

## BRAND PREFERENCE TOWARDS BATHING SOAPS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN NAGERCOIL TOWN

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### ABSTRACT

*Soap is undoubtedly the oldest product to be produced specifically as a surfactant and in its many forms continues to play a major role today. Within the highly competitive marketplaces, soap is presented in a multitude forms both solid and liquid. In India, soaps are available in 5 million retail stores, out of which 3.75 million retail stores are in the rural areas. 70% of India's population resides in rural areas. With increasing disposable incomes, growth in rural demand is expected to increase because consumers are moving up towards premium products. Consumer preference is the search for purchasing, using evaluation and disposing of products, services and ideas that satisfy their needs. This paper aims to study the brand preference of bathing soap among the college students at Nagercoil Town.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Bathing Soap, Preference, Quality, Satisfaction, Motivating Factors....*

### INTRODUCTION

Soap has been in one form or another for thousands of years. In Chemistry, soap is a salt of fatty acids. Households use soaps for washing, bathing and cleaning, where soaps act as surfactants. In industries, they are used as thickness, components of some lubricants and precursors to catalysts. Soaps get bubbly and help to cut dirt and oil. People use soaps for cleaning purpose for clothes, dishes, hands and bodies. They are also used in textile spinning as an important component of lubricants. Soaps for cleaning is obtained by treating vegetable or animal oils and fats with a strongly alkaline solution. Fats and oils are composed of triglycerides and three molecules of fatty acids are attached to a single molecule of glycerol. The alkaline solution, which is often, brings about a chemical reaction known as saponification. In this reaction the triglyceride fats are first hydrolysed into free fatty acid, and then these combine with the alkali to form crude soap, an amalgam of various soap salt, excess fat or alkali, water and liberated glycerol.

Bathing is the act of taking a bath or shower to wash the body. We would generally use a large (bath size) bar of soap for this, or a shower gel. These bathing soaps are actually full of fatty

acids and the cleansing action is that some of the molecules repel dirt and some molecules get attracted to dirt and that's how the soap separates and cleanses. So, the molecules which attract dirt get washed off and molecules which repel dirt stay on our bodies and keep it moisturized. If you have ever used a bathing soap which is made of lye, it is extremely gentle on the skin, doesn't let your skin dry out and keeps your skin smooth and soft. These are some characteristics of bathing soap which you do not generally find the counter-products sold as soaps.

Following are the different kinds of bathing soap which are generally available in the market:

- Lux,
- Dove,
- Nivea,
- Cinthol,
- Hamam,
- Palmolive,
- Pears,
- Mysore
- Sandal etc.,



## **WHAT CONSTITUTES PREFERENCE?**

It consists of consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. If the consumer requirements are fully met then the consumers get satisfaction and falling short will create dissatisfaction and the consumers behave accordingly. Major attributes of consumer satisfaction can be summarized as follows: -

- a. Product Quality
- b. Price
- c. Delivery Commitments
- d. Advertising Media
- e. Resolving Consumer Complaints
- f. Product Packaging
- g. Overall Communication, Accessibility and Attitude

The study of consumer preference is concerned not only with what consumers buy and how often they buy. Consumer research takes place at every phase of the consumption process such as before the purchase, during the purchase and after the purchase. Consumer preference is interdisciplinary which is based on concepts and theories about people that have been developed by scientists in such diverse disciplines as psychology, sociology, social psychology, cultural anthropology, economics etc., Consumer research is the methodology used to study consumer preference. Consumer research designed to predict consumer preference is called positiveness and research designed to understand the consumption preference is called interpretivism which helps in making strategic marketing decisions.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The production of soap companies has massive competition and they obtain to find new ways of making money. At present the consumers are dynamic, their taste and preference are also changing. The consumers are also looking for the product differentiation and the convenience offered. The consumers have certain expectation from branded soaps in terms of its quality, price and packaging. The money spent on advertisement makes the consumer aware of

the latest brand in the market. At this juncture number of questions arises in the minds of the researcher like what is brand preference, factors influencing the customers with regard to the purchase of soap and who are the prospective consumers. To answer the foresaid questions the researcher has to select the title “A Study on Brand Preference towards Bathing Soap among College Students in Nagercoil Town”.

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The present study is confined to highlight the brand preference towards bathing soap among college students in Nagercoil town. This study also covers the demographic profile of customers, motivation factors that influence the respondents towards their favourite brand, buying preference of the respondents, measures the satisfaction level of the respondents. The present study helps them to evolve better promotion strategies which will help to enhance the level of awareness of the consumers and creating a need for their products.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of the study is to find out the Brand Preference towards Bathing Soap among College Students in Nagercoil Town.

Other objectives are:

1. To know the demographic profile of the sample respondents.
2. To find out the various motivating factors that influences the respondents towards their favourite brand.
3. To analyse the buying preference of the respondents.
4. To measure the level of satisfaction and awareness of the respondents.
5. To find out the problems faced by the respondents.

### **DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

### **METHODOLOGY**

Methodology is to describe the research procedure. The present study is an empirical one based on the survey method. It is based on both the primary and secondary data.

