

Consumer Perception Towards Advertising in Rural Markets: Evidence From Selected Districts of Manipur

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Abstract:

This study investigates the critical role of advertising in shaping consumer perception within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector in the rural markets of Tamenglong and Noney districts of Manipur. Rural areas constitute a substantial and unique consumer base characterised by distinct socio-economic and cultural attributes, making examining the influence of advertisements on their product preferences and brand perceptions imperative. This research explores the reach and effectiveness of various advertising channels, including traditional media, digital platforms, and grassroots marketing strategies, in moulding the perception of rural consumers. Additionally, the study delves into the nuanced impact of culture, language, and regional idiosyncrasies on advertising strategies, seeking to identify the strategies that resonate most effectively with rural consumers.

The findings underscore the substantial impact of advertising on consumer perception in the FMCG sector, emphasising the need for advertisers to craft messages and visuals that align with rural consumers' values, aspirations, and lifestyle choices. Moreover, the study reveals the potential for advertisements to influence perceptions and educate and inform rural consumers about FMCG products, thereby enhancing their ability to make informed purchasing decisions. This study offers valuable insights and actionable recommendations for advertisers and marketers striving to connect FMCG products with rural consumers in a dynamic marketing landscape. It is a roadmap for fostering stronger consumer-product relationships and sustainable brand growth in these evolving rural markets.

Keywords: Advertising, Consumer, Perception, FMCG, Rural-Market

1. Introduction

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry in India has long been a driving force behind both market dynamism and economic progress. FMCG firms are crucial to supplying customers across the nation with the staples of daily life, including food, drinks, personal care products, and home goods. These companies have a varied product portfolio. Although these businesses have historically focused mostly on urban markets, the vast and changing rural markets are now rapidly becoming a strategic concern.

Approximately 65% of India's population lives in rural areas, sometimes known as the hinterland. For FMCG firms looking to increase their market share and reach, this enormous and diversified consumer base offers a significant potential. But there are particular difficulties and complexity involved in reaching

the rural market, making it necessary to have a better grasp of consumer behaviour and how advertising influences it.

The impact of advertising on customer behaviour in today's vibrant and fiercely competitive corporate environment cannot be emphasised. Understanding the intricacies of advertising and its influence on customer perception becomes essential as companies continue to grow into new regions. This is never more apparent than in India's rural marketplaces, where Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) businesses compete for the interest and allegiance of customers in outlying areas.

Tamenglong and Noney districts of Manipur, located in the North-Eastern part of India, represent a unique and challenging landscape for FMCG companies. These regions, characterised by their remote geography and distinct cultural diversity, present both opportunities and obstacles for businesses seeking to establish a foothold. The success of FMCG products in these areas hinges not only on product quality but also on the effectiveness of advertising strategies in shaping consumer perceptions.

This study aims to delve deep into the intricate relationship between advertising and consumer perception in the rural markets of the Tamenglong and Noney districts. By analysing the various factors at play, we seek to provide valuable insights into how advertising influences consumer attitudes, preferences, and purchasing decisions. Furthermore, we aim to uncover FMCG companies' specific challenges and opportunities when promoting their products in these unique marketplaces.

In this article, we will explore the key elements of advertising strategies employed by FMCG companies in rural Manipur, considering the cultural, social, and economic factors that influence consumer behaviour. We will also examine the role of traditional advertising methods and the potential of digital and social media platforms in reaching and engaging consumers in these remote areas. By doing so, we hope to shed light on the evolving advertising landscape in rural India and its implications for the FMCG industry.

The insights gained from this study will be valuable for FMCG companies operating in Tamenglong and Noney and serve as a reference point for businesses looking to understand and harness the power of advertising in rural markets across India. Ultimately, the impact of advertising on consumer perception in these regions will offer a glimpse into the intricate interplay between commerce, culture, and communication in the 21st-century marketplace.

