

Impact of buying behavior of youth towards cosmetic products in Perambalur Town

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate internal and external influences on consumers purchasing decisions on cosmetic products perambalur in Tamilnadu. The questionnaires were given to 125 consumers who are all using cosmetics. Out of 125 consumers contacted, 75 questionnaires were received with required coverage and details. The instruments of this study involved two parts: the first section of the instrument consisted of forced-choice questions about demographic characteristics: gender, marital status, age, occupation, monthly income level. The second section variables chosen for this study in order to measure the influence of consumer buying behaviour in cosmetics products. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) for Microsoft Windows 20.00 was used to complete the analysis of the collected data. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations were implemented in order to investigate the demographic data, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to determine whether any significant relationships exist among respondents. In addition, the .05 level of statistical significance was set at all statistical tests in the present study. The findings of the study were generalized as follows: Statistically significant differences were found in Income level by the different brand dimensions like social, culture and there is no statistically significant difference in dimension of Personal and psychological. In the end of the study implications and conclusion were provided. Index

Terms- buying, social, personal, cultural, psychological

INTRODUCTION

Understanding behavior of consumers is a key to the success of business organizations. Marketing personnel are constantly analyzing the patterns of buying behavior and purchase decisions to predict the future trends. Consumer behavior can be explained as the analysis of how, when, what and why people buy. Consumer behavior can be understood as: "The decision process and physical activity individuals engage in when evaluating, acquiring, using, or disposing of goods and services." (Loudon and Della Bitta, 1980).

Nowadays, this phenomenon, can also be illustrated in the following way: "activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services" (Blakwell, Minard and Engel, 2001).

A study by Voss and Parasuraman (2003) suggests that the purchase preference is primarily determined by price than quality during pre-purchase evaluation. Given explicit quality information, price had no effect on pre-purchase or postconsumption quality perceptions. Instead, post consumption quality evaluations had a favorable impact on price evaluations.

Another study by Chernev (1997) analyzed the effect of common features on brand choice and the moderating role of attribute importance. It is argued that when brand attributes differ in importance, with the best value on the most important attribute, thus further polarizing brands' choice shares. In contrast, when attributes are similar in their importance, common features are likely to have an opposite effect, equalizing brands share.

Russo and France (1994), studied the nature of the choice process for commonly purchased nondurables by tracking eye fixations in a laboratory simulation of supermarket shelves. The findings are fully compatible with the general view that the choice process is constructed to adapt to the immediate purchase environment. While describing about shopping orientation, Sinha (2003) reports that Indian Shoppers seek emotional value more than the functional value of shopping. Their orientation is based more on the entertainment value than on the functional value. The orientation is found to be affected primarily by the type of store, the frequency of buying and to some extent by the socio-economic classification. The retailers need to experiment with a format that attracts both types of shoppers. Research suggests that beauty consciousness among people in general is changing.

Vigneron and Johnson (1999) reported that people's needs for appearances and materialism were increasing. That is human beings wanted to satisfy the need to look and feel good. This created a boom in the cosmetic and toiletries sector across the world. Chambers Encyclopedia defines cosmetics as (a) articles intended to be rubbed, poured, sprinkled or sprayed on, introduced into or otherwise applied to the human body or any part thereof for cleaning, beautifying, promoting attractiveness or altering the appearance and (b) articles intended for use as a component of such articles. Now a variety of cosmetic and toiletries ranging from natural to sophisticated items are available in the market. The pattern and preference of use of these items vary according to different segments of gender, age and socio economic class. When we review the literature on the cosmetic and toiletry industry, not many studies are available especially about Indian scenario. The present study is an attempt to analyse the purchasing pattern of cosmetic consumers in perambalur in Tamilnadu.

It is well known fact that the success of any business organization stems from company's ability to understand and influence consumer behavior. This study is needed to consider when designing and implementing marketing programs. Failure to understand the dynamic buyer behavior and improper allocation and coordination of resources will lead the organization to great losses. The better marketers are at understanding consumer behavior, the more successful they will be at influencing consumers' purchase behavior (Kurti Shah 2009).

