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A STUDY ON BRAND LOYALTY AND IT's EFFECT ON BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN CASE OF SELECTED COSMETIC PRODUCTS IN PUDUKOTTAI

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ABSTRACT
As consumers, middle-class Indian women in general attach great importance to cosmetics and fashion. The focus on personal appearance in society is considered to be very significant. Many brand managers are, consequently, competing aggressively for market share in this emerging sector. The main purpose of this paper is to study women's buying behavior and brand loyalty as regards to cosmetics in Pudukkottai town in the context of increasing consumption of such products. Various factors were chosen for study and response were gathered using a quantitative approach. Questionnaire were distributed to 26 respondents for self-completion. A non-probability convenience sampling method has been used for this survey. The findings of the study indicate various parameters which women consider important in purchasing cosmetics: women in the sample tend to have low brand loyalty for cosmetics brands. The study also found that women like to use cosmetics for fashion and health, that beauticians were the most effective source of brand awareness and medical stores held the most trusted channel of distribution. The study helps producers and marketers of cosmetics products to take various decisions regarding product, distribution and promotion aspects of the marketing mix.

KEYWORDS
brand loyalty, buying behaviour, cosmetics.

INTRODUCTION
The general term 'cosmetics' is applied to all preparations used externally to condition and beautify the body, by cleaning, coloring, softening, or protecting the skin, hair, nails, lips or eyes. Cosmetics are, therefore, products intended to be applied to the human body for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness or altering the appearance without affecting the body's structure. This broad definition includes any material intended for use as a component of a cosmetic product. The growth of cosmetics and beauty products markets has become significant as consumers are increasingly becoming aware of appearance, beauty, grooming and the choice of personal care products. Understanding this sector should be of valuable use to marketers in identifying marketing opportunities to ensure greater efficiency in the use of resources and other efforts, which are directly related to consumer purchasing behavior such as market segmentation, consumer targeting, product features, promotional and selling efforts. This paper provides an overview of the cosmetics market and its importance and examines the influence of various parameters and brand loyalty on women's buying behavior concerning cosmetics. This study will provide useful information to the business sector as well as dealers in retailing sectors. The Indian cosmetics industry has experienced rapid growth in the last couple of years, growing at around 7.5% between 2006 and 2008. While this is due to the improving purchasing power and increasing fashion consciousness, the industry is expected to have maintained growth momentum during the period 2009-2012 and beyond. In this sector, both electronic as well as print media are playing an important role in spreading awareness about the various products available and in developing fashion consciousness among the Indian consumers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Tucker W.T., (1964) defined brand loyalty as three successive preference of the same brand in their empirical studies of this concept. Ronald, F. and Harper, B. (1965) conducted a comparative study and indicated that socio-economic variables could not be differentiated between private and manufacturer's brand loyal consumers. Aaker & Keller (1990) argued that loyalty is closely associated with various factors, one of the main ones being the experience of use. Customers may be loyal owing to high switching barriers related to technical, economical or psychological factors, which make it costly or difficult for the customer to change. From another point of view, customers may also be loyal because they are satisfied with the brand and thus want to continue the relationship (Fornell, 1992). Keller (2003) argued that famous brand names can disseminate product benefits and lead to higher recall of advertised benefits than non-famous brand names. There are many unfamiliar brand names and alternatives available in the market place. Consumers may prefer to trust major famous brand names for satisfying purposes. These prestigious brand names and their images attract consumers to purchase the brand and bring about repeat purchasing behavior and reduce price related switching behaviors' (Cadogan & Foster, 2000). Nair Vinith Kumar and Pillai Prakash R., "A study on Purchase Pattern of Cosmetics among Consumers in Kerala." (2007).[1] The study analyses the purchase patterns and spending styles of people belonging to different segments of Cosmetic consumers in Kerala.
Ronald, F. and Harper, B. (1965) conducted a comparative study and indicated that socio-economic variables could not be differentiated between private and manufacturer's brand loyal consumers.[2]

NEED FOR THE STUDY
Consumer attitude gives both difficulty and development to the company. Now, Consumers have lot of interest regarding the cosmetic products and also they having awareness about cosmetic product attributes. Here, the cosmetic companies need to understand the consumer attitude on cosmetics buying behavior which brings success of them. This study focuses on the factors that affect the buying decisions of consumers. This research objective is to get reliable and valid results that helps to the company in planning their future activities and marketing strategies.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND FORMULATION
As is evident from the description above, till date, good amount of researches were undertaken to study various aspects of Brand Loyalty at the International Level. However, one is yet to come across similar researches in the field of Brand Loyalty at the National Level in India or within the Pudukkottai since the concept of Branding is yet to pick up in a developing nation like ours as compared to western more developed nations. Against such a backdrop, the researcher has decided to undertake a study that extends over a wide canvas entailing a comprehensive examination of the brand loyalty behavioral pattern of the cosmetic consumers in Pudukkottai.

