

Reference Group Involvement on Cosmetics Product Choice of Women at Puducherry

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The involvement of the reference group is foreseeable in our day to day life, they always direct and convince to buy a particular branded cosmetic. Cosmetic has its own value in the market in addition to the basic needs of the human being. Women started giving more importance to appearance and the usage of cosmetics reflects a positive change in the attitude and look of the women. Women in all age groups prefer cosmetics and give more importance in selecting a product which is popular and makes them pretty. Mostly the product will be insisted by the group to which they belong. Usually, women will spend more money on textiles but in the current scenario; they are spending more money on beauty parlour and cosmetics. Social media is always very popular in creating awareness, in spite of that reference group play a significant role in product choice of women. This study was conducted to find the involvement of reference group in product choice of women at Puducherry. The sample size for the study was 100; both primary and secondary data were used for analysis. The findings revealed that there is a significant association between reference group involvement and product choice. By using correlation it was found that there is a significant relationship between reference group involvement and the foundation cream, face cream and face powder used by women consumers. It was also found that there is no significant association between reference group involvement in using face wash and moisturizer.

Keywords — *Reference groups, cosmetics, women consumers, product choice, appearance and involvement.*

I. INTRODUCTION

A person's reference groups are all the groups that have a direct (face to-face) or indirect influence on their attitudes or behavior. Groups having a direct influence are called membership groups. Some of these are primary groups with whom the person interacts fairly continuously and informally, such as family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. People also belong to secondary groups, such as religious, professional, and trade-union groups, which tend to be more formal and require less continuous interaction (Kotler and Keller 2012).

A reference group is a group whose presumed perspectives or values are being used by an individual as the basis for his or her current behaviour. Thus, a reference group is simply a group that an individual uses as a guide for behaviour in a specific situation. Reference group influence can take three forms: informational, normative and identification. (Hawkins et al., 2007).

Reference groups influence members in at least three ways. They expose an individual to new behaviors and lifestyles,

they influence attitudes and self-concept, and they create pressures for conformity that may affect product and brand choices. People are also influenced by groups to which they do not belong. Aspirational groups are those a person hopes to join; dissociative groups are those whose values or behavior an individual rejects. Where reference group influence is strong, marketers must determine how to reach and influence the group's opinion leaders. An opinion leader is the person who offers informal advice or information about a specific product or product category, such as which of several brands is best or how a particular product may be used (Schiffman et al., 2010). Opinion leaders are often highly confident, socially active, and frequent users of the category. Marketers try to reach them by identifying their demographic and psychographic characteristics, identifying the media they read, and directing messages to them (Kotler and Keller 2012).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sundarshan et al., (2004) pointed out that the consumer involvement refers to the intensity of interest with which

consumers approach the market place. Consumer involvement varies across different individuals, products, brands and situations. A thorough knowledge of various factors that influence the involvement level of the consumers is also needed.

Stallworth (2008) defined consumer buying behaviour as a set of activities which involves the purchase and use of goods and services which resulted from the customers' emotional and mental needs and behavioural responses. Ampofo (2014) reveals that, on average, advertising does have influence on the purchase of cosmetic products and it is a must for cosmetic firms to continue advertising on their products if they require maximum sales. Although advertising does influence the purchase of consumers, other factors like income and others' recommendation do play a role in one's purchase. Advertising satisfies the needs of the firm as well as the wishes of consumers. Its role can never be replaced by any other means in this dynamic world of ours. It is therefore a must for firms to strategize and know when and where they should advertise to gain maximum returns.

Anute et al., (2015) found that cosmetic product purchased in the age group of 15-30 and most of the people prefer to use domestic brand and like to buy organic cosmetic product. Nearly half of the consumer know cosmetic product through television and customer remain loyal to their cosmetic products they don't change brand. People give more importance to quality in purchasing cosmetic product. Most of the people preferred lakme followed by vaseline, hmalaya ponds and fair and lovely.

Kazim & Kantharaj (2015) have concluded that there is a strong relationship between the cosmetic advertisements and customer purchase decision. The study also revealed that advertisements influence the customer towards their cosmetic brand selection. The study also reveals that religion impacts the purchase decision of the individual, but whereas the mother tongue does not have an impact on the purchase decision.

According to Anandrajan and Sivagami (2016) the most of the respondents are aware about the cosmetic products. The people now are not considering the cosmetics as luxury. Most of the consumers feel that there were chemicals in cosmetics, which cause many side effects, and started switching over to ayurvedic based cosmetics. The cosmetic manufacturing company after realizing the need of the customers" started ayurvedic based cosmetics.

Sumathi et al., (2016) revealed that consumers demand different commodities based on their tastes and preferences for them. Awareness about a product influences consumers' purchase of the same to a great extent. Other factors that influence one's taste and preference for a product are psychological and environmental.

Murugesan (2016) concluded that women play a major role in taking purchase decision for non-durables products. Thus, the result of his study is emphasized and further supported the importance of perception of women consumers as an important element of women purchase decision.

