



A STUDY ON CUSTOMER PREFERENCES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS BRITANNIA PRODUCTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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INTRODUCTION

Confectionaries have vital important among the public irrespective of the age, sex and preferences of the individual in all parts of the world. So, from childhood to retirement age every one of us used to take biscuits as a delicious food during morning and evening tea breaks. Hence the confectionaries are moving fast in the market as all the people consume varieties of sweets, cakes and biscuits frequently and regularly. Further the children up to a particular age limit they consume more amount of confectionary items.. There are number of manufacturers for all types of biscuits. Among various brands Britannia products contribute more shares in the entire market.

Due to globalization in all business there are many competitors. Likewise for all the confectionaries heavy competitions prevail in the market which ultimately affect the sales of the products of the particular company. Though the manufacturers take initiatives to improve the sales by way of advertisement for certain products like good day, fifty - fifty there are heavy demands particularly for cream biscuits all the retailers get more demand from the public irrespective of the age and sex. Due to the taste and more advertisement by the Parle-G nowadays the Britannia Company face tough competition in the market to move its various products. In olden days Britannia was considered as almost the monopolistic company in confectionary items but at present there are number of competitors in the market. The Britannia Company has established its own market in major parts of the country. But in Coimbatore its contribution is little bid low when compared with the other areas. The dealers even felt and conveyed the information to the company. They do not know the real cause for the issue for the decrease in sales. Hence it is necessary to know the reason for the decrease in sales volume of Britannia products. The Britannia Company has many dealers for Coimbatore district. But Cheran Traders, R.S.Puram, Coimbatore is the main authorized distributor who supplies Britannia products to more than 500 retailers in the districts. The retailers are the main intermediaries who frequently meet the ultimate consumers of the Britannia products. They know the consumers preferences and attitudes towards particular product having different brands. To know the consumers attitudes towards the Britannia products instead of meeting the consumers i.e. public who are numerous and uncountable, the researcher due to the time constraints decided to get training in Cheran Traders, Coimbatore and collect the consumers attitudes and preferences towards the Britannia products through the retailers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Britannia products have gained good reputation from the public. The Britannia products contribute a greater share in the entire market. Nobody can deny the fact. But in certain areas of Coimbatore the sales volume of Britannia products is considerably decreased. In modern scenario both the manufacturer and dealers must know the customers attitudes and preferences towards a product. Then only they can frame policy decision accordingly. Heavy competition is prevailing in the study area for improving the sales. The entire manufacturers try to identify the attitudes of the customers. But the Britannia being one of the competitors for biscuits should know the problem and reason for the problem to increase the sales volume of the Britannia products.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

All businesses face competition in the market to move their products due to globalization. Even the Multi-National Corporations dealing FMCG face competition. Hence irrespective of the nature of business, size of the business the producers should identify the cause for the decrease in sales volume immediately. Once they lose the existing customers they could not get them back. Further they could not get the potential customers. Hence it is inevitable to have a thorough study on the customers' attitudes and preference towards the Britannia products then only it will help them to take decision and frame a policy for improving the sales in the study area.



OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the main objectives of the study

- To identify the existing issues related to the Britannia products.
- To evaluate the sales and market share of Britannia products
- To collect details about the consumer behavior from the retailers.
- To know the problems and reasons for the decrease in sales of Britannia products.
- To offer recommendations and suggestions to improve the sales in the study area.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive research was conducted in this study to make the research effective and useful to the needy.

Collection of Data

Both the primary and secondary data was collected in this research work

Primary Data

Primary data was collected from the sample respondents from the population by way preparing a questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared with the guidance of the experts in the relevant field. A necessary correction was made in the questionnaire to complete the research work successfully.

Secondary Data

Secondary data was collected from the journals and magazine published in the related topics.

Sample Selection

The retailers who are dealing in Britannia products are the population for the study. As the population is more than 500 in the study area 10 % of the population i.e. 50 respondents were selected from the total population in RS Puram area and Town hall area of Coimbatore. The respondents were selected at random by using convenient sampling method. The sample respondents consist of both male retailers doing small retail business and moderate retailers purchasing more quantity of Britannia products from Cheran Traders who are the authorized dealers for Britannia products.

Study Period

The study period for the research work covers 2 month starting from 1st Feb 2015 to 31st March 2015

Study Area

The study area for the research work is R.S.Puram and Town Hall of Coimbatore.

Statistical Tools

The collected data was analyzed and interpreted properly to find the result of the research work. Further to know the association between two variables in deciding the particular issues statistical tools like simple percentage was and chi-square tests were used.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesizes were framed for completing the project work effectively.

1. There is no association between the respondents based on the age and the volume of business.
2. There is no association between the experience of the respondents and the knowledge about various brands of Biscuits available in the market.
3. There is no association between the respondents based on the age and their opinion about the consumer behaviour and attitudes towards the Britannia Products

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1. The data was collected from the Retailers of Britannia products. So the findings of the study may not be considered for other products.
2. There was no full co-operation from the respondents at the time of questionnaire or interview schedule. So the findings are based on the information given by the respondents. There may be possibility for bias in the information provided by the respondents.
3. The survey was conducted only from the retailers of Britannia products in the study area. Hence it may not be considered for framing the policy and decisions in other area.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

Mr. Muhesh Dhanna (1984) conducted a study on "Analysis of consumer's Behavior" - A case study of soft drinks in Rohtak. It was found that the brand awareness is more among the male respondents than female respondents. Among the regular drinkers, the largest proportion is that of businessmen. Taste of the soft drinks was playing the most important role in purchase.

