

## A REVIEW OF LITERATURES ON FACTORS INFLUENCING FEMALE BUYING BEHAVIOUR FOR COSMETIC PRODUCTS

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### ABSTRACT

Consumers are in-charge of market; and to satisfy consumers, the study of consumer buying behaviour becomes essential for every organization. It is a process into which variety of factors will influence the consumers in purchasing of a product. With the help of information received after studying the various factors like, cultural, social, personal, psychological, the effect of price and promotion, a growing number of companies today are shaping separate offers, services and messages to the cluster of customer and sometimes for the individual customer, too. Cosmetics have become an integral part of women's fashion statement. Fashion consciousness is increasing among women day by day. With this view point authors has written this paper to contribute to cosmetics market. The purpose of this article is to identify different factors that influences a female buyer while purchasing cosmetic products. To satisfy the purpose, the review of various literatures had been conducted, which includes the study of various articles, research papers, doctoral dissertations and books. Thus, it was concluded that every factor directly or indirectly influencing the female for purchasing cosmetics, only the intensity of influence differs.

**Keywords:** Consumer buying behaviour, Factors influencing female buying behaviour, cosmetic products

### I. INTRODUCTION

Consumer buying behaviour had always been the key of interest to the marketers. The knowledge of consumer helps the marketers regarding how consumer purchase and get influenced by various factors for their purchase. Understanding consumer decision making process and its factors will help marketers determine and plan various strategies to gain brand loyalty, expand market share, increase in customer satisfaction etc. A consumer's buying behavior is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. Most of these factors are uncontrollable and beyond the hands of marketers but they have to be considered while trying to understand the complex behavior of the consumers. 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” (Brosekhan A, Velayutham C. (n.d)). So, consumer refers not only to the act of purchase, but also included pre and post purchase activities. Researchers had always sought out the most sophisticated methods of investigation given by behavioural sciences to understand, predict and perhaps control consumer behaviour more effectively. This article presents a review of literature, in the area of consumer buying behaviour and specifically on factors which influences consumer buying behaviour. The main purpose of this article is to identify different factors that influences a female buyer while purchasing cosmetic products. This review of literatures includes an overview of previous studies conducted on factors influencing consumer buying behaviour.

## **II. INFLUENCES OF CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR**

According to Kotler, Keller, Koshy, Jha. (2013) a consumer’s behaviour is affected by three different factors: cultural, social, personal factors and psychological factors. These factors help consumers to prefer certain products and brands. Though many of these factors are not under the control of marketers, but a successful consumer oriented market service provider should work as psychologist to procure consumers (Rani, 2014).

### **A. CULTURAL FACTORS**

Culture study generally requires a detailed examinations of the character of the total society, including such factors as language, knowledge, laws, religions, food customs, music, art, technology, work patterns, products, and other artifacts that give a society its distinctive flavor (Schiffman, Kanuk, Kumar, 2010, 342). Consumers are also getting influenced from cross-culture of different countries (Patil H. and B. Bakkappa, 2012). To make products more tangible marketers use product features, its appearance and whole lot of other things to match the cultural demand of the consumers. Physical appearance is the most important component for selecting and purchasing cosmetics (Junaid Abdullah B, Nasreen R, Ahmed F, Hamdard J, 2013). In addition to the prevailing culture that a person is surrounded by, subculture is also a part of culture that has a huge impact on the way people act as consumers (Kokoi I, 2011). Subcultures include religions, racial groups and nationalities and they make more specific identification and socialization available for their members (Kotler et. al., 2013,

145). According to Schiffman, Kanuk, Kumar, (2010, 344) Culture can exist and sometimes reveal itself at different perceived or subjective levels. The three levels are supranational, national and group.

Fig. 1 presents a model depicting the role that subjective culture plays in determining consumer's beliefs, practices, and values, which in turn impact consumer's social norms, attitudes, behavioral intentions, and ultimately consumer's behaviour. One of the research shows that while selecting cosmetics, culture influences their selection. Cosmetics are selected in the framework of personal culture and rituals performed. Along with that the language and symbol on the package influences their selection. Consumers are of the opinion that their subculture influences the cosmetics selection and they have derived subculture from the culture of the state and religion to which they belong (Patil H, BBakkappa, 2012).

## **B. SOCIAL FACTORS**

Family, social roles and statuses as well as different reference groups are some of the social factors that, in addition to culture, affect consumer behaviour (Kokoi I, 2011).

