FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SOAP

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ABSTRACT

In Today's competitive era every marketer wants to be in the top position .It is only possible when they will able to satisfy the customers by providing unique products than the competitors. Customer satisfaction is a necessary step in loyalty formation and business success. Product attributes are distinctive tangible and intangible features of a product it describe the main product features, major benefits received by those using the product, current branding strategies, etc. The aim of the study is to determine which attribute is important for choosing Soap and also to find out the gap between customer expectation and product performance. This study helps in understanding customer preference and their satisfaction by the services provided by different organizations for personal care products. For this study Stratified random sampling and primary data is collected through questionnaire . All the responses measured on a five-point Likert scale. The data is collected through primary sources & secondary sources. The analysis is based on the two areas, viz. Paired T-test and Factor Analysis. Consumer preference of product attribute vary according to product nature and socioeconomic nature of consumer. Product attributes are often continuous in nature. From the analysis it has been found that the consumers are giving more importance to quality and for fair and glowing skin while they purchase Beauty soap Manufactures need to continuously engage in product development in order to meet the specific needs of the consumer.

Introduction

Product Attributes that express the impressions of or characteristics of a product or service, such as durability, reliability or good taste. Customer satisfaction is a necessary step in loyalty formation and business success. The most common method for measuring customer satisfaction is to assess the performance of product attribute-level (G. Vani1.et.al). Attribute-level performance has been employed to measure customer satisfaction rather than overall satisfaction. In an attribute-level approach, overall satisfaction is a function of attribute level evaluations. Product quality is an essential component to consider when attempting to enhance customer satisfaction. Increasing customer satisfaction, by increasing customer value, is a key issue for every company .Customer satisfaction is the customer's feeling positive or negative about the value that was received. Several empirical studies have highlighted the effect of expectations on customer satisfaction. It is very important to know the customer expectation to measure the level of customer satisfaction. This study focuses on product attributes to evaluate on overall satisfaction of personal care products i.e Soap. It includes products like soap, shampoo, toothpaste, skincare products, detergent etc. The attributes present in Beauty soap like: attractive packaging, shape of the tablet, color, fragrance/smell, size/weight, ingredients, moisturizing effect, softness, refreshment, cleansing, skin protection, germ protection etc (Sundari. R et.al). Thus attributes performs an important role in marketing communications and could be treated as one of the most important factors influencing consumer's purchase decision. Consumer behavior determines a firm's profitability. Further, profitability is established in the long term by developing a loyal consumer base, that is, a group of consumers who are satisfied with the marketer's brand and continue to buy it over time. At the heart of all marketing strategies is the need to satisfy consumers so as to establish such a loyal consumer base. The central purpose of the business firm is to satisfy customer needs. Therefore, business managers must understand the nature of these needs as a foundation for strategy development. Understanding consumer behavior is difficult enough for Companies. Product attributes allow to create custom fields for your products that can use internally or show to your customers. In researching satisfaction, firms generally ask customers whether their product or service has met or exceeded expectations. Thus, expectations are a key factor behind satisfaction. If the customers have high expectations and the reality falls short, they

will be disappointed/dissatisfied and vise vesa.For this product attributes are play an important role for customer for choosing their products.

Review of Literature

In today's society, beauty and physical attractiveness are constantly emphasized as desirable and admirable characteristics. Images of "idealized" human faces and bodies are widely used to promote products and services. Among researchers, the concept of customer satisfaction is usually discussed from two different perspectives: According to a cognitive perspective, this term is understood to be the assessment resulting from comparing customers' expectations and their perception of the value of the product/service received. From an emotional perspective, satisfaction is considered a positive emotional state resulting from the consumption experience. On the other hand, customer satisfaction also depends on perceived value(Vanessa Apaolaza-Ibáñez1 et al., 2010).(Rajesh Rajaguru & Margaret J Matanda,) explained that Consumer preference of product attributes vary according to product nature and socioeconomic nature of consumer. Product attributes are often continuous in nature (R. sundari, dr. m. sakthivel murugan, 2011) explained that People buy products, but which products they buy and how they make a buying decision have a lot to do with how they feel about the product attributes. Products are what the company makes. The consumer search ingredients of the product, Product should serve the purpose, innovative features, manufacturer's reputation, and the product should be medically tested, while purchasing personal care products. Due to increasing changing consumers' lifestyle in competitive environment the role of product attribute has changed. Product attributes helps in attracting the consumer's attention to particular brand, and enhances its image, and influences consumer's perceptions about product(Rita Kuvykaite et al. 2009.). The product attributes performs an important role in marketing communications and could be treated as one of the most important factors influencing consumer's purchase decision. The product attribute performs an important role in marketing communicationsand it is one of the most important factors influencing consumer's purchase decision. According to (Edward C. Malthouse et al, july 2003) customer satisfaction is a key and valued outcome of good marketing practice .customer satisfaction helps in future success and profitability of the organization.(Kurt Matzlera, 2004) explained that without question, quality and customer satisfaction are key drivers of financial performance. It is argued that satisfaction leads to

