



A STUDY ON THE EFFECTS OF SALES PROMOTION TOOLS ON BRAND SWITCHING OF FMCG IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to see the effects of sales promotion on brand switching of FMCG in Kerala. Fast moving consumer goods (FMCGs) are products that have a quick shelf turnover, at relatively low cost and do not require a lot of thinking time and financial investment to purchase. Fast Moving Consumer Goods refers to a wide range of frequently purchased consumer products including toiletries, soaps, cosmetics, teeth cleaning products, shaving products, detergents, other non-durable such as glassware, bulbs, batteries, paper products and plastic goods, such as buckets. As the risk of purchasing FMCG is relatively less compared to high involvement buying situations, consumers do not mind experimenting with different brands. A consumer's decision of which brand to buy and how much quantity of that brand to buy depends on brand specific factors like price and promotion of various brands and consumer specific factors like consumer's brand loyalty, consumption rate, product inventory and his/her sensitivity to brand and promotion. Fast moving is in opposition to consumer durables such as kitchen appliances that replaced less than once a year. The fast moving consumer goods selected for the study are Tea, Toothpaste, Cereals (including cereal based products), and Detergent, representing the four important categories of FMCGs like beverages, personal hygiene products, food and toiletries respectively. Geographically the study is limited to the state of Kerala in India.

KEY WORDS: FMCGs, Brand Switching, Sales Promotion, Post Hoc Analysis, Inter-Product Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Change is the buzz word in today's corporate world. Since change is inevitable, it is always better that organizations face and manage it, than to avoid the same. In a competitive economy, sales do not occur automatically. The businessman should prepare the ground for future expansion and evolve new ideas for creating favourable selling situation through innovation and thus establish a market for his products. This can be done with the help of

Promotional Strategy which arouses enthusiasm, create buying mood or spark an immediate reaction from the consumer. It influences the attitude of the customer by acquiring the right product at the right time, at the right place and at the right price. Due to the emergence of changes in consumers' attitude, Corporates are in continuous search for identifying areas where improvement can be done and bigger market share can

be achieved. Therefore, it is essential for every business group to create demand and retain the customers so as to survive in the market through some strategy. One of the strategies adapted is sales promotion.

Fast moving consumer goods (FMCGs) are products that have a quick shelf turnover, at relatively low cost and do not require a lot of thinking time and financial investment to purchase. According to *Wikipedia Encyclopedia* Fast Moving Consumer Goods is a classification that refers to a wide range of frequently purchased consumer products including toiletries, soaps, cosmetics, teeth cleaning products, shaving products, detergents, other non-durable such as glassware, bulbs, batteries, paper products and plastic goods, such as buckets. In the words of Philip Kotler the FMCG is characterised by products having low unit value and requiring frequent purchases and consumer behaviour reflecting less loyalty, impulse buying and low involvement on the part of a consumer.

As the risk of purchasing FMCG is relatively less compared to high involvement buying situations, consumers do not mind experimenting with different brands. A consumer's decision of which brand to buy and how much quantity of that brand to buy depends on brand specific factors like price and promotion of various brands and consumer specific factors like consumer's brand loyalty, consumption rate, product inventory and his/her sensitivity to brand and promotion. Fast moving is in opposition to consumer durables such as kitchen appliances that replaced less than once a year. The term Consumer Packaged Goods is used interchangeably with fast moving consumer goods. Three of the largest and best-known examples of FMCG companies are Nestle, Unilever and Proctor and Gamble. Examples of FMCG brands are Coca-Cola, Kleener, Pepsi and Mars.