Dr. S. Shanmugasundaram and Reinald James (1990) conducted a study on "Demographic and Psychological factors that influence the pattern and selection in soft drinks and Tetra-pack drinks" - A study in Vellore. The study revealed that out of the total sample of 250, Gold Spot is preferred by 65 respondents. 184 respondents say that taste is the main reason for choosing a particular brand of soft drink. Most of the respondents were influenced by Television. In Tetra-pack drink, 103 respondents prefer Frooti. The most and majority of the respondents preferred Tetra-pack drinks for its convenience.

Hariपुरam Venkateshwaralu, M. Kishore Kumar and K. Rajnath (1987) conducted a study on "Factors influencing Consumer Decision Making Process Towards Biscuits" - A Behavioral Analysis in Twin Cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. It was found that the large consumers prefer packed biscuits. Small quantity and perceived quality with taste are the two important variables that determine brand loyalty.

Dr. (Mrs.) D. Kamalaveni and Ms. M. Nirmala (2000) conducted a study on "Consumer Behavior in Instant Food Products" in Erode Town. It was found in the study that, only three varieties of main food items and side dishes are regularly purchased by 94 per cent and 95 per cent of the consumers respectively and 74 per cent of the consumers are well aware about the product.

A study was conducted by H.P. Gupta and Dr. Raghbir Singh (1989) on "Consumers' Brand choice Behavior for Televisions" in the city of Amritsar (Punjab). It was found that the most of the respondents own black and white television. Among that, 'Weston' has been found to be the major reasons for preferring a particular brand. And 'durability', 'brand image', 'better guarantee/warranty', 'family liking', 'after sale service' and 'price' are the most important attributes affecting the choice of brand among the majority of the respondents.

Daniel (1983) conducted a study by choosing, "a random sample of 111 potential dress shirt buyers from different shopping malls. They were interviewed concerning their buying habits with respect of dress. The result of the study emphasized the complexity of the concept of brand loyalty. The findings implied the need for marketers to determine the significant predictors of brand loyalty. The study also implied the need for exploratory product, specific brand loyalty research with the ability to generalize the purchase behavior.

K.M. Mubarak Ali (1993) in his study endeavored "to find out the purchasing pattern brand preference, brand loyalty and to suggest and suitable measure to improve the brand loyalty. The study was concluding that a carefully chosen promotion strategy is to be used to increase the brand loyalty of the product. The purchase of consumers durables are influenced by personal opinions. Well brand sales force may be used to persuade the prospective customers.

Wells and Gubar (1966) in his study stated that, “Families exercise some of the most important social and group influences on individual consumption decisions. The family life cycle at which a family is located will determine the kinds of purchase. The fundamental demographic forces of age, marital status, and presence of children in the family can together place a major role in shaping individual and point purchase behavior.

Srinivasan, Narasimhan and Ratchford Brain.T. (1991) conducted an empirical test of a model external search for automobiles, by considering how perceived risk and perceived benefits affected search. By specifying the role of experience and knowledge in search, and by modeling the interrelationship between the various determinants of search, insights into the determinants of search behavior for consumer durables were found. Results indicate a linkage between perceived risk and search. Findings are consistent with the view that more knowledgeable consumers structure the purchase problem in richer, more complex way and thus see a need for more research.

Donald R. Lichtenstein, Scot Burton and Eric j. Karson(1991) in their study examined the differential effect of two types of semantics cues viz.,(i)cues can noting that an advertised price discount exhibits low consistency overtime and (ii) cues can noting that an advertised discount is highly distinctive vis a vis competitors. On consumer perception of reference price advertisements results suggests that for manipulations of external reference prices with offering price held constant, semantic cues that can note high distinctiveness are more effective in influencing consumer’s price-related evaluations when the external reference price that can note low consistency. For manipulations of offering prices with external reference price held constant, however semantic causes can nothing high distinctiveness exert more relative influence of price-related cognition when offering prices are high.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Table No.-1, Showing the Age of the Respondents

Age in years	Respondents		Total number of respondents	% of the respondents
	Small	Medium		
Below 25	06	03	09	18
26 to 35	10	07	17	34
36 to 45	11	04	15	30
46 and above	08	01	09	18
Total	35	15	50	100

Source: Primary data

Interpretation

The above table shows that among 50 respondents 18% of the respondent are below 25 years of age, 34% of the respondents belong to the age group 26-35, 30% of the respondents belong to the age group of 36-45 while the remaining 18% of the respondents belong to the age group of 46 and above.