Nirmala & Panchanatham (2019) Television advertising touches the emotional feelings of women consumers and tempts them to buy the product. It has enhanced the interest of both young and women consumers and sway the buying behaviour of women consumers.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find the involvement of reference group on product choice of women consumers towards cosmetics in Puducherry.
2. To find the significant association between the reference group involvement and face cosmetic products.

IV. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. H₀: There is no significant relationship between reference group involvement and cosmetic product choice of women consumers.
2. H₀: There is no significant association between reference group involvement and foundation cream.
3. H₀: There is no significant association between reference group involvement and face cream.
4. H₀: There is no significant association between reference group involvement and moisturizer.
5. H₀: There is no significant association between reference group involvement and face wash.
6. H₀: There is no significant association between reference group involvement and face powder.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A sample design is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. It refers to the technique or the procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting items for the sample. Sample design may as well lay down the number of items to be included in the sample i.e., the size of the sample. Sample design is determined before data are collected. There are many sample designs from which a researcher can choose (Kothari 2004). The sample size for the study is 100 women consumers from Puducherry district. The sampling technique followed in the study is convenience Sampling. The study was based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data have been collected from the women consumers in Puducherry by using semi-structured questionnaire. The statistical tools such as correlation and chi-square test are used for analyzing the involvement of reference group on cosmetic product choice of women in Puducherry.

VI. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The frequency distribution of face cosmetics based on women consumer preferences in puducherry.

Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of face cosmetics

Face Cream		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fair & Lovely	31	31.0	31.0	31.0
	Ponds White Beauty	20	20.0	20.0	51.0
	Oriflame	19	19.0	19.0	70.0
	L'oreal	11	11.0	11.0	81.0
	Biotique	8	8.0	8.0	89.0
	Others	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Moisturizer		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Nivea	35	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Vaseline	33	33.0	33.0	68.0
	Oriflame	12	12.0	12.0	80.0
	Ponds	10	10.0	10.0	90.0
	Others	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Foundation Cream		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lakme bb	29	29.0	29.0	29.0
	MAC	20	20.0	20.0	49.0
	Spinz BB Cream	16	16.0	16.0	65.0
	Maybelline	11	11.0	11.0	76.0
	Colorbar	10	10.0	10.0	86.0
	Others	14	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Face Wash		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Ponds	32	32.0	32.0	32.0
	Clean and Clear	20	20.0	20.0	52.0
	Revlon	15	15.0	15.0	67.0
	Himalaya	12	12.0	12.0	79.0
	Aroma Magic	10	10.0	10.0	89.0
	Others	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Face Powder		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Ponds	30	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Yardley	20	20.0	20.0	50.0
	Spinz bb	16	16.0	16.0	66.0
	Gokul	8	8.0	8.0	74.0
	Enchanteur	11	11.0	11.0	85.0
	Others	15	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

The above table 1 shows that 31% of the respondents use Fair & Lovely face cream, 20% of the respondents use Ponds White Beauty face cream, 19% of the respondents use Oriflame, 11% of the respondents use L'oreal, 8% of the respondents use Biotique and 11% of the respondents use other face creams like Himalaya, Nivea, Lakme and The Body Shop,.

The above table shows that 35% of the respondents use Nivea moisturizer cream, 33% of the respondents use Vaseline, 12% of the respondents use Oriflame, 10% of the respondents use Ponds and the remaining 10% of the respondents use other moisturizer creams like Johnson & Johnson, Lakme and Olay.

From table 1 it was found that 29% of the respondents use Lakme foundation cream, 20% of the respondents use MAC, 16% of the respondents use Spinz bb Cream, 11% of the respondents use Maybelline, 10% of the respondents use Colorbar and the remaining 14% of the respondents use other foundation creams like Oriflame and L'oreal.

The study reveals that, 32% of the respondents prefer Ponds face wash, 20% of the respondents prefer Clean and Clear, 15% of the respondents prefer Revlon, 12% of the respondents prefer Himalaya, 10% of the respondents prefer Aroma Magic and the remaining 11% of the respondents use other face wash like Biotique, Oriflame and Banjaras.

The above table shows that, 30% of the respondents use ponds powder, 20% of the respondents use Yardley, 16% of the respondents use Spinz bb, 8% of the respondents use Gokul, 11% of the respondents use Enchanteur and 15% of the respondents use other face powders like Z Tal, Oriflame and White Tone.

Nirmala & Panchanatham (2017) revealed that 43% of the respondents are using foundation cream out of which 7% of the respondents use Maybelline brand, 28% use Lakme and 8% use Olay foundation cream. 46% of the respondents are using face cream and the brands preferred were Olay 16%, Ponds 16%, Lakme 7% and Nivea 7%. 23% of the respondents are using face pack and the brands preferred were Himalaya 9%, Oriflame 7% and Banjara 6%. 64% of the respondents are using face wash and brands preferred were Himalaya 22%, Garnier 18%, Lakme 19% and Clean & Clear 5%. 15% of the respondents are using concealer and the brand preferred was Oriflame 9% and Ddx 6%.