The Indian FMCG sector is the fourth largest sector in the economy with a total market size of in excess of US \$ 13.1 billion. It has a strong presence of multinational companies and characterised by a well-established distribution network, intense competition between organised and unorganised segments and low operational cost. Availability of key raw materials, cheaper labour costs and presence across the entire value chain has given India a competitive advantage in this sector.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Most of the studies conducted so far on sales promotion were done in developed countries. Studies reported from developing countries are very limited. Planning aspect of promotion received maximum attention of researchers. A few studies conducted in India were

also reviewed. Most of these studies are by marketing faculty members of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. Priya Jha Dang, Abraham Koshi and Dinesh Sharma presented an empirical view of various sales promotions launched in the market for the period, 1996-2003. Preeta Hemang Vyas examined the ratio of incentives and outlays when consumers buy fast moving consumer goods under various sales promotion offers. In another study the same author attempted to study consumer preference with regard to sales promotion in FMCG category. In 2004, Preeta Vyas reviewed recent contributions in the area of sales promotion through Meta analysis. Along with Kureshi Sonal, the same author conducted some other studies on sales promotion. K.M. Krishnakumar conducted the only study in Kerala on sales promotion. The researcher studied consumer's perception about sales promotion strategy adopted by marketers of fast moving consumer goods in Kerala.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The FMCG industry has moved to the path of globalization and privatization in a novel way. Large private companies and multinational companies (MNCs) entered into the arena and are facing unprecedented competition. The environment so created by globalization is a great challenge to Indian FMCG market. The present study examines the effect of sales promotion on brand switching and evaluates the effectiveness of sales promotion tools in motivating Brand-Switching. Sales promotion technique is one of the strategies that help FMCG companies to get a better market share for its sustainable growth. Hence, this study has been undertaken to suggest ways for effective implementation of promotional schemes aiming at brand switching in favour of an organisation to achieve competitive advantage.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study discusses the effect of sales promotion on consumer's buying and consumption behaviour. Specifically it examines:

1. How far important sales promotion tools succeed in effecting brand switching.
2. The effectiveness of Sales Promotion Tools in Motivating Brand-Switching.
3. Ways for effective implementation of promotional schemes which are aiming at brand switching in favour of an organisation to achieve competitive advantage.

HYPOTHESIS

H₀: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness among important sales promotion tools in promoting brand switching.

H.1: There is significant difference in the effectiveness among important sales promotion tools in promoting brand switching.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is designed as a descriptive one based on primary and secondary data. The study is mainly based on primary data collected from consumers of Fast Moving Consumer Goods in Kerala. Secondary data relating to the study have been collected from various Journals, Textbooks, Periodicals and Dailies. For the purpose of collecting data a Questionnaire and Structured Interview Schedule were used.

The data were collected from the respondents directly through an undisguised personal interview by the researcher himself. Multistage sampling technique was adopted to select the required number of respondents from different parts of Kerala. The state is divided into two equal parts on the basis of number of revenue districts. Southern districts including Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Idukki and Ernakulam constitute the first part. The second part comprises of districts like Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Wayand, Kannur and Kasargode. From each part one district is selected randomly viz. Ernakulam and Malappuram. From each of the selected district 200 respondents were selected after giving due representation to the diverse groups of consumers. Altogether there are 400 respondents who represent a cross section of consumers of fast moving consumer goods in Kerala.

To understand the veracity of data, mathematical and statistical tools such as Percentages, Standard Deviation, Mode, Chi-square test, t-test, One-Way ANOVA, Least Squared Deviation (Post-Hoc), Correspondence Analysis were used.

PERIOD OF THE STUDY

The study is conducted during the period of two years i.e., from January 2005 to February 2007.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Consumer sales promotion of FMCGs has both short-term and long-term objectives. Short-term objectives include warding off competition by loading the consumers, initiating trial purchase of the brand in a highly competitive market and clearing out stock during the off-season. Long-term objectives include building brand image, loyalty and category expansion. Successful sales promotion creates additional revenue to the marketer or helps to maintain current revenue. While switching in favour of the marketer's brand, stockpiling and consumption acceleration help the former, preventing a switch out by using an appropriate promotion strategy is required to attain the latter.

Four products, representing four important categories of fast moving consumer goods, have been selected in order to study the effect of sales promotion on customer's buying and consumption behaviour. These products are Tea, Toothpaste, Cereals and Detergent representing beverages, personal hygiene, food and toiletries respectively.