**a) Primary Data**

Primary data were collected from the respondents by conducting field investigation with the help of well-designed schedule and personal interview. It is mainly prepared to know the brand preference towards bathing soap among college students in Nagercoil town. The interview schedules were used to collect data from 75 respondents. After collecting data, it was processed, analysed and tabulated.

**b) Secondary Data**

Secondary data are those data which have been collected from various sources like books, magazines, journals, e-sources and published projects related to the topics.

**SAMPLE DESIGN**

The researcher has used convenient random sampling technique for the collection of data.

**LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

- This study covers a sample size of only 75 respondents.
- The data were collected from the college students of Nagercoil town only.
- This study is based on convenient random sampling method.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**AnkitKatiyar&NikhaKatiyar(2014)<sup>1</sup>** state that bathing soap are fast moving consumer goods that have seen a surge in their sales in the past few decades in India. More and more people are opening up to the idea of experimenting and trying out newer bath soaps. This study attempts to cover the various factors that influence the buying decision of consumers who plan to purchase and use bathing soap.

**Shanmugapriya and Sethuraman(2014)<sup>2</sup>** opine that the marketing scenario in India has undergone vast change since 1991 due to the economic reforms. Competition intensified in every product line and market, which forced brands to redefine their norms of existence in all industries. In the FMCG industry, especially in bathing soap sector there has been severe

competition among the MNCs, national and local players. Brand loyalty is determined by several distinct psychological processes of the consumers and entails multivariate measurement.

**NituSaxena(2009)<sup>3</sup>** has reported that numerous bathing soaps are available in the market and the customers are confused before buying anyone of the soap he/she needs it. Before taking a decision to buy a specified bathing soap, generally a customer is passing through various stages depending upon the complexity of the purchase and the buyer's preference. Today marketers must know the real needs, wants; beliefs and attitudes of the buyers to earn profits under globalized economy.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### GENDER WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

S. NO.	GENDER	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Male	22	29
2.	Female	53	71
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:**Primary Data

The above table depicts that out of 75 respondents, 71 per cent of the respondents are female and 29 per cent of the sample respondents are male. This shows that female respondents give more preference to branded soaps than male respondents.

#### AGE WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

S.NO.	AGE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	18 years old	6	8
2.	19years old	32	43
3.	20 years old	24	32
4.	21 years old	6	8
4.	22 <sup>+</sup> years	7	9
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:**Primary Data

It is inferred that, 43 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 19 years old and 8 per cent of the respondents come under the age group of 18 & 21. It is clear that majority of the sample respondents come under the age group of 19.

#### EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

S.NO.	EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Under Graduate	51	68
2.	Post Graduate	11	15
3.	Diploma	7	9
4.	Research scholar	6	8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that, out of 75 respondents, 68 per cent of the sample respondents are doing Under Graduate Degree course and 8 per cent of the sample respondents are doing research work. It is inferred that, majority of the sample respondents are undertaking Under Graduate Degree course.

#### FAMILY SIZE OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

S.NO.	SIZE OF THE FAMILY	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	2 members	1	1
2.	3-5 members	42	56
3.	6-8 members	25	34
4.	Above 8 members	7	9
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that 56 per cent of the respondents' family has 3 - 5 members and 1 per cent of the respondents' family has 2 members. It signifies that, majority of the sample respondents have 3 - 5 members in their family.

**SORCES OF INFORMATION FOR MAKING PURCHASE DECISION**

S. NO.	MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Relatives/ Friends	28	37
2.	Classmates	12	16
3.	Mass Media	16	21
4.	Well-wishers	6	8
5.	Doctors	5	7
6.	Dealers/ Shopkeepers	0	0
7.	Beauticians	8	11
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:**Primary Data

The above table reveals that 37 per cent of the respondents are informed by relatives/friends, 7 per cent of the respondents are informed by the doctors and none were influenced by dealers/shopkeepers. It is inferred that most of the respondents are influenced by friends/ relatives.

**MOTIVATING FACTORS OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS**

S.NO.	MOTIVATINGFACTORS	TOTAL	MEANS CORE	RANK
1.	Past experience	251	3.35	VI
2.	Influenced by mass media	294	3.92	II
3.	Good result	236	3.15	VIII
4.	Trusted companies	187	2.49	IX
5.	Discount facilities	267	3.56	IV
6.	Easy to purchase	0	0	-
7.	Beauty conscious	295	3.93	I
8.	Brand popularity	258	3.44	V
9.	Reasonable price	269	3.59	III
10.	Doctor's advice	238	3.17	VII

**Source:**Primary Data

It is evident from the above table that out of ten identified motivational factors, "Beauty conscious" is the factor which is ranked first with the highest mean score of 3.93, "Influenced by Mass Media" and "Reasonable Price" are the factors that are given second and third ranks with the mean scores of 3.92 and 3.59 respectively. "Discount Facility" and "Brand popularity" are ranked fourth and fifth with the mean score of 3.56 and 3.44. Sixth and seventh ranks are given to "Past Experience" "Doctors, advice" accordingly. The last rank is given to



“Trusted Companies” with the score of 2.49. Hence it is inferred that the sample respondents are motivated by various factors to choose among different brands of soaps.