increased loyalty, reduced price elasticity, increased cross-buying, and positive word of mouth. An effective method to set priorities is importance–performance analysis (IPA). It analyses quality attributes on two dimensions: their performance level (satisfaction) and their importance to the customer.

Objectives of the study

➢ To find out the major determinants of consumer purchasing decision

➢ To find the gap between customer expectation and performance of product attributes.

Hypothesis of the study

• **H01**: There is no significant difference between expectation and performance of Soap with relation to different product attributes.

Research Methodology

For this research study, the primary data is collected through questionnaire and personal comments from the respondents. The sampling procedure use for this study is stratified random sampling. The stratification is done on the basis of geographic locations.The instrument which is used for the collection of primary data is a questionnaire, which is coded in order to be analyzed. All the responses measured on a five-point Likert scale.The sample size taken for the study is 180.Basically the data was collected from major cities of Orissa.The data produced from the coded questionnaire is processed via analysis and interpretation, for the clarity of understanding. The software package SPSS was used to carry out the analysis based on the two areas, viz. Paired T-test and Factor Analysis.

Analysis & Interpretation

Paired Samples Test

This paired sample t-test calculation measures the gap between perceived importance of an attribute and its actual emphasis. Table 1 shows the differences between importance and performance of attributes of the soap .

Table-1

		Paired Differences								
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	b1i - b1p	.542	1.342	.100	.344	.740	5.404	178	.000	
Pair 2	b2i - b2p	.441	1.218	.091	.262	.621	4.847	178	.000	
Pair 3	b3i - b3p	.212	1.222	.091	.032	.393	2.324	178	.021	
Pair 4	b4i - b4p	.274	1.203	.090	.096	.451	3.045	178	.003	
Pair 5	b5i - b5p	.128	1.250	.093	-.056	.313	1.375	178	.171	
Pair 6	b6i - b6p	.218	1.098	.082	.056	.380	2.655	178	.009	
Pair 7	b7i - b7p	.296	1.155	.086	.126	.466	3.431	178	.001	
Pair 8	b8i - b8p	.117	1.108	.083	-.046	.281	1.417	178	.158	
Pair 9	b9i - b9p	.123	1.095	.082	-.039	.284	1.502	178	.135	
Pair 10	b10i - b10p	-.095	3.814	.285	-.658	.468	-.333	178	.739	
Pair 11	b11i - b11p	.045	1.048	.078	-.110	.199	.570	178	.569	
Pair 12	b12i - b12p	.006	1.243	.093	-.178	.189	.060	178	.952	

Inference: From the above table it is observed that the gap between expectation and actual performance of the attributes of soap are highly significant in pair 1(Attractive packaging), 2(shape of the Tablet),3(colour), 4(Fragrance/smell), 6(Ingredients), 7(moisturizing effect) and not significant in pair 5(size/weight),pair8(softness),

pair 9(Refreshment),pair10(cleansing),pair11(skin protection)and 12(Germ protection). This implicates that there exists a significant difference between importance and performance of soap category with relation many attribute considered.

Variables	Mean Expectation	Mean Performance
Attractive packaging	2.372222	1.938889
Shape of the tablet	2.377778	2.077778
Colour	2.327778	2.133333
Fragrance/smell	2.444444	2.205556
Size/weight	2.438889	2.283333
Ingredients	2.411111	2.288889
Moisturizing effect	2.5	2.333333
Softness	2.466667	2.427778
Refreshment	2.527778	2.4
Cleansing	2.477778	2.383333
Skin protection	2.4	2.388889
Germ protection	2.505556	2.5

GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN MEAN EXPECTATION AND MEAN PERFORMANCE
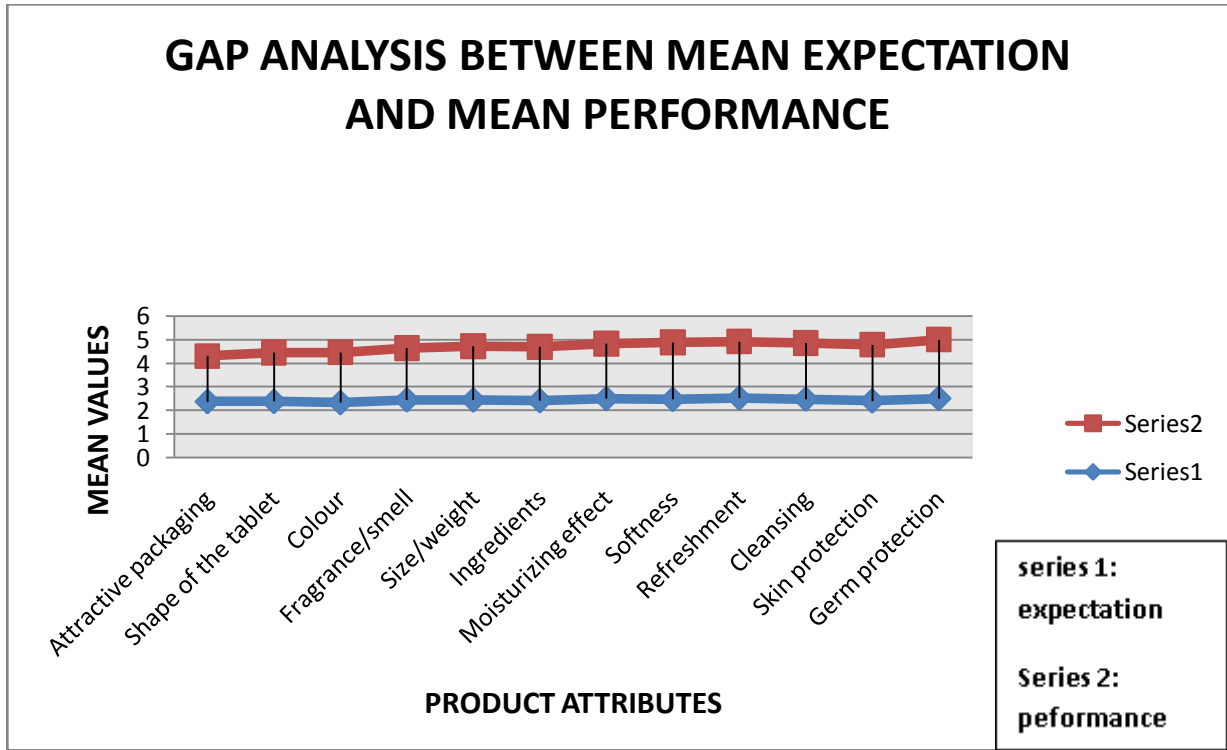
Inference: The above graph shows the gap between the customer expectation and Actual performance of product attributes.

Factor Analysis

As the first step, the suitability of the data collected for using factor analysis was thoroughly checked. Prior to running the factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was performed.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.923
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1238.726
	Df	45
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.137	61.373	61.373	6.137	61.373	61.373	3.924	39.240	39.240
2	1.065	10.652	72.025	1.065	10.652	72.025	3.278	32.785	72.025
3	.609	6.093	78.118						
4	.472	4.719	82.838						
5	.410	4.100	86.938						
6	.342	3.419	90.356						
7	.295	2.955	93.311						
8	.277	2.765	96.077						
9	.230	2.300	98.377						
10	.162	1.623	100.000						

Inference: The KMO of sample adequacy is 92%.so it is accepted. Through Bartlett's Test of Sphericity we found that the chi-square value is significant, that's why all the variables are fit for making Factor analysis.

Inference: From the above table it has been interpreted that the total variance explained by two extracted factors having Eigen value more than 1 is 72% .

Rotated Component Matrix

	Component	
	1	2
Packaging	.840	.314
Shape	.835	.332
Color	.845	.305
Fragrance	.756	.336
Size	.779	.304
Ingredients	.495	.629
Moisturizer	.382	.771
Softness	.273	.813
Refreshment	.211	.842
skin protection	.344	.643

Inference: The variables Packaging, shape, colour, fragrance, size are highly loaded with Factor 1 i.e.: Visibility factor and the variables ingredients, moisturizer, softness, refreshment, skin protection are highly loaded with Factor 2 i.e. Technicality factor.