2. Statement Of Problem

This article's main focus is on the urgent need to fully comprehend and investigate the complex dynamics of advertising's influence on consumers' perceptions of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) items in India's rural market. Rural markets have a huge potential for development for FMCG firms, but they are characterised by socioeconomic variety, language and cultural uniqueness, and little access to contemporary advertising channels. The efficiency of rural advertising techniques, the influence of cultural and linguistic elements on customer perceptions, and the difficulties and possibilities presented by the rural consumer environment are all complicated by this. So, the main issue is how to strategically use advertising to connect FMCG items with rural customers, cultivating long-lasting brand impression and loyalty in this evolving market.

3. Review Of Literature

Ajithkumar (2018) emphasises the importance of advertising in generating greater sales and influencing consumer buying decisions. The study analyses the attitude of children and ladies towards advertisements

and highlights that consumers easily switch from one brand to another when exposed to similar types of product advertisements.

Al-Gamal & Siddiq (2018) explore the perceptions of foreign students in Mysore, India, towards online advertising. The study is exploratory in nature and aims to gain a better understanding of the subject. The paper concludes that online advertising is very important for marketers and customers alike. It also claims that the respondents have a high-quality perception of online advertising.

Dar & Singh (2018) find that advertising significantly influences all three aspects of consumer behaviour and that television, celebrity endorsement, and promotional schemes are the most effective means of advertising for rural consumers. The article suggests that marketers should develop effective advertising strategies to capture and expand the rural market for FMCG products.

Kalyan & Rajeswari (2023) highlight the importance of effective advertising in influencing consumer buying behaviour. Emotional response, environmental response towards the brand, brand awareness, and sensory-stimulated advertising all play significant roles in shaping consumer behaviour. Organisations should focus on understanding their target audience and utilising emotionally appealing advertising strategies to enhance their sales and competitive advantage.

Kumar (2016) examines the impact of advertisements on consumer buying behaviour, focusing on the role of emotional and environmental responses. The paper finds that emotional response significantly predicts consumer buying behaviour, while environmental response does not. The paper concludes that advertisement is an important factor in shaping consumer's attitudes and behaviour and that advertisements with emotional value have a stronger effect than advertisements with environmental conditions.

Malik et al. (2014) examine the impact of advertisement and consumer perception on consumer buying behaviour. Using a questionnaire survey, the study collected data from 150 respondents in Gujranwala, Pakistan. The study applied statistical techniques to test the hypotheses and found that advertisement has a strong positive relationship with consumer buying behaviour, while consumer perception has a weak positive relationship. The study concludes that effective advertising strategies significantly influence consumers' purchasing decisions.

Saranya & Pradeep (2021) investigate the influence of online advertising on consumer behaviour. The study finds that imaginative online advertisements significantly influence buying trends. Consumers' behaviour is impacted by product quality and price. Celebrity endorsements in online ads also matter. Positive factors improve consumer loyalty to brands. The study also recommends personalised experiences, market research, and increased investment in online advertising to enhance product purchases.

Shebli & Elarbah (2019) provide insights into the impact of TV advertising on consumer buying behaviour and emphasise the significance of television advertising in influencing consumer choices. The study found that TV ads significantly impact consumers' buying behaviour and choices.

Tamizhjothi (2018) highlights the importance for companies to understand rural consumers' attitudes, interests, lifestyles, behaviours, and preferences in order to develop effective advertising strategies. The study suggests that advertisements should be tailored based on the nature of the product and the target audience's demographic characteristics. It is recommended that advertising agencies create advertisements that appeal to the entire family, as rural consumers make the final decision based on their interests.

Weldode et al. (2018) emphasise that rural India holds significant marketing potential, with 70% of the population residing in rural areas. Understanding both the rural context and consumer behaviour is crucial for effective product launches and advertising strategies. In rural markets, word-of-mouth plays a vital

role. Opinion leaders significantly influence promotional efforts. Strong Indian brands with brand equity and efficient dealer networks have been successful in rural areas. Consumption patterns in rural India are evolving to resemble urban areas. Rural consumers aspire to purchase branded, high-quality products. The wider reach of media and telecommunication services has influenced their purchase decisions.