There are three sections of consumer behavior that need to be addressed carefully: psychological influences, socio-cultural influences and situational influences. The marketers have to go through a number of challenges in selling products like „cosmetics“ as they have to be applied directly on human skins, body and other parts. There is a perceived risk of dissatisfaction in the consumers as far as its benefits are concerned. It is necessary to study the consumer buying decision process in this regard.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to develop a framework for the study consumer behaviour it is helpful to begin by considering the evolution of the field of consumer research and the different paradigms of thought that have influenced the discipline. As described in this article, a set of dimensions can be identified in the literature, which can be used to characterize and differentiate, the various perspectives on consumer research. It is argued that consumer behaviour itself emerged as a distinct field of study during the 1960s; and is characterized by two broad paradigms, the positivist and the non-positivist. The positivist paradigm encompasses the economic, behavioural, cognitive, motivational/trait/attitudinal, and situational perspectives; these perspectives are referred to as the traditional perspectives as they pre-date the development of the non-positivist paradigm.

The positivist paradigm, which is still the dominant paradigm, emphasizes the supremacy of human reason and that there is a single, objective truth that can be discovered by science. This paradigm regards the world as a rational and ordered place with a clearly defined past, present, and future. The assumption of rationalism is therefore fundamental to the traditional perspective. The opposing, non-positivist paradigm, envelops the interpretive and postmodern perspectives, which have emerged more recently during the period post-1980 to date. The proponents of this emerging perspective argue that positivism overemphasizes the rational view and the ideology of a homogenous social culture and thereby denies the complex social and cultural world in which consumers live. This paradigm instead stresses, the importance of symbolic and subjective experience and the idea that consumers construct meanings based on unique and shared cultural experiences, and thus there can be no single unified world view. Unsurprisingly, the two paradigms differ in their views on the benefits derived from consumption and the objectives that underscore consumer research.

The traditional, positivist perspective takes a very utilitarian approach to the benefits from consumption. While the non-positivist perspectives place much greater emphasis on the symbolic dimensions of choice. The objective of non-positivist research endeavour is to achieve a better understanding of consumer behaviour with no specific intent to influence consumer processes. Conversely, outcomes of positivist research are directed toward advancing the goals of marketing practice. By identifying the paradigmatic shifts within the field, this article aims to identify different streams of thought that could guide future consumer research. Consumer is the study “of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires” (Solomon 1995, 7). In the marketing

context, the term „consumer “ refers not only to the act of purchase itself, but also to patterns of aggregate buying which include pre-purchase and post-purchase activities. Pre-purchase activity might consist of the growing awareness of a need or want, and a search for and evaluation of information about the products and brands that might satisfy it. Post-purchase activities include the evaluation of the purchased item in use and the reduction of any anxiety which accompanies the purchase of expensive and infrequently-bought items. Each of these has implications for purchase and repurchase and they are amenable in differing degrees to marketer influence (Foxall 1987).

Engel, et al. (1986, 5) define consumer behavior as “those acts of individuals directly involved in obtaining, using, and disposing of economic goods and services, including the decision processes that precede and determine these acts”. Simple observation provides limited insight into the complex nature of consumer choice and researchers have increasingly sought the more sophisticated concepts and methods of investigation provided by behavioral sciences in order to understand, predict, and possibly control consumer behavior more effectively. Psychology, social psychology, and sociology are the disciplines most widely employed in this endeavor which has become a substantial academic industry in its own right. In order to develop a framework for the study of consumer behavior it is helpful to begin by considering the evolution of the field of consumer research and the different paradigms of thought that have influenced the discipline (Marsden and Littler, 1998).

Paradigms in consumer research can be broadly classified as a set of fundamental assumptions that researchers make about what they are studying and how they study it (Kuhn, 1962). As described below, a set of dimensions can be identified in the literature, which can be used to characterize and differentiate the various perspectives on consumer behavior. Consumer behavior itself emerged as a distinct field of study in the 1960s.

A major catalytic influence in its emergence was the formation of the Association for Consumer Research in 1969. Membership now exceeds 1700 (www.acrweb.org), and the growing maturity of the field is reflected in its annual conference proceedings, entitled *Advances in Consumer Research*. The literature has grown sharply, with the *Journal of Consumer Research* (first published in 1974) standing as a premier source. More recently, the *Journal of Consumer Psychology* was launched in 1992

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate internal and external influences on consumers purchasing decisions on cosmetic products in Perambalur Tamilnadu \.

- To find how consumer buying behavior factors influence Consumers when purchasing cosmetic products.
- To study the influence of Income Level of the respondents on consumer buying behavior dimensions

Hypothesis of the study

- H1: Social dimension has influence on respondents Income
- H2: Cultural dimension has influence on respondents Income
- H3: Personal dimension has influence on respondents Income
- H4: Psychological dimension has influence on respondents Income

Sample & Instrumentation

The questionnaires were given to 125 consumers who are all using cosmetics. Out of 125 consumers contacted, 75 questionnaires were received with required coverage and details. The instruments of this study involved two parts: the first section of the instrument consisted of forced-choice questions about demographic characteristics: gender, marital status, age, occupation, monthly income level.