Table No.2, Showing the Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital status	Respondents		Total number of respondents	% of the respondents
	Small	Medium		
Married	23	09	32	64
unmarried	12	06	18	36
	35	15	50	100

Source: Primary data

Interpretation

The above table clearly reveals that 64% of the respondents are married while the remaining 36% of the respondents are unmarried.

Table No.3, Showing the Experience of the Respondents

Experience in years	Respondents		Total number of respondents	% of the respondents
	Small	Medium		
3-5 years	08	03	11	22
5-10 years	13	07	20	40
10-15 years	07	02	09	18
above 15 years	07	03	10	10
Total	35	15	50	100

Source: Primary data

Interpretation

From the above table it is inferred that among 50 respondents 22% of the respondents have 3-5 years of experience, 40% of the respondents have 5-10 years experience, and 18% of the respondents have 10-15 years experience, while the remaining 10% of the respondents have more 15 years experience.

Table No.4, Showing The Reason For Preferring Britannia Products

Reasons	Respondents		Total number of respondents	% of the respondents
	Small	Medium		
Quality	08	05	13	26
Tasty	20	07	27	54
complements	04	02	06	12
Easy availability	03	01	04	08
Total	35	15	50	100

Source: Primary data

Interpretation

The above table shows that among 50 respondents 26% of the respondents informed that quality of the Britannia products is the main reason for preferring the products, 54% of the respondents told that taste is the main reason for buying Britannia products, 12% of the respondents told that complement provided by the company is the main reason for preferring the products while the remaining 8% of the respondents conveyed that easy availability of products is the main reason for purchasing the Britannia products.

Table No.5, Showing the Opinion of the Respondents Regarding the Factor Influenced the Consumer To Buy Britannia Products

Factors influenced	Respondents		Total number of respondents	% of the respondents
	Small	Medium		
Parents	22	03	11	22
Friends	09	07	20	40
Salesperson	07	02	09	18
Media	12	03	10	20
Total	35	15	50	100

Source: Primary data

Interpretation

From the above table it is understood that 22% of the respondents informed that the parents influenced them to buy Britannia products, 40% of the respondents told that their friends influenced them to buy Britannia products,

18% of the respondents conveyed that the salesman influenced them to buy Britannia products while the remaining 20% of the respondents said that the media influenced them to buy the Britannia products.

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

FINDINGS

- Majority of the respondents belong to the age group 26-35 and the age group of 36-45.
- Majority of the respondents are married.
- Majority of the respondents have 5-10 years' experience.
- Majority of the respondents told that taste is the main reason for buying Britannia products.
- Major portion of the respondents told that their friends influenced them to buy Britannia products.
- Major portion of the respondents told that the consumers buy Fifty -Fifty and milk Bikies biscuits respectively
- Majority (82%) of the respondents conveyed that the brand image of the Britannia plays a vital role in influencing the consumers
- Majority (78%) of the respondents told that Britannia company takes initiative to promote the sales
- Majority (52%) of the respondents informed that the company maintain stable quality in the products to ensure the sales
- Majority (66%) of the respondents the consumers get satisfaction when they buy Britannia products.
- Majority of the consumer satisfied because of the better quality
- Majority of the respondents told that the frequently change the dealer price,
- Major portion of the respondents told that the consumers buy three products Britannia at a time
- Majority of the respondents buy Milk Bikies and Marie gold respectively
- Major portion (78%) of the respondents told that the consumers get satisfaction when they buy Britannia products
- regarding the product factors of the Britannia products in an average most of the respondents gave good opinion
- Majority of the respondents stated normal opinion for the price factors of the Britannia products.
- Major portion of the respondents have given very good opinion with regard to promotional factors of the Britannia products.

FINDINGS FROM CHI-SQUARE TEST

1. There is no significant relationship between respondents based on the age and their opinion about the promotional measures taken by the Britannia Company.
2. There is no relationship between the experience of the respondents and their opinion about the price factors of the Britannia Company
3. There is no relationship between the education of the respondents and their satisfaction about the taste of the Britannia products.
4. There is relationship between the marital status of the respondents and the products bought from Britannia products.

SUGGESTIONS

- Few respondents felt that the quality of the Britannia items is reducing. Hence management should monitor this type of problems.
- Some of the respondents are not satisfied with the complements provided by the company. To overcome the competitions the Britannia industries may also provide some complements to the customers and also to the consumers.
- Few respondents informed that the Britannia Company does not give more advertisement when compared with the other companies. Hence the company may concentrate on advertisement to attract major customers.



- Some of the respondents informed that the Britannia Company demand more deposits from the dealer, hence the company should try to reduce the deposits amount from the dealers that will help the company to retain the existing dealers.

CONCLUSION

The modern marketing and business are fully consumer oriented and also customer oriented. These ideas must be kept in mind with all the manufacturers. Otherwise, they have to lose the existing customers. All the companies try to satisfy the desires and needs of the customers in all possible ways. As there are heavy competitions in the confectionary items the Britannia industry should be very careful with regard to customer satisfaction. In Coimbatore new products contribute considerable market share in the total market. It will be great competition for the Britannia products. To avoid competitions the Britannia Company should take all initiatives to retain the existing customers and increase the potential customers.

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