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[1] Tucker W.T "The Development of Brand Loyalty, Journal of Marketing Research, August, 1964. pp. 32-35.
[2] Ronald, F; and Harner, B. "Private Brand Prone Grocery Customers Really Different ",Journal of Advertising Research, vol. 5 December 1965. pp. 27-35.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has been carried out with the following objectives:

(1)   To examine the brand loyalty of women skincare cosmetic product among the consumer.

(2)   To identify the important factors that influencing to Purchase the Skincare Cosmetics Products among the respondents.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research Design of a Study outlines the nature of information required for the purpose of the study, the method of data collection, the technique used for the analysis and interpretation of the data for the study.

PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires. A questionnaire approach is considered to be the most effective tool to collect the primary data. The questionnaire included both open-ended and closed –ended questions. Likert scales were used for some questions involving purchasing decisions and additional questions concerned demographic attributes of respondents.

SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Reference books and academic journals were consulted to determine the existing level of knowledge about consumer buying behaviour. Observation from the internet also involved their various brands and product lines available in the market, as well as the company's turnover and their market positions. In addition, past research survey data was used to frame the questionnaire.

SAMPLING DETAILS

The population for this research study consists of women using cosmetics products. Working women, housewives and college students were contacted through a face-to-face interviewing method using the questionnaire. In this study, the sampling unit is the individual consumer who uses cosmetics products. A total of 26 women consumers were contacted within the Pudukkottai town and the sample were selected by a non-probability convenience sampling method to seek fair, impartial and effective data.

NATURE AND TYPE OF THE STUDY

This research work is in the form of 'ex-post –facto' study in which the researcher tried to study the existing perceptions of the Women Skincare Cosmetics Buyers regarding the Concept of Brand Loyalty, The Factors Affecting it and the Factors Affecting the Purchase of Skincare Cosmetics in general, etc, without manipulating in any way the scenario as it stands presently. Thus, this Study is largely Empirical in approach.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1: INFLUENCE OF AGE, MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME, OCCUPATION AND MARTIAL STATUS ON OVERALL ATTITUDE

		N	Mean	SD	t	DF	Sig
Age	18 – 20	3	4.333	3.5	3.031	5	0.29
	21 – 25	11					
	26 – 30	3					
	31 – 35	5					
	36 – 40	3					
	Above 41	1					
	Total	26					
Income	Below 10000	5	6.50	2.646	4.914	3	0.16
	10000 – 25000	10					
	25001 – 50000	7					
	50001 and above	4					
	Total	26					
Marital Status	Married	16	13	4.243	4.333	1	0.144
	Unmarried	10					
	Total	26					
Occupation	Student	12	5.20	3.962	2.935	4	0.43
	Homemaker	5					
	Service	4					
	Business	2					
	Professional	3					
	Total	26					

The above table shows the influence of age on overall attitude of the respondents towards skincare cosmetics products. In order to find out the influence, Anova was performed and the results shows a significant outcome (t=3.031; p=0.29). That is the respondents differ significantly with respect to their age towards their attitude on skincare cosmetic products. On observing the mean values, it is noted that the respondents who are in the age group (M=4.333; SD=3.5) Hence, it is concluded that it has positive attitude towards skincare cosmetics products. Next, the table shows the influence of Monthly Family Income on Overall attitude of the respondents towards skincare cosmetics products. Anova result shows a non-significant outcome (t=4.914; p=0.16). and the results on mean of (M=6.50; SD=2.646). Also, the table shows the influence of Occupation on overall attitude of the respondents towards skincare cosmetics products. Anova results shows a significant with respect to their occupation is (t= 4; p=0.43) and the mean results and standard deviation is (M=5.20; SD=3.962) and the table Marital status influences the skincare cosmetic users (t=1; p=0.144) and also the (M=13; SD=4.243).

The following are the factors influencing the category of age and the occupation group are as follows.

TABLE 2: FACTORS INFLUENCING AGE AND OCCUPATION (CROSS TABULATION)

Age/Occupation	Student	Homemaker	Service	Business	Professional
18-20	2	1	0	0	0
21-25	9	2	0	0	0
26-30	1	0	1	0	1
31-35	0	3	0	1	1
36-40	1	0	1	0	1
Above 41	0	0	1	0	0

Source: Primary Data from survey

The table2 shows that the comparison between the age group and occupation. it is identified by using the Anova calculation of mean of 2.17 on students and 0.83 of Homemakers and 0.67 of service women cosmetic users and 0.33 of business women's 0.50 of professionals of skincare cosmetics users. And the median of (1.00,) of student and 0.50 of homemakers and 0.50 of service and 0.50 of professional cosmetic users.