According to Kotler et. al., 2013, The family is the most important consumer buying organization in society, and family members constitute the most influential primary reference group. There are five roles that will be played by family in any purchase process and those are; initiator, influencer, decision maker, purchaser, and consumer. Kotler et. al., 2013 describes reference groups and roles, as all the groups that have a direct (face-to-face) or indirect influence on their attitudes or behavior and which consists of the activities a person is expected to perform, respectively. Each role carries a status. People choose products that reflect and communicate their role and actual or desired status in society

For the marketers, who needs to study consumer behaviour must study consumer socialization process. It is the process by which children acquire skills, knowledge, attitudes, and experiences necessary to function as consumers (Schiffman, Kanuk, Kumar, 2010, 317). Marketers need to study consumers different stages of learning which will help them conclude on how to make products, how to promote them and to strategize various things which will attract consumers and close the sale.

According to one of the study conducted in Kolhapur by Desai K. (2014), consumers while purchasing cosmetics in spite of the impact of friends, family members, beauticians and others, the actual decision to buy was taken by the respondents on their own. In contrast, one of the studies also suggested that family members consent is the major factor in the purchase of soaps (Reddy P, Rao N. Appa, Reddy I. Lokananda, 2014). Not only in cosmetics but for FMCG products also the social factors influence the buying behaviour of consumers. One of the study shows that nearly 50% of women purchases are getting influenced by word of mouth (Sonkusare G., 2013). Supporting to this study, one more study concluded that women shoppers are high involvement shoppers who sought their opinion of female friends and co-workers, used most of the non-personal idea sources for shopping (Tammy R. Kinley, Bharath M. Josiam and Fallon L., 2010).

### C. PERSONAL FACTORS

A buyer's decisions are also influenced by personal characteristics. The characteristics like; the buyer's age and stage in the life cycle, occupation and economic circumstances, personality and self-concept, and lifestyle and values (Kotler et. al., 2013, 150). Personal factors are the most important factors to study because each will have direct impact upon consumers mind and most importantly will directly affect their purchase decision.

**a. *Age & Stage in the life cycle:*** Consumers' taste in food, clothes, furniture, and recreation is often related to their age. Consumption is also shaped by the family life cycle and the number, age, and gender of people in the household at any point in time (Kotler et. al., 2013, 150). Critical life events or transitions-marriage, childbirth, illness, relocation, divorce, career change, widowhood-will give rise to new needs.

As this study is related to cosmetics products, age will be playing the most important role. Different age group people prefer different brand of skin care cosmetic product (Junaid Abdullah B, Nasreen R, 2012). Supporting to this, Junaid Abdullah B, Nasreen R, Ahmed F, Hamdard J. (2013) also concluded that there is a significant relationship between age and type of cosmetics products used and age and time period of using cosmetics. According to one study conducted by Kokoi I (2011), 20-35 and 40-60 year-old Finnish women were rather similar in terms of the factors affecting their buying behaviour related to facial skin care products.

**b. *Occupation and economic circumstances:*** Marketers try to identify the occupational groups that have above-average interest in their products and services and even tailor products for certain occupational groups. Product choice is greatly affected by economic circumstances: spendable income, savings and assets, debts, borrowing power, and attitudes toward spending and saving. If economic indicators point to a recession, marketers can take steps to redesign, reposition, and reprice their products or introduce or increase the emphasis on discount brands so they can continue to offer value to target customers (Kotler et. al., 2013, 150).

There were various studies conducted to prove affect of occupation and economic circumstances on purchase decision. There is a significant relationship between occupation and brand loyalty & preference but there is no significant relationship between income and brand loyalty (Dhadhal C. 2011; Wijesundera G, Abeysekera R, 2010). As this study is related to cosmetics products and today is the era of working women. So, occupation is going to play the most important role while purchasing cosmetics, supporting to this one of the study concluded that, the working respondents were more conscious of their appearance and ready to buy high priced products as compare to housewives & students (Desai K, 2014). Therefore, As the income level of female consumers is increasing their expenditure for cosmetic product is also increasing (Junaid Abdullah B, Nasreen R, Ahmed F, Hamdard J., 2013). In contrast, certain studies also concluded that there is no significant relationship between occupation and education on price and brand while buying skin care products (D. Lavanya, 2014).