Findings

- From the study it was inferred that 12% of the people are belongs to below 20 age group,29% of are belongs to 20-25 years,19% are of 26-30, 17% are 31-35, 6% are 36-40, 6% are 41-45,5% are age group of 46-50, 4% are age group of 51-55, 1% are of 56-60 & above age group. It was found that from the total sample 54% are male & 46% are female and out of all 51% are married while 49% are unmarried. it was found that from the total sample size 8% are from high school,10% are intermediate,39% are bachelor's degree,17% are master degree, And 26% are from other educational background.The total sample 33% are student,11% are housewife, 14% are belongs to business,37% are doing service, 5% are belongs from others. From the analysis it was inferred that from

the total sample 46% are below 5000 income level,9% are 5001-10000, 11% are 10001-20000, 16% are 20001-30000,7% are 30001-40000 & 11% are earning 40000 & above.

- From the analysis it was found that 16% of the sample are using LUX, 9% are using LIFEBOUY, 22% are using DOVE, 9% are using VIVEL, 3% are using FAIRGLOW, 9% are using CINTHOL, 3% are using LIRIL, 3% are using SUPERIA, 2% are using MARGO & NEEM, 4% are using MEDIMIX, 1% are using VATIKA, 7% are using DETOL, 9% are using PEARS & rest 1% are using other brands.It was found that 45% of the people are using beauty soap for more than five months, 24% are using this for more than a year, 18% are using this for more than two years, and 18% are using for more than four years.

- After Analysis it has been found that 77% of the people get to know about the beauty soap products by TV.,11% are from magazine,2% are from newspaper,6% are from friend and relatives, 3% are get to know about it at point of purchase, and 1% are from other sources. After Analysis it has been found that 67% of the total sample get to know about their shampoo brand by TV.,21% are know from magazine, 1% are from newspaper,1% are from internet, 7% are from friends and relatives, 2% are at point of purchase, and rest 1% are know about their product from other sources.

- After analysis it has been found that the respondents are choosing Dove soap as the best brand and they are giving importance to quality of the soap and for fair and glowing skin while they are purchasing the beauty soap.

- It was found that there is significant difference between importance and performance of soap category with relation to so many attributes, so null hypothesis is rejected.

- It is observed that the gap between expectation and actual performance of the attributes of soap are highly significant in Attractive packaging, shape of the Tablet, color ,Fragrance/smell, Ingredients, moisturizing effect, and not significant in size/weight, softness, Refreshment, cleansing, skin protection and Germ protection.

- From the analysis it was found that the factor analysis of the 12 attributes of soap yielded two factors explaining 72.025% of total variance. Only ten of the twelve items

loaded on these two factors and, based on the items loading on each factor, the factors were labeled "visibility factor" (Factor 1), "technicality factor" (Factor 2). The variables Packaging, shape, colour , fragrance , size are highly loaded with Factor 1 i.e. :Visibility factor and the variables ingredients, moisturizer, softness, refreshment, skin protection are highly loaded with Factor 2 i.e. Technicality factor.

Conclusion

Customer is the king of the market .Consumers are aware of the different products and brands in the market and are conscious of the products they use or consume. They choose the product according to their requirement , style preferences, etc. Companies are aware that it is costly to create a new customer than retain aan old customer. In relation to product attributes, packaging, shape of the Tablet, colour, Fragrance/smell, was the most important attribute consumers looked for when purchasing their products. The various significance tests done to identify if demographic variables influence brand choice revealed that differences were found on race between different age groups.   After analysis it is observed that the gap between expectation and actual performance of the attributes of soap are highly significant in Attractive packaging, shape of the Tablet colour, Fragrance/smell, Ingredients, moisturizing effect and not significant in size/weight, softness, Refreshment, cleansing, skin protection and Germ protection. The research attempted to cover all areas that were essential for marketers to understand in terms of the various aspects of the consumer. It also identified product attributes that need to be developed to meet the consumer needs as well as demographic variables that influence the purchase. Therefore the study could be of great use for all in the industry and other interested parties. The results of the study confirm that there is significant difference between importance and performance of soap category with relation to so many attributes. Hence marketers need to provide additional benefits to their consumers in order to satisfy them for their future business.

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