Brand Switching Possibility Due to Promotional Offers:-

Brand switching, considered as one of the most important effects of sales promotion and advertisement, is a buyer's tendency to move from one brand to another across a product category. Many studies have revealed that sales promotion has a very strong effect on consumer's brand switching behavior. The share of brand switching in the total incremental sales due to promotion has been found as high as 80 percent in the case of some products when such increased sales were decomposed in to brand switching, stockpiling and category expansion. The switching possibilities are measured in terms of some percentages such as zero (no possibility), less than 25 (very low possibility), 25 to 50 (low possibility), 50 to 75 (high possibility) and 75 to 100 (very high possibility).

Table 1 Brand Switching Possibility Due to Promotional Offers

Level of Possibility	Tea		Toothpaste		Cereals		Detergent	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No Possibility	240	60.0	215	53.7	232	58.0	193	48.2
Very Low Possibility	104	26.0	108	27.0	101	25.2	95	23.7
Low Possibility	26	6.4	44	11.0	36	9.0	46	11.5
High Possibility	21	5.3	15	3.8	11	2.8	35	8.8
Very High Possibility	9	2.3	18	4.5	20	5.0	31	7.8
Total	400	100.0	400	100.0	400	100.0	400	100.0
Mode	1 st item		1 st item		1 st item		1 st item	

Source: Survey Data

Table 1 shows the brand switching possibility of consumers of the selected products due to sales promotion:

Tea: - In the case of tea, 60 percent opined that there is no possibility of a brand switching. There is a very low possibility in the case of 26 percent of buyers where as the higher-level possibilities are marginal. Mode indicates that most of the buyers subscribe to the view that there is no possibility of brand switching in the case of tea.

Tooth paste: - In the case of toothpaste, 53.7 percent indicated that there is no possibility of a brand switching. 27 percent buyers expressed a very low possibility, and 11 percent opined that there is a low possibility of switching. Mode indicates that most of the buyers subscribe to the view that there is no possibility of brand switching in the case of toothpaste.

Cereals: - In the case of cereals, the percentage of buyers who expressed that there is no possibility of switching is 58. Further 25.2 percent buyers opined that there is a very low possibility while 9 percent possess low possibility. Mode indicates that most of the buyers subscribe to the view that there is no possibility of brand switching in the case of cereals.

Detergent: - In the case of detergent, more than half of the buyers would switch their brands due to sales promotion. Percentages of buyers included in each category are 23.7, 11.5, 8.8 and 7.8 in the case of 'very low', 'low', 'high' and 'very high' groups respectively. Mode indicates that most of the buyers subscribe to the view that there is no possibility of brand switching in the case of detergent.

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that detergent is the product, which is subject to maximum brand switching incidences followed by toothpaste, cereals and tea. Various levels of possibilities of trial purchase are also different from product to product. Chi-square test has been applied to test whether these differences are significant and the result suggests that there is significant difference among these products in their chances of brand switching when the product is on a promotional offer. The value of chi-square at 12 degrees of freedom is 42.019 and 'P' value is less than 0.001.

Effectiveness of Sales Promotion Tools in Motivating Brand-Switching:-

The power of various sales promotion tools to motivate buyers to switch their brands may vary from one tool to another. As brand switching is the most important objective of sales promotion in the fast moving consumer goods market it is important that marketers know this difference. More over they can design counter strategies against the scheme implemented by their rival competitors. Respondents who were found motivated to switch from one brand to another due to sales promotion were asked to give their priorities of promotional tools by distributing 100 points. The mean and standard deviation of these scores were obtained in order to identify and rank these tools in their order of suitability. Table 2 provides information with relate to the four products on this aspect of study

Table 2 -Effectiveness of Sales Promotion Tools in Motivating Brand-Switching.