#### PREFERENCE FOR BUYING PARTICULAR BRAND

S.NO.	PREFERENCE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Fragrance	19	25
2.	Colour	11	15
3.	Brand	27	36
4.	Shape	10	13
5.	Packaging	8	11
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:**Primary Data

The above table reveals that, 36 per cent of the sample respondents buy a particular bathing soap by the influence of its brand and 11 per cent of the sample respondents buy bathing soaps as its packaging attracts them the most. It is inferred that the sample respondents give more importance to brand preference.

#### BRAND PREFERENCE OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

S.NO.	BRAND PREFERENCE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Lux	6	8
2.	Dove	7	9
3.	Pears	8	11
4.	Sandoor	16	21
5.	Vivel	10	13
6.	Hamam	7	9
7.	Medimix	8	11
8.	Cinthol	2	3
9.	Lifebuoy	1	1
10.	Dettol	2	3
11.	Others	8	11
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:**Primary Data

The above table shows that, 21 per cent of the sample respondents give preference to Sandoorbathing soap and 1 per cent of the sample respondents buy Lifebuoy bathing soap. It is inferred that more sample respondents prefer Sandoorbathing soap.

**LEVEL OF SATISFACTION**

<b>S.NO.</b>	<b>ATTRIBUTES</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>MEAN SCORE</b>	<b>RANK</b>
1	Weight	270	3.6	<b>III</b>
2.	Fragrance	285	3.8	<b>I</b>
3.	Size	241	3.21	<b>VI</b>
4.	Composition	248	3.31	<b>V</b>
5.	Softness	170	2.27	<b>IX</b>
6.	Quality	114	1.52	<b>X</b>
7.	Availability	211	2.81	<b>VII</b>
8.	Price	281	3.75	<b>II</b>
9.	Health benefits	252	3.36	<b>IV</b>
10.	Silky skin	205	2.73	<b>VIII</b>

**Source:**Primary Data

In order to find out the level of satisfaction of the customers Likert's Five Point Scale have been used. Using this technique, the researchers found that "Fragrance" is given the first rank with the mean score of 3.8, second rank is given to "Price" with the mean score of 3.75, third rank is given to "Weight" with the mean score of 3.6, fourth rank for "Health benefits" with the mean score of 3.36, ninth and tenth rank are given to "Softness" and "Quality" with the mean score of 2.27 and 1.52 respectively. From that, it is clear that majority of the sample respondents are satisfied with the fragrance of the soap and majority of the sample respondents are not satisfied with the quality of the soap. This shows that the customers are very much satisfied with the fragrance of the soap.

**AWRENESS OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS**

<b>S.NO.</b>	<b>ATTRIBUTE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>MEAN SCORE</b>	<b>RANK</b>
1.	Side effect	311	4.15	<b>I</b>
2.	Composition	269	3.59	<b>III</b>
3.	Cleanliness	284	3.79	<b>II</b>
4.	Skin allergy	258	3.44	<b>IV</b>
5.	Quantity of TFM	223	2.97	<b>V</b>

**Source:**Primary Data

In order to find out the awareness level of the customers, Likert's Five Point Scaling technique was used. Using this technique, the researchers found that "Side effect" is given the first rank with the mean score of 4.15, second rank is given to "Cleanliness" with the mean score

of 3.79, third rank is given to “Composition” with the mean score of 3.59, fourth rank is given to “Skin allergy” with the mean score of 3.44 and the last rank is given to “Quantity of TFM” with the mean score of 2.97. It is clear that, the majority of the sample respondents were aware about the side effect of the soap they are using and minority of the respondents were not aware with the quantity of Total Fatty Matter used in soaps.

### PROBLEMS FACED BY THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

S.NO	PROBLEMS	GARRETT MEAN	RANK
1.	Non-availability	53.36	V
2.	Poor quality	58.04	III
3.	High price	57.01	IV
4.	Perception	59.37	II
5.	Allergy/rashes	59.81	I

**Source:** *Primary Data*

In order to find out the problems faced by the respondents Garrett’s ranking technique was used. Using this technique, the researchers found that “Allergy/Rashes” is the first attribute which ranks first with the mean score of 59.81, second rank is given to “Perception” with the mean score of 59.37, third rank is given to “Poor quality” with the mean score of 58.04, fourth rank is given to the price and the last rank is given to “Non-availability” with the mean score of 53.36. From that it is clear that majority of the sample respondents are facing the problem of allergies and rashes.

### CONCLUSION

This research is mainly focused on brand preference towards bathing soaps among the college students at Nagercoil Town. From the overall analysis of the study, it is understood that the college students in Nagercoil town, are more conscious in their beauty and they are highly influenced by the advertisements being given in mass medias. The respondents also give importance to brand and fragrance while buying the bathing soaps. They had high level of awareness about the bathing soap what they are using. In order to satisfy the needs of college students the company should take necessary steps to improve the quality of soaps which should not create any side effects.

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