In the previous study of television advertising and changing habits of female college students (Nirmala & Panchanatham 2017) the foundation cream mostly used by the respondents was Lakme and in the current study also the respondents preferred Lakme. The face cream preferred by the respondent in the previous study was Olay and Ponds but in the current study it was Fair & Lovely. The face wash preferred by the respondents was Himalaya, currently it was Ponds. The reason for the change in their preference was, in

the previous study researcher have concentrated only on the college students but in this study, respondents belong to all age groups.

Table 2 shows the significant relationship between reference group involvement and cosmetic product choice of women consumers

Correlations		Reference Group Involvement	Cosmetic Product Choice
Reference Group Involvement	Pearson Correlation	1	.551**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Cosmetic Product Choice	Pearson Correlation	.551**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data

H0: There is no significant relationship between reference group involvement and cosmetic product choice of women consumers.

The above table shows that $r = 0.551$ and p-value is 0.00 which is less than 0.05 hence we reject the null hypothesis and it was found that there is a significant relationship between reference group involvement and cosmetic product choice of women consumers. It was observed that the friend's circle, colleagues and neighbours involved in the product choice of the respondents.

According to (Nirmala & Panchanatham 2019) it was found that from table 4 there is a significant relationship between television advertising and the cosmetics acquired by women consumers and the p-value is 0.014. The television advertising convinces women consumers for the money spent on cosmetics and make them feel charming and to gain more self-belief among others in society.

Table 3 shows the significant association between reference group involvement and cosmetic product choice of women consumers

S.No.	Face cosmetics products	Chi square value	Degrees of Freedom	p-value	S-Significant/ NS-Not Significant
1	Foundation Cream	26.233	15	0.036	S
2	Face Cream	25.192	15	0.047	S
3	Moisturizer	13.530	12	0.332	NS
4	Face Wash	11.731	15	0.696	NS
5	Face Powder	25.066	15	0.049	S

Source: Primary Data

H0: There is no significant association between reference group involvement and foundation cream.

The above table reveals that there is a significant association between reference group involvement and foundation cream since the chi-square value at 15 degrees of freedom is 26.233 and p-value is 0.036 which is less than 0.05. The reference group suggest and convenience their friends circle and family members to buy particular branded cosmetics.

H0: There is no significant association between reference group involvement and face cream.

Table 3 shows that the chi-square value at 15 degrees of freedom is 25.192 and p-value is $0.047 < 0.05$, which is significant. Hence we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis therefore; there is a significant association between reference group involvement and face cream.

H0: There is no significant association between reference group involvement and Moisturizer.

The above table reveals that chi-square value at 12 degrees for freedom is 13.530, p-value is $0.332 > 0.05$ which is not significant. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and there is no significant association between reference group involvement and Moisturizer.

H0: There is no significant association between reference group involvement and face wash.

Table 3 shows that chi-square value at 15 degrees of freedom is 11.731 and the p-value is $0.696 > 0.05$ which is not significant. Hence we accepted the null hypothesis and there is no significant association between reference group involvement and face wash.

H0: There is no significant association between reference group involvement and face powder.

The above table shows that chi-square value is 25.066 at 15 degrees of freedom and p-value is $0.049 < 0.05$ which is significant. Hence we reject the null hypothesis and it was found that there is a significant association between reference group involvement and face powder.

VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The product choice of women consumers is influenced by the reference group. The reference group suggests the brand which meets the expectation of the consumer. The study was concluded that reference group involves in cosmetic product choice of women consumers in Puducherry. The frequency distribution of face cosmetics in table 1 shows that 31% of the respondents use Fair & Lovely face cream, 35% of the respondents use Nivea moisturizer cream, 29% of the respondents use Lakme foundation cream, 32% of the respondents prefer Ponds face wash and 30% of the respondents use Ponds powder.

Table 2 revealed that there is a significant relationship between reference group involvement and cosmetic product choice of women consumers, the r value is 0.551 and p -value is 0.00 which is less than 0.05. The family member and friends circle always act as a mentor in picking a particular branded product. They will consider the merit and demerit of cosmetic products and suggest a suitable product which fit the skin and body colour of the respondents.

Table 3 shows the significant association between reference group involvement and cosmetic product choice of women consumers in Puducherry. From table 3, it was found that there is a significant association between reference group involvement and the cosmetic product like foundation cream, face cream and face powder. The chi-square value for foundation cream, face cream and face powder was (26.233, p -value $0.036 < 0.05$), (25.192, p -value $0.047 < 0.05$) and (25.066, p -value is $0.049 < 0.05$) respectively. The other cosmetics like face moisturizer and face wash is not significant and chi-square value is (13.530, p -value $0.332 > 0.05$) and (11.731, p -value $0.696 > 0.05$). From the study, it was observed that the face cream preferred by most of the respondents was Fair & Lovely, face moisturizer Nivea, foundation cream Lakme bb cream, for face wash and face powder they prefer Ponds brand. The brand used and liked by reference group is recommended to the friends, neighbours and colleagues. They show a lot of involvement and interest in selecting the product for others.

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