Product	No.	Statistic	Price-Off	Couponing	Premium	Sampling	POP
Tea	160	Mean	29.84	14.00	15.13	16.53	24.50
		S. D.	24.63	15.02	14.46	14.77	25.15
Toothpaste	185	Mean	29.76	12.88	20.52	17.59	19.24
		S. D.	23.66	11.40	18.51	18.08	21.73
Cereals	168	Mean	29.88	12.86	17.08	19.17	21.01
		S. D.	25.26	11.45	15.61	17.49	23.13
Detergent	207	Mean	31.88	13.19	18.64	17.08	19.15
		S. D.	24.74	11.14	15.97	15.70	20.70

Source: Survey Data

The above table reveals the following information:

Tea: - In the case of tea, 160 respondents were found motivated by sales promotion to switch over to a new brand of the product. 'Price-off' is the most suitable sales promotion tool in motivating buyers to switch over to a new brand of tea. Its mean value is 29.84 with a standard deviation of 24.63, which is in the acceptable limit. 'POP' (mean value 24.50), 'Sampling' (mean value 16.53), 'Premium' (mean value 15.13), and 'Couponing' (mean value 14.0) can be arranged in the order of their power to motivate buyers in switching brands.

Toothpaste: - In the case of toothpaste, 185 respondents were found motivated by sales promotion to switch over to a new brand of the product. 'Price-off' with a mean score of 29.76 is the most suitable sales promotion tool in motivating buyers to switch over to a new brand of tooth paste. 'Premium' (mean value 20.52), 'POP' (mean value 19.24), 'Sampling' (mean value 17.59) and 'Couponing' (mean value 12.88) can be arranged in the order of their power to motivate buyers in switching brands.

Cereals: - in the case of cereals, 168 respondents were found motivated by sales promotion to switch over to a new brand. 'Price-off' with a mean score of 29.88 is the most suitable sales promotion tool in motivating buyers to switch over to a newly promoted brand. 'POP' (mean value 21.01), 'Sampling' (mean value 19.17), 'Premium' (mean value 17.08) and 'Couponing' (mean value 12.86) can be arranged in the order of their power to motivate buyers in switching brands.

Detergent: - In the case of detergents, 207 respondents were found motivated by sales promotion to switch over to a new brand. 'Price-off' with a mean score of 31.88 is the most suitable sales promotion tool in motivating buyers to switch over to a newly promoted brand. 'POP' (mean value 19.15), 'Premium' (mean value 18.64), 'Sampling' (mean value 17.08), and 'Couponing' (mean value 13.19) can be arranged in the order of their power to motivate buyers in switching their brands.

To summaries the above discussion, 'price-off' is the best and 'couponing' is the least effective sales

promotion tools in motivating buyers to make a brand switching in the case of all the four categories of FMCG selected for the study. Other tools take interchangeable positions.

Consumer's perception about the effectiveness of each sales promotion tools in motivating them to switch brands can be further analysed on product wise. Accordingly 'price-off' appears to be most successful in the product detergent (mean value 31.88) and then products cereals (mean value 29.88, tea (mean value 29.84) and toothpaste (mean value 29.76) follow in that order. Couponing has greatest influence on the product tea (mean value 14.0) followed by detergent (mean value 13.19), toothpaste (mean value 12.88) and cereals (mean value 12.86). In the case of premium, the highest influence is on toothpaste (mean value 20.52) followed by detergent (mean value 18.64), cereals (mean value 17.08) and tea (mean value 15.13). Influence of sampling on brand switching is at the maximum level on cereals (mean value 19.17) followed by toothpaste (mean value 17.59), detergent (mean value 17.08) and tea (mean value 16.53). Finally, point-of-purchase promotions exert maximum influence on tea (mean value 24.5) followed by cereals (mean value 21.01), toothpaste (mean value 19.24) and detergent (mean value 19.15).

Analysis of Variance

A study of the significance of difference in the effectiveness of a sales promotion tool in motivating brand switching among the four products would be useful to the marketers to take appropriate decisions. Results of the analysis of variance using 'F-test' are presented in the Table 3 It can be observed from the table that the brand switching motivational role of each sales promotion tool in the case of all the four products is not significantly different, except in the case of the tool 'Premium' as the 'P' values are more than 0.05, at the confidence limit of 5%. In the case of 'Premium' the 'P' value is only 0.017.