4. Objectives Of The Study

Based on the above discussions, the following objectives were made in the study.

1. To Assess the Impact of FMCG Advertising on Consumer Awareness in rural markets.
2. To Evaluate the Influence of FMCG Advertising on Brand Perception in rural markets.
3. To Understand the Effectiveness of FMCG Advertising in Generating Desire for Products.
4. To Examine the Impact of Emotional Appeal and Humor in FMCG Advertising.

5. Research Methodology

The study is empirical one based on descriptive research design. The study's various sources of information include primary and secondary data. Secondary data for the study have been collected from published papers, journals, books, etc. Primary data have been collected through the interview schedule. The samples of primary data have been selected from the Tamenglong and Noney Districts of Manipur. The data are collected from 50 respondents in the selected area. The collected data have been classified and tabulated as per the requirement of the study. Appropriate statistical measures and ratios like average and percentage have been used to analyse and draw meaningful inferences and conclusions. This study's data has been analysed using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

6. Data Analysis And Interpretation

A. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

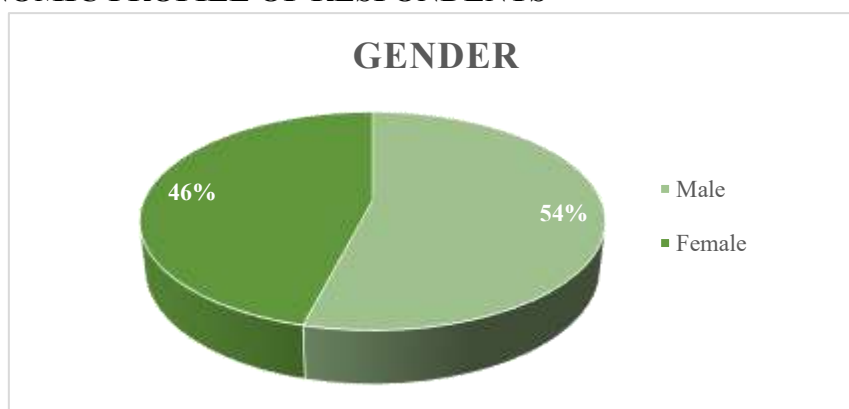


Figure 1. Gender

GENDER: According to Figure 1, the number of male respondents is more than the number of female respondents. Female respondents are 23 (46%), Whereas male respondents are 27 (54%).

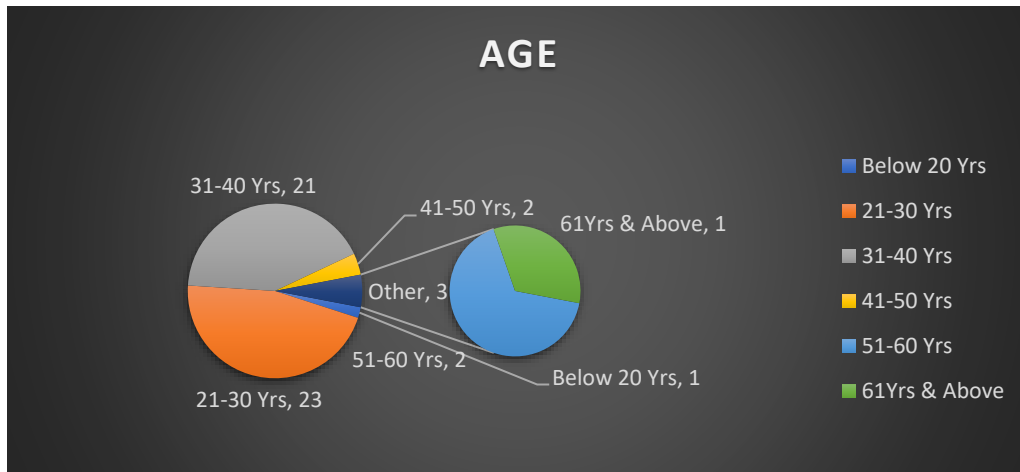


Figure 2. Age of the Respondents

AGE: Based on Figure 2, the majority of the respondents are in the age group between 21 and 30 years old, which represents (46% of the whole sample size). The age group between 31 to 40 years of age has 21(42%) individuals. The age groups between 41 to 50 and 51 to 60 have 2(4%) individuals each. The age group below 20 years and 61 and above age have 1(2%) individual each from the whole sample size.