**c. *Perosnality and Self-concept:*** Schiffman, Kanuk, Kumar (2010) share their view by stating that personality is those inner psychological characteristics that both determine and reflect how a person responds to his or her environment. Marketers have intuitively felt that what consumers purchase, and when and how they consume, are likely to be influenced by their personality factors. For this reason, marketing and advertising people have frequently depicted specific personality traits or characteristics in their marketing and advertising messages. Brands also have personalities, and consumers are likely to choose brands whose personalities match their own. Research studies have found that a strong, positive brand personality leads to more favorable attitudes towards brand, brand preference, higher purchase intentions, and brand loyalty, and is a way for consumers to differentiate among competing brands.

As materialism increases, consumers are also becoming increasingly concerned with enhancing their self-image. Individuals develop their self-images through interactions with other people- initially their parents, and then other individuals or groups with whom they relate over the years (Schiffman, Kanuk, Kumar, 2010, 148). The product is a part of the consumers "self-defining" process and consumers are likely to select a brand that is in congruence with their personality. Self-image congruity is a very strong predictor of consumers' brand preferences and a good predictor of consumer satisfaction. Consumers with higher levels of self-image congruity were more likely to prefer the brand and enjoy higher levels of satisfaction with the brand as compared to those with lower levels of self-image congruity (Jamal A, Goode M., 2001).

Self-image does have an impact on purchase intention and purchase behaviour in buying skincare products (Sukato N., Eley B., 2009). The congruence between brand personality and self-image increases not only consumer satisfaction but also the consumer-brand relationship (Seong-Yeon Park, Eun Mi Lee., 2005).

**d. *Lifestyle and Values:*** Lifestyle refers to a person's pattern of living in the world as expressed in activities, interests, and opinions (Kotler et. al., 2013, 153). Whereas according to Kokoi I. (2011), lifestyle is more related to buying behaviour referring to the pattern of consumption habits that reflects how a person allocates his or her time and money. Further Kokoi I. (2011) added that even though people come from the same culture, subculture and social class and they have the same kind of education and occupation, they may still have very different lifestyles.

Values have a great impact on the type of buying behaviour a consumer engages in. Consumer decisions are also influenced by core values, the belief systems that underlie attitudes and behaviors. Marketers who target consumers on the basis of their values believe that with appeals to people's inner selves, it is possible to influence their outer selves-their purchase behavior (Kotler et. al., 2013, 153). One of the studies conducted by Srinivasan R., Srivastava R., Bhanot S. (2014) depicted the relationship between age, value and purchase behaviour towards luxury brands and found significant difference between value and different age groups.

#### D. KEY PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES

As Kotler et. al. suggested (2013, 153); four key psychological processes- motivation, perception, learning, and memory- fundamentally influence consumer responses. Further they added marketing and environmental stimuli enter the consumer's consciousness, and a set of psychological processes combine with certain consumer characteristics to result in decision processes and purchase decisions. Therefore, it's marketers job to understand which stimuli will influence the purchase decision of the consumers.

**a. *Motivation:*** It is the driving force within individuals that impels them to action (Schiffman, Kanuk, Kumar, 2010, 90). This driving force is produced by a state of tension, which exists as the result of an unfulfilled need. Kotler et. al., (2013, 154), added that; three of the best- known theories of human motivation those are going to be discussed here are those of Sigmund Freud, Abraham Maslow, and Frederick Herzberg- carry quite different implications for consumer analysis and marketing strategy. A motivated person is ready to act. Satisfying all the needs and wants, overcoming to all the tensions and drive, they will show certain behaviour that will help them into purchase decision and goal or need fulfillment.

**b. *Perception:*** According to Kotler et. al., (2013, 156) it is the process by which consumer select, organize, and interpret information inputs to create a meaningful picture of the world. Kokoi I (2011) further added that before perceiving anything, people have to first be exposed to an object and also pay attention to it. This chain of events of exposure, attention and perceiving is played out many times during one day. In terms of studying consumer behaviour, people's perceptions are more important than reality because perceptions are what actually affect a consumer's behaviour. Perceptions are formed through a three stage process that consists of selective attention, selective distortion and selective retention (Kotler et. al., 2013, 156). When it comes to conscious and purposeful allocation of attention, people tend to notice stimuli that relate to their current needs. A person, who wants to buy facial cleansing milk, will most likely pay more attention to cleansing milk advertisements than a person who is not in the need of that specific product. People are also more likely to pay attention to stimuli that they anticipate, in other words, more likely to pay attention to skin care products in a cosmetics store than in a food store. A third attention grabber in terms of allocating

processing capacity, are discounts. People are more likely to notice stimuli whose deviations are larger compared to the normal size of the stimuli (Kokoi I., 2011).

