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GRT **IDENTIFYING THE MOST PREFERRED BRAND
OF WASHING MACHINE AND ASSOCIATED
FACTORS – A SURVEY**

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Abstract:- The present study makes an attempt to identify the most preferred brand of washing machine by the people of Tirunelveli district. It is a survey aimed at bringing out the factors responsible for the brand preference. The relevant and valid data were collected from a random purposive sample of 465 through a structured questionnaire. All the factors studied were classified under the dimensions - Social, Personal, Physical, Utility and Economic. The present study would be beneficial to the manufacturers to foresee the expectations of the consumers so as to incorporate them in their product, to the marketers to push the sale of the product on the expected lines of the consumers and to the consumers to benefit from the goodness of the product.

Keywords: Brand Preference, Structured Questionnaire, Consumer Ranking, Home Appliance

INTRODUCTION

A consumer is an individual who buys or has the capacity to purchase goods and services offered for sale. Consumer behaviour is the study of when, why, how, and where people do or do not buy product. It blends elements of psychology, sociology, social anthropology and economics. It attempts to understand the buyer decision making process, both individually and in groups. It studies characteristics of individual consumers such as demographics and behavioural variables in an attempt to understand people's wants. It also tries to assess influences on the consumer from groups such as family, friends, reference groups, and society in general. Brand is an identifying symbol, words or mark that distinguishes a product or company from its competitors. Usually brands are registered with a regulatory authority.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A washing machine is a huge time saver over hand washing. People do not have to sit and monitor the washing process. A washing machine eliminates the effort needed to wash clothes. With hand washing, people must use physical effort to get the clothes clean and scrub vigorously to remove stains. A washer allows people to pretreat stains with some detergent and then put the clothes in the machine to let the agitator do all the work for people. Washing machines are available in a range of sizes. Losarwar.S.G (2006) made an analysis of consumer behaviour towards selected durables including washing machine in Maharashtra State. The major objectives of the study were to find the socio-economic profile of the consumers, to study the brand of awareness of consumers and to identify the factors influencing the consumers in the selection and use of a particular product. Sarika.R.Lohana (2011) studied the consumer behaviour for household appliances of the people of Nanded City. This is a survey type of research. A question was designed and used as tool for the collection of data. Primary data were collected from a sample of 75. The study revealed that the consumer preference was based on after sale service, reputation of the company, durability of the product etc. Sunil and Ramesh Rao (2005) analysed the consumer behaviour of the population in Chennai city of Tamilnadu state based on primary data collected from a sample of 200. The study identified that

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families decided collectively on the purchase of home appliances. Majority of the consumers preferred cash payment rather than credit payment. Advertisement and publicity through mass media proved to be the best source of reaching the public. The study completed by Deepa (2001) revealed that the satisfaction levels among the users of IFB washing machine were quite high. It also recommended improvement in after sales service, cost of spares and cost of the washing machine. Saravana.S (2010) reported the significant role of women in the purchase of home appliances. Sanjaykumar and Singh (2008) reported that the rural consumers were price sensitive and least brand conscious. Madhu and Prasanna (2007) came to the conclusion that the quality, availability, suitability and reasonable price were the most influencing factors in the purchase of a particular brand of washing machine.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Household appliances have been a part and parcel of our day-to-day life. They include Mixer, Fan, Television, Refrigerators, Washing Machines, Air conditioner etc. The main advantage in household appliances is economy. These appliances which were considered as luxuries a decade ago have become more or less necessities of life. In fact everyone feels the need for owning these appliances.

Each member consumer may play a significant role in making different product decision. Economic dependence, improvement in education and awareness, work oriented lifestyles, changing social norms, increased participation in the workforce and a society more open to change have led to an enhancement in the role of women in the family consumption related decision making process.