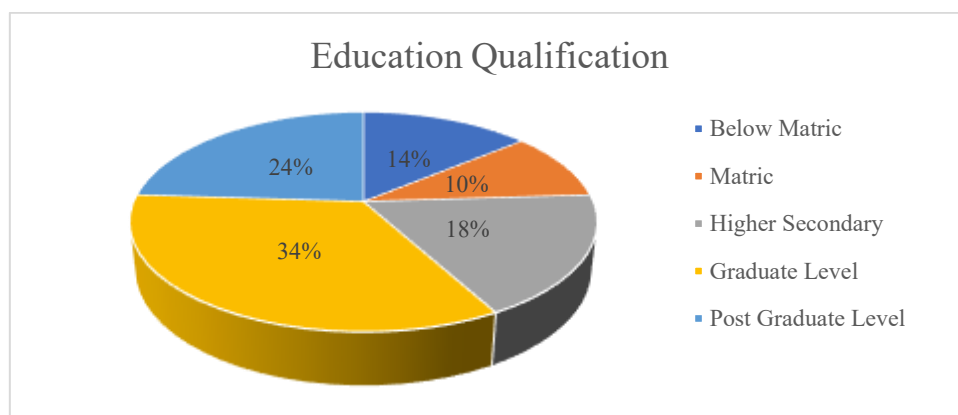


Figure 3. Education Qualification

EDUCATION QUALIFICATION: The highest education level of respondents is the postgraduate level, with 12 (24.0%) respondents. Most of the respondents are of Graduate level, which is 17 (34%) respondents. It is observed that 9(18%) of respondents are at Higher Secondary level, 7(14%) of respondents are below Matric, and 5(10%) of them have Matric.

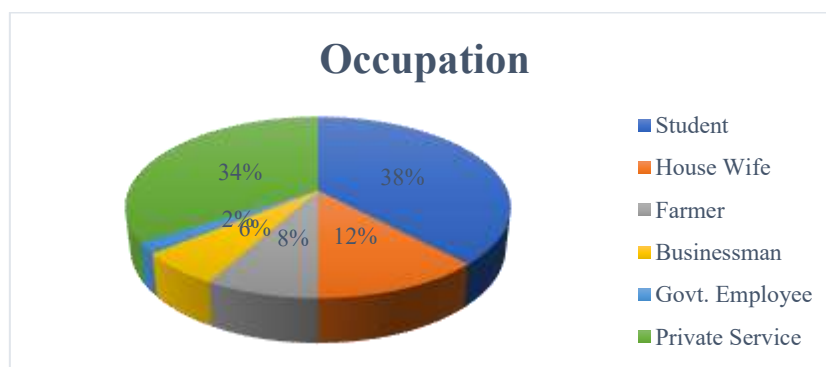


Figure 4. Occupation

OCCUPATION: Based on Figure 4, 17(34%) of the respondents among the whole sample size are in private service. 19 (38%) of the respondents are students, 6 (12%) respondents are housewives, 4(8%) respondents are farmers, 3 (6%) respondents are businessmen and 1 (2%) respondent is government employee.

