Chapter 4  Research Methodology

Introduction
Research is defined and interpreted by many scholars in different ways. Research is a researcher’s journey from known or factual things to unknown with some new finding along with making some original contribution to the existing stock of knowledge through objective and systematic method to find solution over a problem. According to Clifford Woody, research is either defining or redefining a problem. Redman and Mory (1923) defined the research as a “Systemized effort to gain new knowledge”. In other words Redman and Mory characterized the exploration as a "Systemized push to increase new information". According to Richard W. Mensing and Bernard Ostle, "Research is considered to be an inquiry into the nature of the reasons for and the consequences of any particular set of circumstance, whether these circumstances are experimentally controlled or recorded just as they occur."
Research is also an important academic activity and as such the term should be used in the technical sense. C. R. Kothari also states that "the research inculcates scientific and inductive thinking and promotes the development of logical habits of thinking and organization. Companies define and re-defining their problems, formulate the hypothesis, collect the required data and organize it for evaluation. It helps them in decision making.

Present chapter Research Methodology explains the research design and methodology adopted for the purpose of the present study.

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4.1 Topic of the present study

The research undertaken is titled “A study of brand positioning and promotion techniques of household detergent brands affecting customer satisfaction and brand loyalty” (With special reference to Pune city)

4.2 Scope of the Study

The geographical scope of the study is limited to Pune city only. Here Pune city means an area under the city limits on Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC).

4.3 Detergent segments

There are mainly three detergent segments as follows:

1. Premium detergents.
2. Mid-priced detergents
3. Low priced or popular detergents

4.4 Population of the study (Different entities involved in the study)

Considering the theme of the research it was very much sure that several entities are involved in the present study.
The researcher was of the opinion that all these entities have equal importance in the decision making process according with their duties and responsibilities. Hence the researcher has decided to focus on all these entities and made three groups for this,

1. Customers who are the actual end users of the detergent brand.
2. Distributor / Wholesaler / Retailer
3. Third party promotion agencies/advertising agencies/brand and desk research agencies/sales and marketing personnel of detergent marketing agencies

This research was mainly intended to collect the relevant as well as the first hand information from the customers who are the actual users or end users of various detergent brands. Knowing customers awareness, views and opinions about the detergent brand they use is of prime importance. It was also very necessary to interact with the distributors, wholesalers as well as the retailers who sell detergent brands across Pune as they are the important channel partners.

It was important to know and interview these entities who are involved in various branding activities as the every entity has a specific role to perform. It was also noticed that the brand managers and brand experts have perfect knowledge of the customer’s likings and their views as well as they have latest updates of channel partners, marketing team advertising and brand auditing analysis team.

Researcher has fairly understood the importance of all abovementioned entities in their respective decision making process. Execution process of various designed activities of promotions merchandising are done by marketing and advertising team in co-ordination with brand team of particular brand of the detergent of that company.

4.5 Research Methodology

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the present research purpose. After having stated the research problem research methodology for the proposed research was adopted. The researcher designed two questionnaires and one discussion guide for the field work study.
4.6 Research problem

Indian FMCG sectors detergent segment is ever changing, volatile and having tremendous competition. An extreme competition between the detergent marketers/companies for their presence as well as their market shares frequently lead to frequent price wars. Detergent marketers are adopting innovative technology and making product innovations according to the changing washing habits of Indian customers. Detergent companies need to introduce newer products while still keeping the market share. The local brands are also competing with leading larger brands and in some cases can have significant market share. Retaining the present customers is also a great challenge before these detergent marketers in Indian domestic markets. FMCG companies are adopting various positioning strategies and promotion techniques to make their customers happy because customer satisfaction has a direct linkage with brand loyalty.

Considering this entire situation there is an acute need to study how these household detergent brand’s marketers operate in highly competitive markets and position their brand/s successfully where in this day and edge customer loyalty keeps changing as customers are experiencing and can get swayed by advertising and other promotional activities. It is essential to know whether the positioning is effective. Promotions are effective and marketers satisfy their customers or not. If customers are satisfied do they become loyal to the brand? Do companies are giving effective message through their brand communication. Amalgamation of many factors will be helpful to companies and consumers. Study made in Pune city will serve as a canvas for other markets too.

4.7 Pilot Study

Prior to starting main field work a pilot study was made on approximate 15% of the total samples. The few questions were reframed after the pilot study.
4.8 Methods of Data Collection

Data Collection was made through two main sources, viz, primary data and secondary data.

Primary Data

Here the primary data means an essential information gathered from the respondents from Pune city. For gathering this information, the two types of Questionnaires were designed. Questionnaire A was designed to obtain the response from customers of detergents. Questionnaire B was designed to obtain the response from the retailers, wholesalers and distributors.