The second section variables chosen for this study in order to measure the influence of consumer buying behaviour in cosmetics products dimension contains of 39 items and characterized into four sub scales : (a) Social(items 1 to 7), (b) culture(items 8 to 13), (c) Personal (items 14 to 18) ,(d) Psychological(items 19 to 39)The dimension 39 items are evaluated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 ,using the anchors “5=strongly agree,4=agree,3=Neutral,2=Disagree ,1= Strongly disagree”. Cronbach, s alpha is a coefficient (a number between 0 and 1) that is used to rate the internal consistency (homogeneity) or the correlation of items in a test. If the test has a strong internal consistency most measurement experts agree that it should show only moderate correlation among items (0.70 to 0.90).The reliability coefficients for the variables chosen for the study should have to be more than 0.70, to consider it as an acceptable value (Nunally, 1978).

In this study the Reliability analysis shows that all the factors have shown alpha value greater than 0.7, indicating the evidence of reliability and the overall reliability of the instrument is 0.92. So, the items constituting each variable under study have reasonable internal consistency and shows that all the dimensions of consumers buying behaviour have a positive reliability. The factors and dimensions included for analysis carry a good degree of reliability to support the objectives formulated. All dimensions have got significant relationship to make the real representation of the study. Hence it is concluded that the data collected in this study is highly reliable.

Data Analysis and Findings

Most of the respondents were young, with 49% aged between 21-25 and 20% aged between 15-20 (n = 75). As might be expected, therefore, there was a significant proportion of students in the sample (36%), although the majority of respondents (51%) described themselves as housewives (n = 75) – there remain powerful social pressures in India which continue to limit women's ability to work outside the house and this also has an impact on marketing. When asked what kind of cosmetics respondents used, 93% replied that they used branded products and only 7% local or generic brands (n = 75).

The preference for herbal or non-herbal products was mixed, since 20% used herbal products, 45% used non-herbal products and 35% used both types (n = 75). When asked why they bought the cosmetics that they did, the most common response was for fashion purposes (26%), followed by health (20%) and social influence (18%). Smaller responses were noted for getting attention (13%), status (11%), to improve personality (9%) and psychological satisfaction (3%) (n = 150). Interestingly, the most important source of information about cosmetics was doctors (30%), followed by friends (26%) and beauticians (25%), with shopkeepers (10%), the media (5%) and the internet (4%) lagging behind (n = 75).

It is apparent that respondents have a diverse range of purposes for using cosmetics and finding out about them. Since personal relationships are important in providing information, brand managers should make sure that their information is properly conveyed to the trusted intermediaries. This understanding is reinforced by the information on the places where cosmetics are purchased, which had a number of categories with none dominant. For example, the most common response was medical stores (20%), followed by beauty parlours and general stores (both at 17%), cosmetic stores (15%), retail malls (13%), exclusive cosmetic stores (9%), online purchases (6%) and distribution agents (3%). India is a country where, generally, there remains a significant lack of retail space compared to the number of consumers now with disposable income and, in particular, with respect to the burgeoning middle class and the female half of the population. While urbanization and economic development will eventually yield more such shopping space, it remains necessary for manufacturers to establish and maintain relationships with smaller-scale and more traditional distribution channels.

This is likely to remain the case for some years. The size of the market may be inferred from the fact that 55% of the respondents spend an average of 501-750 rupees per month on cosmetics (US\$1 = 60 rupees); 28% of the respondents spent less than this but 10% spend 751-1000 rupees and 7% more than this (n = 75). Given the size of potential market overall, it is clear that this represents a significant market opportunity. It is also clear that there is significant scope for marketers to improve their offerings, since 64% of respondents reported that they changed brands regularly and that only 36% demonstrated loyalty (n = 75).

That the market is still developing rapidly is indicated by the fact that the most common reason for changing brand is that a new product has appeared on the market (28%), followed by improvements in an existing alternative product (26%). The implications for management of the marketing mix are evident from the importance of price changes (18%), packaging changes (14%) and advertising changes (12%) (with 2% choosing other reasons – n = 96). It is clearly important for marketers to establish a relationship of trust and loyalty because a remarkable 95% of respondents use the same brand for every product in the category (n =75). Capturing a customer with one product, therefore, strongly suggests that the customer will be very receptive to extension of the brand across many product lines. Likert scales were used to invite respondents to answer to a battery of potential factors. The responses have been converted into an average score for comparison (see Table 1 below), with a high score of 5 and a low score of 1.