Selective distortion can cause a phenomenon where consumers distort neutral or unclear information about a brand to make it more positive based on the beliefs and expectations they have of that certain brand (Kotler et. al., 2013, 156). For example, a consumer can see that a fairness cream from their favorite brand seems to work better than the cream of a less familiar brand even if no noticeable difference really exists (Kokoi I., 2011). The retaining of information that supports attitudes and beliefs is called “Selective retention” (Kotler et. al., 2013, 157).

**c. *Learning:*** From a marketing perspective, learning is defined as the process by which individuals acquire the purchase and consumption knowledge and experience that they apply to future related behaviour (Schiffman, Kanuk, Kumar, 2010, 198). Further they added that, repeating advertising messages about brands and their benefits, rewarding people for purchase behaviour by selling products that provide superior benefits, getting consumers to make associations among different brand offerings under the same brand name, and developing brand loyalty are all elements of consumer learning. The reason that marketers are concerned with how individuals learn is that they are vitally interested in teaching them, in their roles as consumers, about products, product attributes and their potential benefits; where to buy them, how to use them, how to maintain them, and even how to dispose of them. Marketers want their communications to be noted, believed, remembered, and recalled. For these reasons, they are interested in every aspect of the learning process (Schiffman, Kanuk, Kumar, 2010, 196-198). Supporting to this, Kotler et. al., (2013) wrote that, Learning theorists believe that learning is produced through the interplay of drives, stimuli, cues, responses, and reinforcement.

**d. *Memory:*** All types of information that consumers pass through, will get stored in the memory. It is very important to study memory as a part of factors influencing consumer buying behaviour, because which products or services or brands consumer will be choosing is the result of the associations they have made with information stored in the memory. This information can be in the form of perception, feelings, thoughts, experiences, images etc. Consumers will be using their memory, and choosing the products that best suits with it. The

strength and organization of these associations will be important determinants of the information consumers can recall about the brand (Kotler et. al., 2013, 158). Marketers should make such types of marketing strategy that can help consumers gain right type of knowledge, associations and experience and maintain them in the memory. As Kotler et. al., (2013) wrote, cognitive psychologists distinguish between short-term memory (STM)- a temporary and limited repository of information- and long-term memory (LTM)- a more permanent, essentially unlimited repository.

### **III. PRICE EFFECT**

Though, all the above factors influence the most for consumer buying behaviour, and affects majority of the consumers while taking purchase decision. But, while discussing about consumer buying behaviour, one cannot ignore the effect of price in consumer decision making process. So, as suggested by Kokoi I. (2011), price is also one of the factors affecting consumer behaviour. "Price can be defined as the thing that a consumer has to give up to buy and obtain a certain product." As and well written by Kokoi I. (2011); in addition to the monetary amount a consumer pays for a product, there are also other costs involved that affect the perception of price. These include time, cognitive activity or elaboration and behavioural effort.

Other studies also shown price as an influencing factor in consumer purchase decision making process. Price plays an important role in purchasing behaviour of a skin care cosmetic products (Junaid Abdullah B, Nasreen R, 2012). Brand, quality, price and availability are certain factors that influence consumer buying behaviour while purchasing cosmetics products (Junaid Abdullah B, Nasreen R, Ravichandran N, Ahmed F, 2014). Supporting to it, one of the study also concluded as there were statistical relationships between price and brand preference (Wijesundera G, Abeysekera R, 2010). Some studies has also shown that females are less sensitive to price than males as far as fashion goods purchases are concerned (Celil K, Nuri C., 2015). Out of India studies has also shows that product price significantly influence the buying decision of cosmetic consumers in Saudi Arabia (Sheroog A, Upendra L, Belal K., 2016). Another non-Indian study concluded that there is a strong correlation between price and brand loyalty (Hamza S., 2011). In contrast, a study concluded that quality is

most important factor for purchase of cosmetics by the respondents than price (Desai K., 2014).

Therefore, price became the most important factor to go through.