Table 3 Results of Analysis of Variance (Inter-Product Analysis)

Promotion Tools	Sources	D.F.	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Ratio	P-Value
Price-Off	Between Groups	3	627.0	209.01	0.346	.792
Couponing	Between Groups	3	140.8	46.96	0.314	.816
Premium	Between Groups	3	2729.0	909.68	3.437	.017
Sampling	Between Groups	3	651.2	217.09	0.790	.500
POP	Between Groups	3	3206.7	1068.91	2.097	.099

Source: Survey Data

Table 4 Results of Analysis of Variance (Inter-Promotion Tool Analysis)

Product	Sources	D.F	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Significance
Tea	Between Groups	4	30231.5	7557.8	19.97	<.001
Toothpaste	Between Groups	4	28213.7	7053.4	19.26	<.001
Cereals	Between Groups	4	26691.7	6672.9	18.00	<.001
Detergent	Between Groups	4	41134.0	10283.5	30.86	<.001

Source: Survey Data

Differences in the brand switching motivational effectiveness of all the sales promotion tools in the case of each product are tested for their significance and the results are exhibited in the table 4. Since the 'P' values in all the cases are less than 0.05, at the confidence limit of 5%, it is concluded that the motivational role of the five tools of promotion in motivating brand switching in the case of each of the four products is significantly different.

Post Hoc Analysis:-

The analysis of variance in the brand switching motivational effectiveness of various sales promotion tools in the case of each product is done taking all the tools together. A more detailed study taking two tools at a time, in order to know the significance of difference between them is conducted using the method of Least Square Difference. The results of analysis are incorporated in

Table 5

Table 5 Results of Post Hoc Analysis (Inter-Promotional Tool)

Pair of Tools Compared	Tea		Toothpaste		Cereals		Detergent	
	Mean Diff.	P Value	Mean Diff.	P Value	Mean Diff.	P Value	Mean Diff.	P Value
Price-off-Coupons	15.843*	<.001	16.875*	<.001	17.023*	<.001	18.695*	<.001
Price-off - Premium	14.718*	<.001	9.232*	<.001	12.797*	<.001	13.236*	<.001
Price-off - Sampling	13.312*	<.001	12.162*	<.001	10.714*	<.001	14.806*	<.001
Price-off - POP	5.343*	0.014	10.513*	<.001	8.869*	<.001	12.729*	<.001
Coupon-Premium	-1.125	0.605	-7.643*	<.001	-4.226*	.045	-5.458*	.002
Coupon-Sampling	-2.531	0.245	-4.713*	0.018	-6.309*	.003	-3.888*	.030
Coupon-POP	-10.500*	<.001	-6.362*	0.001	-8.154*	<.001	-5.966*	.001
Premium-Sampling	-1.406	0.518	2.929	0.141	-2.083	.322	1.570	.382
Premium-POP	-9.375*	<.001	1.281	0.520	-3.928	.062	-.507	.777
Sampling-POP	-7.968*	<.001	-1.648	0.408	-1.845	.380	-2.077	.247

Source: Survey Data

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 5 shows that the significance of difference between mean values of various tools taken in pairs for comparison:

1. The difference between 'discount' and each of the other tools of promotion is very much significant in the case of all the four products since the 'P' values are less than 0.05.
2. In the case of tea, the mean difference between coupon and POP; premium and POP; and sampling and POP are significant as well.
3. In the case of toothpaste, the difference between coupon and premiums; coupons and sampling; and coupon and POP are also significant.
4. In the case of cereals, the difference between coupon and premiums; coupons and sampling; and coupon and POP are also significant.
5. In the case of detergent, the difference between coupon and premiums; coupons and sampling; and coupon and POP are also significant.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study reveals the following findings:

- ☆ Generally consumers of FMCG do not show the tendency to switch brands on account of promotional offer. Majority of the consumers of Tea, Toothpaste and Cereals think that there is no possibility of switching brands induced by promotional offers. Majority of the consumers of detergent would switch consequent to promotional offers. Among those buyers who opined that there are some possibilities of switching, a substantial portion feels that the possibility is very low.
- ☆ Detergent is the product that is subject to maximum brand switching incidences followed by Toothpaste, Cereals and Tea.
- ☆ Differences in the motivational role of sales promotion in making consumers switch brands in the case of the four products are proved to be significant.
- ☆ Price-Off is the most and couponing is the least effective tool of sales promotion in motivating buyers to switch brands in the case of all the four categories of products. Except in the case of toothpaste, POP Promotion is the second best effective tool for the purpose.
- ☆ The differences in the effectiveness of each sales promotion tool in motivating buyers to switch brands of various products are not significant except in the case of Premium scheme, in that case the tool is most effective for the product

Toothpaste and least effective for the product Tea.