Washing machine is supposed to be the core of housekeeping for every family. However the salient qualities needed for a good brand of washing machine are not known to many of the consumers. A study which is capable of giving the needed input to the consumers to buy a standard product of washing machine seems to be the need of the hour. Therefore the knowledge of consumer behaviour of the household appliance washing machine would be of immense help for the purchaser to make a valid purchase decision. Hence the researcher being curious to know the fact about the reasons for the consumers to decide in favour of a particular brand of washing machine for their homes has chosen the following research problem for her investigation:

“Identifying The Most Preferred Brand Of Washing Machine And Associated Factors – A Survey”.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Brand

“The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as a "name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of other sellers”.

Washing Machine

A washing machine is a machine used to wash laundry, such as clothing and sheets. The term is mostly applied to machines that use water as opposed to dry cleaning. The present study includes the products of Videocon, IFB, Whirlpool, Samsung, LG and Siemens.

Associated Factors

By this the investigator means the factors responsible for the purchase of the different brands of washing machines. The factors are categorized under Social, Personal, Physical, Utility and Economic dimensions.

METHOD OF STUDY

The present study is an empirical one based on survey method. For data collection the researcher prepared a structured questionnaire. The target population is the people of Tirunelveli district. Purposive random sampling was adopted. The researcher administered the research tool to the chosen 500, whereas she was able to receive only 465 questionnaires complete in all respects.

OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

The major purpose of the study is given in the form of following objectives:

1. To identify the most preferred brand of washing machine by the consumers of Tirunelveli district.
2. To find the most influencing Social factor, Personal factor, Physical factor, Utility factor and Economic factor for

the purchase of the most preferred brand of washing machine. Then suitable hypotheses were framed for statistical testing.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The table 1 furnishes the rank preference of different brands of washing machine.

Table.1
Home Appliance – Washing Machine

S.No	Brand of Home Appliance	No. of Respondents	Rank
1	IFB	132	I
2	Videocon	93	II
3	LG	82	III
4	Whirlpool	78	IV
5	Samsung	54	V
6	Siemens	26	VI
	Total	465	

From the table it may be understood that IFB brand of washing machine is the most preferred one followed by Videocon and LG.

The **Second objective** was achieved by subjecting the data collected for identifying the factors enabling the purchase of the most preferred washing machine, to the statistical analysis Kendall Coefficient of Concordance.

The table 2.1 provides the ranking of social factors by the consumers for the top branded IFB washing machine.

Washing Machine – Brand 1 (IFB)									
Ranking of Social Factors									
Respondents	Spouse	Children	Friends	Relatives	Parents/Elders in the Family	Neighbours	Sales Representative	Colleagues	Total
132	313	676	522	665	398	692	808	678	4752
Rank	I	V	III	IV	II	VII	VIII	VI	

To establish the confirmation of rank difference in Social factors the hypothesis was tested by Kendall Coefficient of Concordance is given in table 2.2

Table 2.2
Confirmation of Rank difference in Social Factors

Washing Machine – Brand 1 (IFB)						
K	N	SR_j	s	W	Calculated value	C^2 value at 5% level
132	8	594	196782	0.2688	248.45	14.067*

*Significant at 5% level

As the difference in ranks is statistically significant the Social factor Spouse is found to be the most influencing one.

The table 2.3 provides the ranking of Personal factors by the consumers for the top branded IFB washing machine.

Table 2.3
Ranking of Personal Factors

Washing Machine – Brand 1 (IFB)											
Respondents	Price	Mode of operation	After sales service	Cost of working	Space requirement	Availability of spares	Colours	Model	Design	Features	Total
132	398	690	1022	643	957	1025	858	625	539	501	7258
Rank	I	VI	IX	V	VIII	X	VII	IV	III	II	

To establish the confirmation of rank difference in Personal factors the hypothesis was tested by Kendall Coefficient of Concordance is given in table 2.4

Table 2.4
Confirmation of Rank difference in Personal Factors

Washing Machine – Brand 1 (IFB)						
K	N	SR _j	s	W	Calculated value	C ² value at 5% level
132	10	725.8	459365.6	0.319	379.637	16.919*

*Significant at 5% level

As the difference in ranks is statistically significant the Personal factor Price is found to be the most influencing one.

