AN ANALYSIS OF CUSTOMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS TUPPERWARE PRODUCTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY

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Abstract

Our lifestyle has changed in this fast paced world as compared to few decades ago. Today, more and more people are caught up in an endless cycle of buying and throwing away, seeing consumption as a means of self-fulfilment. Consumption is the reason why anything is produced. Demand towards products is driven by convenience and habit which in returned is hard to change. Truly consumers has little knowledge of the link between their consumption choices and the environmentally consequences. This study attempted to gain knowledge about consumer response towards green products. With a sample of 100 respondents the data obtained from the survey were analyzed with percentage analysis, chi-square test, weighted average score analysis. The purpose of the study was to examine the variables that influence the purchase pattern of consumer response towards green recyclable products. However there are still fewer facts to show whether consumers’ knowledge and awareness would influence their actual purchase intention towards green products.

Key words: Green marketing, Consumer perception, Tupperware products

1. Introduction

1.1. Meaning

According to the American Marketing Association, green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. Thus green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising. Defining green marketing is not a simple task where several meanings intersect and contradict each other; an example of this will be the existence of varying social, environmental and retail definitions attached to this term. Other similar terms used are Environmental Marketing and Ecological Marketing.

Tupperware is the name of a home products line that includes preparation, storage, containment, and serving products for the kitchen and home, which were first introduced to the public in 1948. Tupperware develops, manufactures, and internationally distributes its products as a wholly owned subsidiary of its parent company Tupperware Brands and it is marketed by means of direct sales through an independent sales force of approximately 1.9 million consultants.

Tupperware was developed in 1948 by Earl Silas Tupper (1907–83) in Leominster, Massachusetts. He developed plastic containers used in households to contain food and keep
it airtight. The formerly patented "burping seal" is a famous aspect of Tupperware, which distinguished it from competitors. Tupperware pioneered the direct marketing strategy made famous by the Tupperware party. The tradition of Tupperware's "Jubilee" style events continues with rallies being held in major cities to recognize and reward top-selling and top-recruiting individuals, teams, and organizations. Rexall bought Tupperware in 1958. Tupperware spread to Europe in 1960 when Mila Pond hosted a Tupperware party in Weybridge, England, and subsequently around the world. At the time, a strict dress code was required for Tupperware ladies, with skirts and stockings (tights) worn at all times, and white gloves often accompanying the outfit. A technique called "carrot calling" helped promote the parties: representatives would travel door to door in a neighborhood and ask housewives to "run an experiment" in which carrots would be placed in a Tupperware container and compared with "anything that you would ordinarily leave it in"; it would often result in the scheduling of a Tupperware party. Rexall sold its namesake drugstores in 1977, and renamed itself Dart Industries. Dart merged with Kraftco to form Dart & Kraft. The company demerged, with the former Dart assets named Premark International. Tupperware Brands was spun off from Premark in 1996; Premark was acquired by Illinois Tool Works three years later. In 2003, Tupperware closed down operations in the UK and Ireland, citing customer dissatisfaction with their direct sales model. There has been limited importer-distribution since then. The company announced a formal re-launch in the UK in mid-2011 and recruited UK staff, but in December the re-launch was cancelled. Tupperware is now sold in almost 100 countries, after peaking at more than a hundred after 1996.

1.2. Review of literature

McDaniel, S.W. & Rylander, D.H. (1993) in the article titled “Strategic Green Marketing” stated that Green marketing is taking shape as one of the key business strategies of the future. The increasing environmental consciousness makes it incumbent on consumer marketers not just to respond to, but to lead the way in, environmental programs. Consumer marketers should: recognize a product's environmental implications; analyze the changing consumer and political attitudes while recognizing the role that companies can play in protecting the environment.

Polonsky, et al., (1998) In the paper titled "Developing Green Products: Learning from Stakeholders" discussed the research which focused on US and Australian markets' perceptions of stakeholders' potential to influence the green new product development (NPD) process and what strategies can be used to involve stakeholders in this process. The findings suggest that marketers believe some stakeholders with "high" influencing abilities should be involved in the green NPD process, although it appears that in practice, firms use very basic methods to include these stakeholders.

Clare D'Souza, et al., (2006) focused a study on Green products and corporate strategy: an empirical investigation. The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of multiple factors on the green purchase intention of customers in Australia. The results indicate that customers' corporate perception with respect to companies placing higher priority on profitability than on reducing pollution and regulatory protection were the significant predictors of customers' negative overall perception toward green products. The present findings contributes to an understanding of the antecedents of green purchasing and highlight that green customers rely more on personal experience with the product than the information provided by the marketer.
1.3. Statement of the problem

Among different products used by the respondents in day today life, Tupperware products occupy important role. These Tupperware products are available as plenty in different type of products as green products. The marketing for products (other than green products) is severely undertaken using lot of strategies and methods but for Tupperware products, these activities are not very active. Under these circumstances, an attempt is made to know the level of awareness about Tupperware products, their preference and their satisfaction towards the same to throw a light on the scope for marketing of green products, taking Tupperware products is a case.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

- To study the awareness level of customers towards Tupperware Products
- To study the customer ideas, opinion and preference towards Tupperware Products
- To study the level of customer satisfaction towards the purchase and consumption of Tupperware Products

1.5. Methodology of the study

The area of the study refers to Coimbatore City. The study is based on primary data collected using structured questionnaire from 200 respondents who were selected using convenient sampling method. Among various green products, Tupperware products are taken in this study. The statistical tools used to analyze the data in tune with the objectives of the study were:
- Percentage analysis
- Chi-square analysis
- Weighted average score analysis.

2. Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected from the customers are systematically presented under various headings. They are:
- Section A: Deals with analysis of data relating to the customers by using percentage analysis
- Section B: Deals with application of statistical analysis such as Chi-square analysis and Weighted average score analysis.

2.1. Application of Statistical Tools

2.1.1. Section A

The data collected from the respondents were systematically analyzed. Based on the percentage analysis, the interpretations are given below:
- Majority (65%) of the respondents purchase and consume Classic Lunch Set.
- Majority (70%) of the respondents are influenced by dealers.
- Majority (64%) of the respondents are using these Tupperware products for more than two years.
- Majority (70%) of the respondents prefer Tupperware products due to health reasons.
- Majority (72%) of the respondents think that the Tupperware maintains the quality of the food is the special feature for possessing to buy the product.
Majority (66%) of the respondents spend up to Rs.1000 per month for buying the selected green products

Majority (75%) of the respondents are highly satisfied with Tupperware products due to health & safety factors

Majority (85%) of the respondents have not faced any problem in using green products

Majority (55%) of the respondents feel that the prices of green products are high but at the same time they feel that the quality is good.

2.1.2. Section-B

Chi-square analysis: Chi-square test was used to test the significance of two attributes. In other words, chi-square test was used to test if one factor has significant influence over the other. Personal factors considered for this analysis are given below:

(i) Age
(ii) Educational status
(iii) Occupational status
(iv) Marital status
(v) Family monthly income
(vi) Size of the family

The other factors considered for the analysis regarding the green products are:

(i) Source of awareness
(ii) Consumption of products
(iii) Preference of products

All the tests were carried out at 5% level of significance. The chi-square test was applied between the personal factors and study factors and the results are given in the following tables with suitable hypotheses and interpretation.

1. Hypothesis

The personal factors of the respondents have no significant influence over the sources of awareness of Tupperware products. Table No-1 shows that age, marital status, family monthly income and size of family have no significant influence over the sources of awareness of Tupperware products whereas educational qualification and occupational status have significant influence over the sources of awareness of Tupperware products.

2. Hypothesis

The personal factors of the respondents have no significant influence over the consumption of Tupperware products. Table No-2 establishes that age, educational qualification and occupational status have significant influence over consumption of Tupperware products while marital status, family monthly income and size of family have no significant influence over the consumption of Tupperware products.

3. Hypothesis

The personal factors of the respondents have no significant influence over the preference of Tupperware products. Table No-3 establishes that age, educational qualification, occupational status and marital status have significant influence over the preference of Tupperware products while family monthly income and size of family have no significant influence over the preference of Tupperware products.
Weighted Average Score Analysis: In order to use this technique, first the qualitative information is converted into quantitative data through a five point scaling technique similar to Likert Scaling Technique. After converting the scores, the weighted average score is calculated mainly to assess the level of opinion awareness of the different categories of respondents on various issues.

In this study, weighted average score analysis was prepared for ranks which are given by respondents. In applying the above tool, the quality characteristics were converted into numerical value by using 4 points or 5 points scaling. In the 3 point scaling technique, score of 3 is highly satisfactory, score 2 is given for moderate satisfactory and score 1 is given for low satisfactory. Based on the scores, the weighted average score was calculated for each factor.

It is understood from the Table no.4 that most of the respondents assigned first rank to health reasons, second rank to quality, third rank to design, forth rank to price and fifth rank to other reasons such as product durability, easy handling etc., Majority of respondents assigned first rank to health reasons.

It is clear from the Table no.5 that the health & safety is given top rank, second rank to environment benefit, third rank to quality, forth rank to price and fifth rank to product design. Majority of respondents were highly satisfied with the health & safety.

3. Research Suggestions

- The numbers of green stores are very less in number in the city and hence steps should be taken to open more number of green stores.
- The advertisement for Tupperware products is very minimum compared to other product and hence suitable steps should be taken by the manufacturer to increase the advertisement.
- The price of Tupperware products is little high from the point view of customers and hence manufacturer to consider reducing the price of Tupperware products.
- It is also suggested to the manufacturer to conduct an awareness campaign for the general public and make an attempt to brief them about the advantages they will get in using the Tupperware products.
- It is also suggested to the manufacturer to adopt promotional strategies in marketing of Tupperware products.

4. Conclusion

With its designs that mix everyday utility with vibrant colors, style and ease, Tupperware products have been the trusted choice for generations. Having gone through stringent quality tests, these products are food-grade safe and come with a lifetime guarantee. This not only takes care of family’s health but also ensures that no unnecessary plastic dump is added to the environment. Environmental concern could emerge as one of the powerful drivers that influence eco-friendly purchases; it has actually not resulted in the ability to command a sustainable premium consumers are willing to buy eco-friendly products, but not to pay the higher price. Knowledge and awareness about green products can affect attitudes and perceptions about the product and, ultimately, buying decisions of the consumers. Though consumers are willing to purchase green products, many business organizations still behind the needs of the eco friendly society. In addition to that marketer can charge high price with highlighting eco friendliness of the products. It may be important to examine in future studies the effect of disposable income on willingness to pay premium. Increased
consumer demand will help reduce costs in production of eco-friendly products. Awareness among consumers that their buying choices can make a difference to the environment should be promoted. There is a scope for eco-friendly marketers to capture this market as it has long term scope & growth.

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