- ☆ The differences in the effectiveness of various sales promotion tools in motivating buyers to switch brands in the case of each product are significant
- ☆ Price-Off as a tool of sales promotion, capable of motivating consumers to switch brands, is most effective in the product Detergent, followed by Cereal, Tea and Toothpaste respectively.
- ☆ Couponing as a tool of sales promotion capable of motivating consumers to switch brands is most effective in the product Tea, followed by Detergent, Toothpaste and Cereals respectively.
- ☆ Premium as a tool of sales promotion capable of motivating consumers to switch brands is most effective in the product Toothpaste, followed by Detergent, Cereals and Tea respectively.
- ☆ Sampling as a tool of sales promotion capable of motivating consumers to switch brands is most effective in the product Cereals, followed by Toothpaste, Detergent, and Tea respectively.
- ☆ POP Promotions as a tool of sales promotion capable of motivating consumers to switch brands is most effective in the product Tea, followed by Cereals, Toothpaste and Detergent respectively.

Managerial Implications of the study:-

Sales promotion as a tool for effectin brand switching is not highly effective and hence not suitable for fast moving consumer goods. As there is significant difference among various sales promotion tools in effecting brand switching, selection of an appropriate tool is the key to success.

Results of Testing Hypothesis:-

On the basis of the above findings the following null hypothesis is tested and the results are given below:
H.0: "There is no significant difference in the effectiveness among important sales promotion tools in promoting brand switching in the category of FMCG".

H.1: "There is significant difference in the effectiveness among important sales promotion tools in promoting brand switching in the category of FMCG".

The Null Hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the Alternative Hypothesis that there is significant difference in the effectiveness among important sales promotion tools in promoting brand switching in the case of FMCG is proved and hence accepted.

Suggestions:-

- ✧ The level of awareness about various sales promotion tools is very low except in the case of Price-Off and Premium schemes. It is suggested that sales promotion schemes should be sufficiently backed and supported by print and electronic media advertising.
- ✧ Consumers prefer to get value added offers in the form of additional quantity of the same product they buy as incentives. Bonus pack schemes can be used more effectively than free gifts and compliments.
- ✧ Coupon distribution system should be streamlined, as consumers mostly prefer to get them through newspapers and magazines.
- ✧ Consumers of FMCGs in Kerala give utmost importance to the quality of the product. Price and offers are factors of lesser importance to them. Marketers should remember that inferior quality products cannot be sold with the help of unimaginative sales promotion schemes.
- ✧ Sales promotion is more effective in the case of non-food categories like detergent, toothpaste, etc. These items can be more frequently promoted.
- ✧ Manufacturers or marketers who are up in the channel of distribution should ensure that there are no chances of misuse of promotional schemes by other members. Schemes like Coupons, Contests and sweepstakes and Sampling give rise to malpractices by retailers.
- ✧ Sample of a new product may be distributed along with another product of the same marketer or through the retail counter to make it more effective.

Limitations of the Study:-

The study is subjected to some limitations also. First of all there can be some memory recall errors from the part of the respondents. Secondly all of the selected products are in their maturity stage of life cycle. Finally, data relating to sales promotion activities are not sufficiently available.

Scope for Further Research:-

Comparative studies on the effects of sales promotion and advertising on brand switching will be highly useful for marketing strategists to select appropriate promotional tools. Geographical area can be extended for those researchers who are interested to study the problem of the effect of sales promotion tools on brand switching on a national level.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide some useful insights in to the nature of influence of various sales promotion schemes on divergent consumer behaviour. The results of the study on the effect of sales promotion on buying and consumption behaviour may be useful to promotion managers of FMCG companies to streamline their sales promotion strategies and make their promotional efforts more fruitful.

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