The table 2.5 provides the ranking of Physical factors by the consumers for the top branded IFB washing machine.

Table 2.5
Ranking of Physical Factors

Washing Machine – Brand 1 (IFB)							
Respondents	TV Demo	Newspaper Advertisement	Home Demo	Visit to show room	Dealer contact	Incidental & Personal happening	Total
132	365	331	383	465	637	579	2760
Rank	II	I	III	IV	VI	V	

To establish the confirmation of rank difference in Physical factors the hypothesis was tested by Kendall Coefficient of Concordance is given in table 2.6

Table 2.6

Confirmation of Rank difference in Physical Factors

Washing Machine – Brand 1 (IFB)					
K	N	SR _j	s	W	Critical value at 5% level
132	6	460	77086	0.2528	764.4*

*Significant at 5% level

As the difference in ranks is statistically significant the Physical factor Newspaper Advertisement is found to be the most influencing one.

The table 2.7 provides the ranking of Utility factors by the consumers for the top branded IFB washing machine.

Table 2.7
Ranking of Utility Factors

Washing Machine – Brand 1 (IFB)									
Respondents	Usability	Durability	Usable warranty	Maintenance	Moveability	Multi usability	Endurability	Low power workability	Total
132	323	301	600	528	792	675	810	723	4752
Rank	II	I	IV	III	VII	V	VIII	VI	

To establish the confirmation of rank difference in Utility factors the hypothesis was tested by Kendall Coefficient of Concordance is given in table 2.8

Table 2.8
Confirmation of Rank difference in Utility Factors

Washing Machine – Brand 1 (IFB)						
K	N	SR_j	s	W	Calculated value	C^2 value at 5% level
132	8	594	272744	0.37269	344.36	14.067*

*Significant at 5% level

As the difference in ranks is statistically significant the Utility factor Durability is found to be the most influencing one.

The table 2.9 provides the ranking of Economic factors by the consumers for the top branded IFB washing machine.

Table 2.9
Ranking of Economic Factors

Washing Machine – Brand 1 (IFB)									
Respondents	Special discount for cash payment	Special introductory offer	Easy Installment	0% interest	Gifts & Compliments	Exchange offer	Discount offer	Festival offer	Total
132	492	517	604	788	568	482	645	648	4744
Rank	II	III	V	VIII	IV	I	VI	VII	

To establish the confirmation of rank difference in Economic factors the hypothesis was tested by Kendall Coefficient of Concordance is given in table 2.9

Table 2.10
Confirmation of Rank difference in Economic Factors

Washing Machine – Brand 1 (IFB)						
K	N	SR_j	s	W	Calculated value	C^2 value at 5% level
132	8	593	70117	0.9581	885.2844	14.067*

*Significant at 5% level

As the difference in ranks is statistically significant the Economic factor Exchange Offer is found to be the most influencing one.

FINDINGS

Among the six brands of **Washing Machine** studied it is found that the brand IFB is the most preferred one by the consumers of Tirunelveli district.

The **Social Factor** – *Spouses* of the respondents; **Personal Factor** – *Price* of the appliance; **Physical Factor** – *Newspaper Advertisement*; **Utility Factor** – *durability* and **Economic Factor** – *Exchange Offer* are found to be the most deciding ones for the purchase of IFB brand.

DISCUSSION

As per the study first and foremost the prospective buyer is to look for the **Price** of the product (**Personal dimension**) and **Durability** of the machine (**Utility dimension**). That is the washing machine should withstand rough handling without developing repairs to incur loss to the consumer. But at the same time the **Price** should not be too high for the prospective buyer to procure that brand. Forming such an understanding, the consumer proceeds to verify the **Qualities** through TV demo or Home demo or Newspaper advertisement, of **Physical dimension**. It is also ascertained in the study, that the suggestion or judgment of the **Spouse** (**Social dimension**) is also a dominant factor to materialize the purchase of a particular brand of washing machine, in addition to the availability of Special Introductory offer or Special Discount offer or Exchange offer.

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