#### **IV. MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS**

Kokoi I. (2011) also suggested another factor to study while researching on consumer buying behaviour and that factor is marketing communications. Because, if communications done right, it can payoff huge to the companies. "Marketing communications are the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers- directly or indirectly- about the products and brands they sell" (Kotler et. al., 2013, 456). There are many tools that can be used by marketers to convey messages to consumers. So, the marketing mix consists of eight major modes of communication: advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word-of-mouth marketing and personal selling (Kotler et. al., 2013, 459). In cosmetics markets, heavy advertising with famous models and spokeswomen is often used to allure consumers to buy different products (Kokoi I., 2011). For example, L'Oreal attracts millions of women from India by using bollywood actors as their spokeswomen in their advertisements. By which women who associate themselves with spokeswomen will get attracted and make purchase decision. In other words, cosmetics companies are not trying to sell products and brands but also an image that is associated with certain characteristics or qualities.

Certain studies had also shown that marketing promotions plays an important role in influencing purchase decisions of the consumers. The impact of advertising is reasonable in creating the product awareness or brand identification (Rao K., 2015). Advertisement and celebrity endorsement are the important factors which play an important role in purchasing behaviour of a skin care cosmetic products (Junaid Abdullah B, Nasreen R, 2012). Supporting to this one of the study concluded that maximum number of women consumers are attracted towards the marketing strategy through advertising (Sonkusare G., 2013). Consumers today use varied ways to collect information. So, the marketers use varied ways to reach consumers and with the help marketing communications tools, they send information to customers. One of the study concluded that TV and internet has impact upon receiving the information in

purchase decision (Desai K., 2014). Supporting to this one more study has concluded that TV ads play the most important role while making decision for purchasing bathing soaps (Reddy P, Rao N. Appa, Reddy I. Lokananda, 2014). One of the study conducted on consumer's buying and switching behaviour due to advertisements for shampoo brands, had concluded that advertisement has significant impact on consumers' mind, when they buy any particular product. The results had also shown that consumers switch to other brands after watching endorsements (Shrivastava A, Bisen V, 2014). Therefore, it can be said that not only the purchase decision, but the switching behaviour also get influenced by marketing promotion tools, which makes it important to study. So, in cosmetics industry, promotional activities have positive effects on consumers' purchasing behavior or brand choice (Shallu, Gupta S, 2013). While studying about cosmetics and consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetics products, one cannot forget the role played by beauticians. Beauticians are the most effective source of brand awareness (Limbad S. (n.d)). So, the marketers are going to conduct all the branding activities through marketing communication tools.

## V. CONCLUSION

Conditions of competition are changing rapidly today and companies that strategize and react to these changes promptly and quickly are the most successful (Brosekhan A, Velayutham C. (n.d)). Overall, it was argued that the study of consumer buying behaviour is evolving rapidly as researchers recognize and implement various perspectives to understand the nature of purchase and consumption behaviour. The various factors which influence female buying behaviour while purchasing cosmetics which had been already discussed in this article are cultural, social, personal and psychological. Moreover, the effect of price and marketing communication had also been discussed as factors which influence female buying behaviour. Thus, it can be concluded that every factors are important to study at its own, and every factor directly or indirectly contributes its part to influence the female in its process of purchasing cosmetics; differs only at the stage of buying and which type of products are being purchased.

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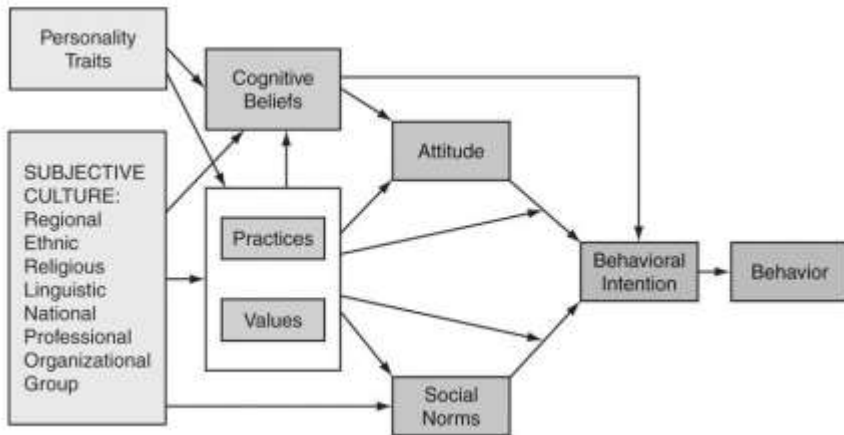
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**Figure 1 1 A theoretical model of culture's influence on behaviour - Source: Schiffman, Kanuk, Kumar, 2010, 345**



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