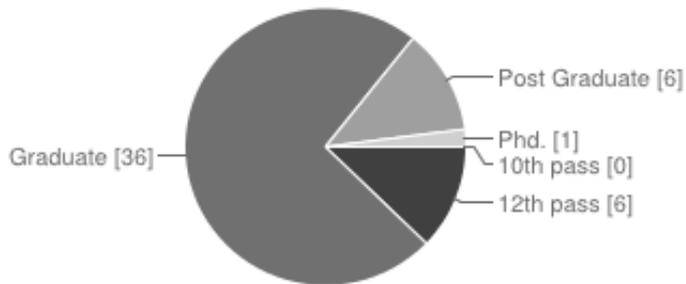
The investigation used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The study with 207 respondents aimed at identifying the important factors that influence the buying behavior of product soap.

The main research instrument used was a well structured questionnaire. The respondents belong to age group of 18 to 23 years from different backgrounds. A total of 13 statements regarding selection of a product based on various factors were rated by respondents according to scale rated with range 1 to 10. The questionnaire also included about the influence of popularity and availability on the purchasing decisions. Some of the respondents were also interviewed in order to have an in-depth analysis and find out the main reasons behind their preferences.



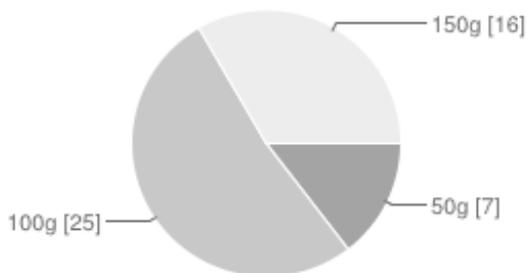
**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RESULTS:**

Education level



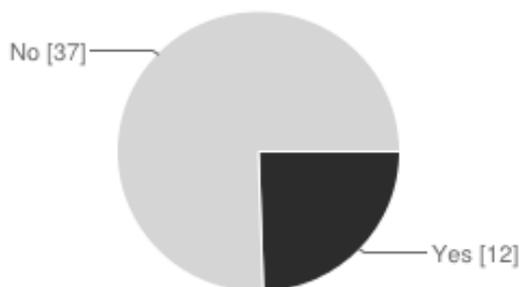
10 <sup>th</sup> pass	0%
12 <sup>th</sup> pass	12%
graduate	73%
Post graduate	12%
phd	2%

What is your preferred size of soap?



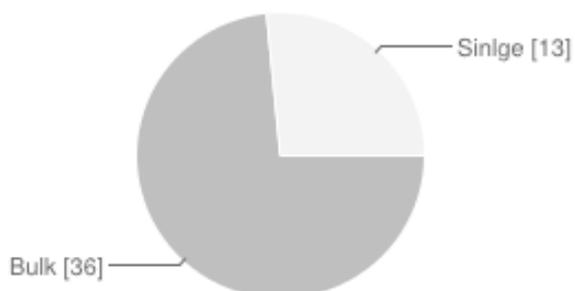
50g	15%
100g	52%
150g	33%

Did you buy the soap on the basis of any discount offering coming on soap?



yes	24%
no	76%

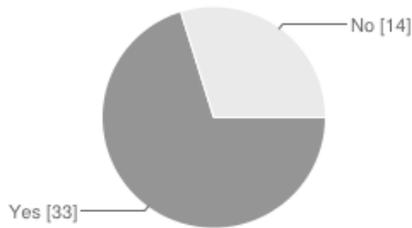
Do you purchase in bulk or single?



bulk	73%
single	27%

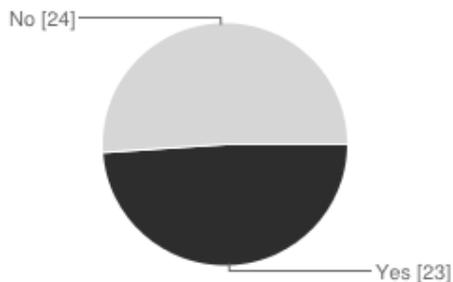


If more discounts are given would you purchase soap in bulk or not?



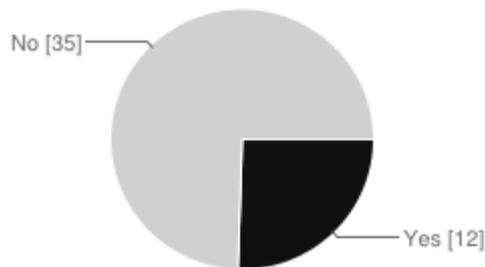
Yes	70%
no	30%

Do you use liquid wash?



Yes	49%
no	51%

Do you share the soap with others like friends and families?



Yes	26%
no	74%

<b>Factors (rated out of 10)</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Completely reliable for skin	6%	0%	6%	0%	2%	12%	6%	10%	18%	39%
No side effects	10%	2%	0%	2%	0%	2%	13%	15%	25%	31%
Medicated value	11%	2%	4%	5%	4%	4%	6%	15%	21%	28%
Freshness	6%	2%	2%	2%	0%	2%	6%	19%	21%	38%
Lather giving property	2%	2%	2%	2%	6%	2%	19%	15%	25%	25%
Fragrance	4%	2%	0%	2%	4%	6%	6%	22%	27%	27%
Readily availability	4%	2%	2%	1%	0%	5%	17%	13%	25%	31%
Popularity	2%	2%	4%	0%	1%	3%	15%	15%	38%	21%
Medical prescription	12%	6%	2%	3%	6%	4%	7%	20%	16%	22%
Moisturizer attribute	6%	4%	0%	0%	1%	3%	12%	27%	29%	18%
Effective for skin and blemishes	6%	2%	4%	6%	4%	0%	6%	17%	23%	31%
Recommendations	2%	4%	2%	4%	2%	8%	15%	23%	23%	17%
Completely natural	2%	2%	6%	2%	4%	2%	17%	17%	19%	29%



<b>Factors regarding wrapper (rated out of 5)</b>	5	4	3	2	1
Color	17%	44%	21%	8%	10%
Design	13%	47%	11%	17%	13%
Paper quality	29%	33%	21%	6%	10%
Information content	17%	19%	9%	0%	6%

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS:

It can be concluded from the study that among various reported common factors which influence a consumer's mind like ingredients, cost, availability of the product, attractive packaging, fragrance and its popularity in the market, etc., but there are few significantly more critical problems like composition of the product, attractive packaging and the overall look of the product. The packaging of soap seems to play a critical and significant role in attracting customers. Also, various kinds of schemes and offers available with soaps like, 'buy one get one free', or any additional products given with the soap, also influence the customers in buying a particular soap brand. Seasonal availability of popular soap brand combines three variables seasonal change, availability and product's popularity. It has been found in our research that consumers are more inclined towards buying popular brands. Seasonal change is an important factor when an individual buys soap. In winters people usually prefer soap with moisturizers while in summer they look for mild soaps. Availability of soap is also an important factor in analyzing consumers' buying behavior. We assume that these factors may be the secondary determinant factors which may influence the choice of a brand from among those in the consideration list in consumer's mind, but may not be the most important and primary determinants for shortlisting the brands. And it can also be suggested that the media publicity, especially in the electronic media, which plays a significant role in influencing the consumer's mind.

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