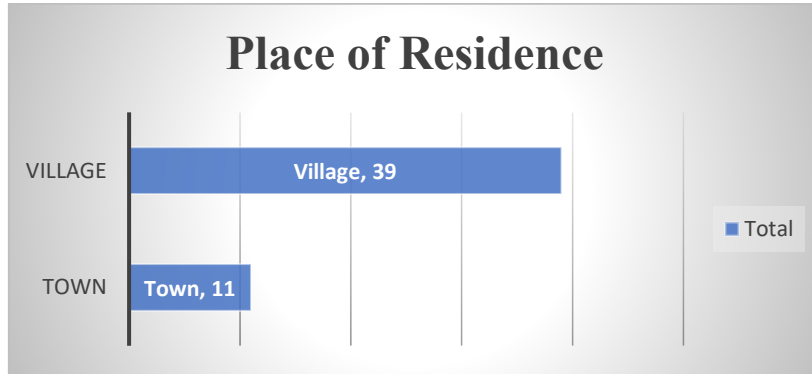


Figure 5. Place of Residence

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: The Figure 5. shows that 39 (78%) respondents among the whole sample population reside in villages. And the remaining 11(22%) respondents live in town.

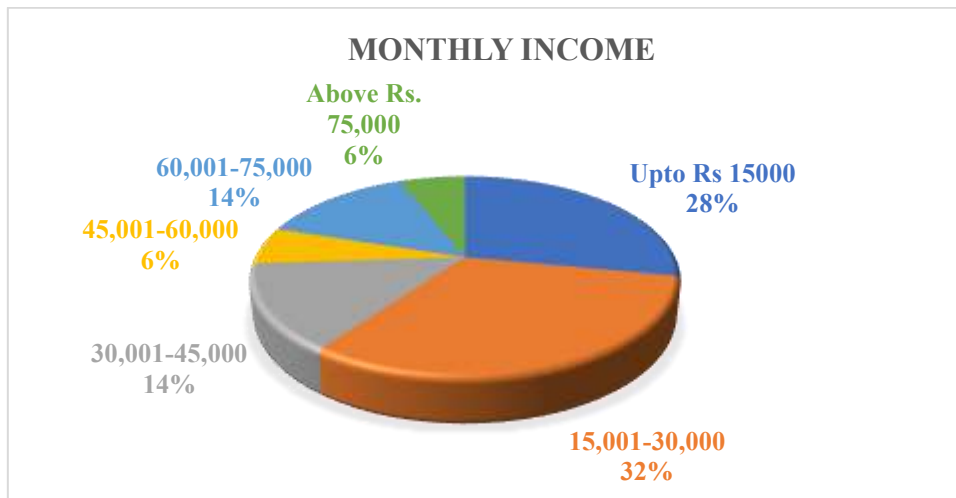


Figure 6. Family Monthly Income

FAMILY MONTHLY INCOME: As shown in Figure 6., while distributing the respondents based on the family's monthly income, the slab has been divided into six categories. The respondents having a family monthly above Rs. 75,000 are 3(6%), Rs. 60,001 – 75,000 are 7(14%), Rs. 45,001 – 60,000 are 3(6%), Rs. 30,000 – 45,001 are 7(14%), Rs. 15,000 – 30,001 are 16(32%) and up to Rs. 15,000 are 14(28%).