Secondary Data

The desk research of published magazines, articles, internet, research papers has been extensively used to gather the secondary data. Information relevant for the purpose of this study available with.

4.9 Tools used for the field work study

Two questionnaire’s A and B along with discussion guide.

4.10 Designing of a Questionnaire’s and Discussion Guide

Considering different entities involved in the research study the researcher has designed two separate questionnaires for two entities and one discussion guide for informal communication with the third entity. Questionnaire A was designed for customers who are the actual users of the product/detergent brand. Questionnaire A covered the various aspects of customer’s style of washing their laundry, the brand type they select, any reasons for the choice of the selection of the particular any substitute detergent brand used, Brand switch over reasons, decision making. The respondents were also asked about the advertisements of the detergent brands as well as celebrity endorsements in this category. Promotion related few questions were also asked to them. In order to study their satisfaction level contentment and loyalty few questions asked further. Finally, their suggestions and overall opinion was noted. It was found that few customers were reluctant in disclosing their monthly family income.
Second Questionnaire B was designed for Distributor’s / Wholesaler’s / Retailer’s. Instead of third questionnaire a DG (Discussion Guide - Informal discussion synopsis) was prepared for the brand personnel, marketing, sales managers with few questions for them pertaining to specific brand its positioning promotion activities brand growth auditing as well as the problems in their branding process. Main focus of this discussion was to ask them about the present scenario of particular detergent brand, its various promotional activities and what new they can offer for customers to keep them happy. It was also necessary to take their opinions and review on detergent brand’s advertisements, celebrity endorsements and what made them to purchase the particular brand was also taken. Their decision making style was also observed. It was observed that detergent’s brand name, quality and positioning effect in their minds recommendations as well as effective advertisements also play an important role in customer’s purchasing decisions. Reasons for brand switchover, promotional expectations, and their satisfaction and loyalty levels were studied. It was very important to know overall views of the customers. The researcher has attached all these three tools used in the annexure of the thesis. The researcher conducted a survey with the help of the two questionnaires and one discussion guide. The large data was collected from the responses of all field work tools.

Thus, Total sample size of the present study for A + B + C resp. is 800 + 87 + 23 = 910

4.11 Sampling Design

Guidelines of research scholar Chisnall are referred.

There are two basic methods of sampling.

1. Probability Sampling

2. Non probability sampling

Pune is the fastest developing metropolitan city in Maharashtra state in India. The researcher is being based in Pune naturally selected Pune city area for the present research work. During this study the researcher used stratified convenient sampling method. The researcher divided Pune city into five parts i.e. Pune city was divided
into five strata’s. Out of five strata’s convenient samples were chosen from each strata. Pune East, Pune North, Pune West, Pune South and Pune central.

4.12 Sample Size

Total respondents for Questionnaire A (Customers) were 925. Responses collected from 925 respondents. This collected data was further screened and only clear and complete responses of 800 respondents were considered. So a sample size of 800 for Questionnaire A was considered to be adequate. Stratified convenient sampling method was used. The respondents were selected on a random basis.

Total respondents for Questionnaire B were 102. Data collected was further screened and only clear and complete responses of 87 respondents were considered. Sample size of for Questionnaire B was 87 which was adequate.

A total responses for Discussion Guide were 27 which were further screened and only clear and complete responses of 23 were considered. Sample size of Discussion Guide (DG) was 23 which was adequate. Total sample size was A + B + C = 800 + 87 + 23 = 910

4.13 Sample Selection

For this study the researcher used stratified convenient sampling method. The researcher has approached various distributors of detergents, wholesalers as well as retailers across the city limits of Pune Municipal Corporation as per the area selected for this study. The head offices of the leading detergent companies whose brands are in this study are located in Mumbai and in different places so researcher couldn’t meet each and every person personally in their respective office. Brand audit, promotion and advertising and research personnel have their offices in Pune so these people were available in Pune. Few Mumbai based company personnel who keep coming to these Pune company offices frequently or they having their residence in Pune so the researcher took prior appointments of these personnel and tried to have formal and informal talk with them. Few who couldn’t meet personally the interactions with them were made through phone, mobile.

The researcher took around 925 interviews of customer’s on which Questionnaire A was administered. Due to some incomplete answers daisy answers few
incomplete forms were rejected during data cleaning and finally complete clear answered 800 forms were selected for data analysis. The interviews of the customer’s were carried during the reported period.

Questionnaire B was administered on distributors / wholesalers / retailers. For this total 102 people from this category were visited and after data cleaning only 87 clear forms were taken for analysis.