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TABLE 3

	Student	Homemaker	Service	Business	Professional
mean	2.17	0.83	0.67	0.33	0.50
Median	1.00	0.50	0.50	.00	0.50
Std. Deviation	3.430	1.169	0.816	0.516	0.548
Variance	11.767	1.367	0.667	0.267	0.300
Range	9	3	2	1	1
Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.					

MAJOR FINDINGS BASED ON THE SURVEY

BRANDS OF SKINCARE PRODUCTS ENJOYING MAXIMUM BRAND LOYALTY

The women respondents were asked to determine brand names of various categories of skincare products that they chose to use consistently / purchase repeatedly. The survey results as classified based on the main categories of skincare products viz. Body care, Facial care and Hand care are as under:

IN THE BROADER BODY CARE SEGMENT

- Among the General purpose body care products Vaseline turned out to be the leading brand with 25% brand Loyals, followed by Pond's with a loyalty score of 21% in second place and Fair and Lovely with a loyalty score of 18% in third place.

In the broader segment of Facial care products, the loyalty scores of these respondents were observed as under:

- Among the Acne Treatment products Himalaya Herbals was the leader with a loyalty score and clean @ clear followed the second vicco shared the third spot.
- In the Face masks category Ever youth led with a loyalty score of 18% Pond's followed with 8.12% and Fair&lovely with the score of 7% occupied third.
- Among the Cleaners Clean & clear led the market first and followed by Everyouth and Lakme with respectively.
- The Anti-agers, category had Olay as the leader with a loyalty score followed by pond's and Garnier with scores respectively.
- Among the Facial moisturizers, Pond's had the maximum no. of loyal's followed by Vaseline with a loyalty score and Nivea at third place.
- In the Lip care category, Vaseline was the clear winner followed with Nivea and Lakme products.
- In the Toner category Lakme led loyal to its credit followed by Amway and Pond's.

Finally, in the broader **Hand care** segment, Vaseline emerged a winner again with the loyalty score followed by Dettol and pond's with third place.

SUGGESTIONS OF GENERAL NATURE

In order to maintain and extend the Brand Loyalties of the existing Customers and to induce Non-users or Competitor's Customers to Switch their brands in their favour, companies should embark upon the following endeavors.,

1. Develop Long-term outlook coupled with Extensive Research and Development.
2. Continuous Product Innovation
3. Quality Strategy
4. Build Brand Equity by creating the right brand knowledge structures with the right customers.
5. Brand Extension and Multi-Brand Strategy.

The successes of most businesses depend to their ability to create and maintain customer loyalty. Companies have realized that selling to brand loyal customers is less costly than attracting new customers. Brand Loyalty provides companies strong and competitive weapons to fight with competitors in the market place. The concept of brand loyalty is so important that managers must give it sufficient consideration before they plan and implement their marketing strategies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research, it is concluded that there are many factor 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 from about them. However, information has been gathered here which should help in structuring communications campaigns and designing promotional efforts.

Finally, in order to create a successful brand, marketing managers should be more devoted on building brand image. Customer's satisfaction and brand loyalty as part of their branding strategy. By maintaining and strengthening the brand images and values. It will hopefully position the brand positively in the minds of consumers. Therefore, there is a need to Understand the important roles of three branding strategies: brand image, brand satisfaction and brand loyalty in order to enhance their brand appeal.

LIMITATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

There are a number of limitations in this study. Firstly, the small sample size used limit the ability to generalize what is found in this study to the general industry. (i.e., not enough to capture the images of the brand particularly the benefits appeal). Future research should opt for a larger sample size. In addition, although students have been categorized as potential actual users, and thus are argued to be validly used as samples in many studies cited in the literature, the fact that they may not be the ultimate users remains and may have an impact on the study's result. Thus, using actual users for future research is advisable. Consequently, this study stressed on too many color cosmetic brands. Each type of brand may have different image benefits or brand meaning and brand attitude. We suggest that for future research, it would be better to focus on not more than three brands. In addition, future studies may consider examining one type of color cosmetic product category, for example, lipcare or foundation. By focusing on one type of color cosmetic may perhaps truly reveal the brand attributes and benefits of that particular brand. Again future research can be administered on how various brand loyalty factors influence a consumer 's loyalty towards other product categories – FMCG and Non FMCG. To find out the behavioral patterns of consumers and differences between the Loyalty patterns among the various products categories if any.

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