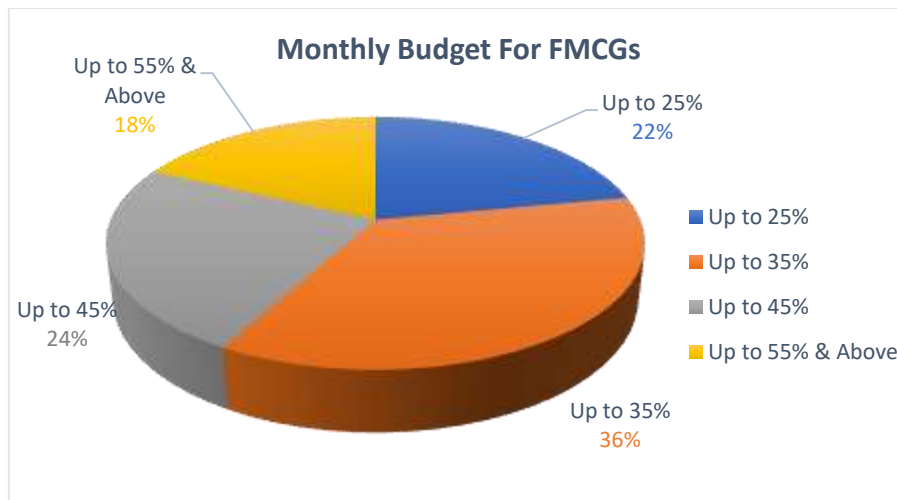


Figure 7. Monthly Budget for FMCGs

MONTHLY BUDGET FOR FMCGs: Figure 7 demonstrates the monthly budget for FMCGs in the percentage of total monthly income. 18(36%) of the respondents from the sample of the total population have a budget of up to 35 per cent of monthly income, 12(24%) of the respondents have up to 45 per cent of monthly income, 11(22%) of the respondents have up to 25 per cent of monthly income and 9(18%) of them have up to 55 and above per cent of the monthly income.

B. PERCEPTION OF RESPONDENTS ON THE IMPACT OF ADVERTISING ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Table 1. Consumer perception on the impact of advertisements towards the purchase of FMCG products.

Statements	5(%)	4(%)	3(%)	2(%)	1(%)	Mean	S.D	Decision
FMCG advertisements help me become aware of new products in the market.	6 (12)	31 (62)	11 (22)	2 (4)	0 (0)	3.82	.691	High perception
In my view, FMCG advertisements create brand awareness.	9 (18)	31 (62)	9 (18)	1 (2)	0 (0)	3.96	.669	High perception
FMCG advertisements influence my brand preferences when I shop for everyday products.	10 (20)	23 (46)	13 (26)	4 (8)	0 (0)	3.78	.864	High perception
I have confidence in the FMCG products due to the advertisement.	4 (8)	28 (56)	13 (26)	5 (10)	0 (0)	3.62	.780	Low perception
I am more likely to purchase an FMCG product if I have	6 (12)	24 (48)	13 (26)	7 (14)	0 (0)	3.58	.883	Low perception

seen or heard positive advertisements about it.								
Advertisements for FMCG products often create a need or desire for those products in my mind.	9 (18)	27 (54)	14 (28)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.90	.678	High perception
I am more likely to try new FMCG products that are promoted in advertisements.	5 (10)	21 (42)	21 (42)	3 (6)	0 (0)	3.56	.760	Low perception
I believe that advertisements provide valuable information about FMCG products.	6 (12)	28 (56)	16 (32)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.80	.639	High perception
I actively seek out advertisements for FMCG products to discover new deals or offers.	3 (6)	27 (54)	17 (34)	3 (6)	0 (0)	3.60	.700	Low perception
I tend to trust FMCG advertisements that feature real customer testimonials or reviews.	2 (4)	31 (62)	11 (22)	6 (12)	0 (0)	3.58	.758	Low perception
Advertisements of FMCG products mention the correct ingredients.	3 (6)	24 (48)	16 (32)	7 (14)	0 (0)	3.46	.813	Low perception
I trust the quality of FMCG products that are advertised compared to those that are not.	5 (10)	29 (58)	13 (26)	3 (6)	0 (0)	3.72	.730	Low perception
The humour or entertainment value in FMCG advertisements affects my perception of the brand.	7 (14)	28 (56)	15 (30)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.84	.650	High perception
The emotional appeal in FMCG advertisements influences my purchasing decisions.	10 (20)	28 (56)	12 (24)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.96	.669	High perception
I'm tempted to repurchase the brand of FMCG under the influence of its advertisement.	20 (40)	27 (54)	3 (6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.34	.593	High perception

Source: Primary data

*Note: N = 50, 5 = Strongly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly Disagree.
Decision – Weighted Average = $56.52/15 = 3.768$*

Interpretation: The data analysis shows that most respondents appeared to have high perception that FMCG advertisements helped them become aware of new products in the market. Also, they felt that FMCG advertisements create brand awareness among consumers in rural markets. They also perceived that FMCG advertisements highly influenced their brand preferences when shopping for everyday products, and advertisements for FMCG products often create a need or desire for those products. They also believe that advertisements provide them with valuable information about FMCG products. The result also shows that FMCG advertisements' humour or entertainment value positively affects their perception of the brand. The majority of the respondents also perceived that the emotional appeal in FMCG advertisements positively influenced their purchasing decisions, and they are tempted to repurchase the brand of FMCG under the influence of its advertisement.