The researcher could establish a contact with around 27 could meet few brand executive or their assistant personally as well as few persons from advertising firms and research analysis persons. The discussion guide which was administered on 27 people and 23 clear complete responses were considered. The brand experts were quite hesitating in giving any document giving the reason of company strategies doesn’t permit to do so and they were also reluctant for giving audio or video interview. The researcher faced problems in meeting them still the researcher made informal discussions with them regarding this research study.

4.14 Statistical analysis

The information was collected through two separate questionnaires A and B. The collected data was edited and cleaned and coded further. Coded data was classified and tabulated for analysis purpose. The researcher has used a software’s like Excel and SAS (System Aided Software) for this purpose. The information collected through the discussion guide was also analyzed. Responses in the questionnaire have been compiled and analyzed by using the software like Excel, SAS (System Aided Software) calculation of percentages of responses and weighted mean score for each question is arrived. The relevant tables and figures, pie charts were made using Excel and the total data was put to interpret further. Questions pertaining to each hypothesis were grouped together and weighted mean scores were studied for the relevant questions under each hypothesis. Chi Square tests were also applied to groups of questions under each hypothesis.
4.15 Limitations

- Field work survey is often expensive and time consuming but a necessary part in the research process.
- The lack of time to carry out a survey on a large scale.
- The lack of funding to carry out a survey.
- The non-response from the few respondents due to their inability in understanding or few respondents who lost their interest in answering for any reason which finally lead the researcher to omit such responses in data cleaning as those incomplete responses were of no use for further analysis.
- As discussed earlier this study consists of the involvement of the three entities. One who is the user of the detergent or a customer second is stockiest or a seller and third is a producer of that commodity. It was very important to interview all three entities to understand the study. For interview of customers the limitation was a stipulated time constraint to complete the interviews another was the huge population and adopting a right method of sampling. Time as well as financial constraints of the researcher for this study itself was one limitation.
- Meeting Distributor’s Wholesaler’s Retailer’s in particular time was one of the constraints. Meeting brand personnel or advertising merchandising marketing people who are situated in different locations was time consuming. Research was carried for the residents of Pune city only was a constraint but researcher will overcome this limitation by making broadening of this study in near future. The time given by brand personnel for meeting and making discussions with them pertaining to this study was very less due to their very busy schedule. This was a challenge as they didn’t response despite of several requests and lot of follow up was made. After a long perusal if they were ready to talk the problem was the time allotment for discussion which was too less as well as they were reluctant in answering few questions. Despite of all difficulties the researcher took efforts in contacting and actual meeting of various leading companies brand, marketing, sales, merchandising, advertisement, promotion personnel.
- Company personnel couldn’t in position to disclose in depth information as disclosure of such information was not permitted to them due to some strategic
reasons. Even few companies’ personnel avoided to give interview saying they need their company’s Human Resource department’s approval to do so. On the commitment of not disclosing their names and name of their company they provided only that information which was allowed for them to give through an informal discussion guide.

4.16 Gender Distribution of the Sample
The gender distribution in the total sample size of 900 is 882 females and 018 males which is 98 % and 2 % respectively. The responses from both females and males have also been analyzed.

4.17 Age Group Distribution of the Sample
The respondents who referred as samples fall in different age range i.e from as 20 to 70 years. The researcher also found respondent who is a very old lady of age around 95 years who actively participated in the present research’s field work survey for data collection. She was very enthusiastic respondent who asked the researcher many questions and replied each and every question in the Questionnaire A with great patience and interest. This respondent was really memorable and found evergreen and 95 years young.

4.18 Profession / occupation of the respondents
The respondents are from the four categories as follows:
1. Young ladies who are homemakers.
2. Employed ladies.
4. Retired ladies.
5. Working males
6. Retired males
4.19 Objectives

The following objectives were made for the present study.

1) To study the brand positioning about detergent brands in Pune city

2) To study the promotion techniques used for major detergent brands in Pune city

3) To understand the customer satisfaction and brand loyalty of detergent brands in Pune city

4) To find the level of customer satisfaction about the leading detergent brands in Pune city

4.20 Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were made for the present study.

1. The Brand positioning and promotion techniques used by major detergent brand companies are not at all effective with all the customers.

2. The Brand Positioning and Brand Promotion techniques used by major detergent brand companies fails to develop or build brand loyalty.

3. The Brand Positioning and Brand Promotion techniques used by major detergent brand companies fails to provide customer satisfaction.

4. The Brand Positioning and Brand Promotion techniques used by major detergent brand companies fails to increase the market share and profitability for the business.

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