Table 1: Factors Influencing Purchase of Cosmetics (n = 75);

Factor Average	SCORES
Brand Image	3.88
Quality	4.30
Fragrance	4.17
Quantity	4.20
Advertising	3.67
Price	3.64
Packaging	3.78
Softness	3.93
Skin Protection	4.48
Protection from Germs	4.38
Moisturizing Effect	4.38
Suitability for the Skin	4.14
Easy to Use	3.83
Availability	3.57
Refreshment	3.98

Natural Ingredients	4.12
Seasonal Change	4.12

source: ORIGINAL RESEARCH

It is evident from these results that, as far as respondents claim, they are more interested in product attributes rather than other aspects of the marketing mix. In order to obtain information about the product, they either need to try it for themselves or to receive information from a trusted intermediary and this has a clear implication for communications strategy.

It should also be noted that there is importance attached to the interaction between the cosmetic and the woman's skin and the suitability of the product. This suggests that international brands will not be able simply to distribute and market their products in India in exactly the same way that they might do in other countries. Instead, it will be necessary to localize the products to some extent, whether or not this means actually modifying the product itself. The questionnaire then went on to ask about preferred brands in six different categories, shampoo, soap and whitening cream; face wash, nail paint and lipstick. In India, as in a number of different Asian countries, the desire for a fairer coloured skin is considered to be one not just of beauty but also to have status issues involved. Although this may be politically suspicious, it is nevertheless the case that the products involved remain very popular.

Table :2 Preference towards consumer products

Shampoo	Points	Soap	Points	Fairness Cream	Points
Pantene	10	Pears	7	Boroplus	5
Clinic plus	10	Dove	15	Fair n lovely	35
L'Oreal	12	Dettol	20	Natural extracts	15
Nyle	26	Lifebuoy	25	Olay	5
Vatica	7	Madimix	2	Vicco	6
Head & shoulders	5	Lux	4	Garnier	2
Garnier	2	Nima	5	Shenaz	1
Sunsilk	1	Vivel	2	Dove	5
Himalaya	2	Nirma	2	L'Oreal	1

Source: Original data

It is evident that in only two categories are there definite brand leaders: Nyle shampoo and Ponds face wash. Some other brands are very popular, for example Lifebuoy soap, but these do have powerful rivals. In most categories, therefore, no single brand has been able to secure a significant position as market leaders and that suggests again a dynamic market place in which marketers will need to plan and enact their strategies for some years to come.

Discussion

In terms of the primary objective, it is evident from the findings presented above that women's buying behaviour with respect to cosmetics is still evolving. Trust and personal relationships are clearly important with respect to information gathering and decision-making but most respondents seem quite happy to switch brands when new options become available in the marketplace. In terms of the secondary objectives, it is evident that a variety of factors determines decision-making and that most categories do not have definite and fixed market leaders. This reinforces the idea that the market remains in a fluid situation and marketers need to be active to persuade consumers to switch to and become loyal to their products. Trust is evidently an issue in this sector, as consumers seem to expect duplicitous behaviour on behalf of manufacturers and distributors while also going to trusted individuals for advice on new products. There is also the issue of the relationship between the individual and new (or untried) products which may or may not be suitable for the skin of the individual. There would appear to be benefits available for those marketers who are able to localize their products appropriately. In terms of the place where the product is purchased, there is scope for marketers to take temporary space in a variety of different locations, since choices are diverse, through renting stalls, franchising products, offering sales promotions and so forth.

Conclusion and Scope for Future Research

Based on the research, it is concluded that there are many factors which may be considered as very important for respondents when purchasing cosmetics. Although brand loyalty is important for any organization because it gives surety that products will have a strong bond in the minds of consumers and this will discourage them from switching to another brands, the research here indicated that it was not easy to obtain and sustain consumer loyalty. Propensity to switch is high in what appears to be a low-trust environment and a market which is still developing, with a great deal of churn as new products appear and new opinions form about them. However, information has been gathered here which should help in structuring communications campaigns and designing promotional efforts. Future research in this area will attempt to expand the number of respondents and to extend the geographical base. Research will also be conducted to measure perception or customer satisfaction regarding cosmetics products and on in-depth brand loyalty by considering factors affecting brand loyalty in a variety of ways.

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