On the other hand, the majority of the respondents agree but have comparatively lower perception that they have confidence in the FMCG products due to the advertisement; they are more likely to purchase an FMCG product if they have seen or heard positive advertisements about it; they are more likely to try new FMCG products that are promoted in advertisements; they actively seek out advertisements for FMCG products to discover new deals or offers; they tend to trust FMCG advertisements that feature real customer testimonials or reviews; that advertisements of FMCG products mention the correct ingredients and they trust the quality of FMCG products that are advertised compared to those that are not.

7. Suggestions

The following suggestions can be put forward from the analysis and discussions of the results, which can serve as a starting point for optimising the FMCG advertising strategies.

- Leverage the Strength of Brand Awareness and Product Introduction: Marketers can capitalise on the high perception that FMCG advertisements help consumers become aware of new products and use advertising as a means to introduce new products.
- Focus on Building Emotional Appeal: Given that emotional appeal positively influences purchasing decisions, marketers can consider incorporating more emotional elements into FMCG advertisements to connect with consumers on a deeper level.
- Enhance Humor and Entertainment Value: Recognise the positive impact of humour and entertainment in FMCG advertisements. Continue to use these elements to engage and captivate consumers.
- Encourage Repurchases: As the study found that consumers are tempted to repurchase brands under the influence of their advertisements, consider loyalty-building strategies to retain customers and encourage repeat purchases.
- Provide Clear Information on Ingredients: Ensure that advertisements mention the correct ingredients clearly and transparently. This can help build trust in the quality of FMCG products.
- Highlight Deals and Offers: Recognise that consumers actively seek out advertisements to discover new deals and offers. Continue to provide promotions and discounts to attract price-conscious shoppers.
- Promote Positive Reviews and Testimonials: Actively highlight and promote positive reviews and testimonials from satisfied customers in advertisements to strengthen consumers' belief in your products.

- Monitor and Measure Impact: Continuously assess the impact of FMCG advertisements on brand perception and consumer behaviour to make informed adjustments to the marketing strategies

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can state that we have developed a thorough understanding of the complex dynamics of FMCG advertising and its significant influence on customer perception and behaviour. Numerous important conclusions that emerged from the data research provide invaluable advice for FMCG marketers and advertising. First and foremost, it is clear that FMCG marketing are essential for raising customer awareness of newly released items. This increased awareness plays a key role in stimulating customer interest in innovative FMCG products. The study has also shown how impressively well FMCG commercials work at building brand identification, especially in rural regions where this type of advertising seems to work particularly well. Our research has interestingly emphasised the role of emotional appeal and entertainment value in FMCG advertisements. These elements have a discernible impact on consumer perception, influencing brand preferences and positively affecting purchasing decisions. Therefore, advertisers should continue to leverage emotional connections and engage consumers through entertaining content.

There are, however, certain things that might be done better. Although FMCG commercials have a lot of influence, there is a chance to increase customer trust in the offered goods. For consumers to have confidence in the quality of a product, constituent information must be accurately communicated. The report also stressed the need of promoting favourable reviews and endorsements, providing alluring bargains and promotions, and regularly introducing new FMCG items through advertising. Consumer engagement and purchase decisions are influenced by these techniques, which promote brand loyalty and long-term company success.

In sum, this study serves as a crucial resource for FMCG advertisers, enabling them to refine their strategies to align with evolving consumer preferences and needs. The data provides a comprehensive understanding of the role of FMCG advertising and its impact on consumer behaviour, reinforcing the pivotal role that advertising plays in the industry.

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