A Study on the Perception of Women in Kolkata towards Shampoo

* Ritika Bhimani
** Supriyo Patra

* Student of Department of Business Administration, St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), 30, Mother Teresa Sarani Kolkata-700016
** Assistant Professor in Management (Marketing), Department of Business Administration, St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), 30, Mother Teresa Sarani Kolkata-700016

Abstract

Hair care, once an occasion based activity, in the beginning of the 21st century has become an integral part of Indian consumer daily beauty regime. The rising trend for hair care products in India is driven by the internal desire to be presentable.

The **main objective** of the paper is to study the buying behaviour and perception of women in Kolkata regarding shampoo and to identify the various factors and their level of importance affecting the purchase of shampoo.

A **cross sectional research design** was adopted and primary research was conducted.Non-probability sampling technique has been adopted for the study.A structured questionnaire was administered for collecting responses from 100women residing in Kolkata, between the age group of 20-44 years.

The **findings** revealed that 98% of the respondent in Kolkata use shampoo for their hair care while the remaining 2% continue to follow the traditional system of using soaps. It also revealed that 36% of the respondents are influenced by the **television** in their decision-making process. The **mini bottles** are the most preferred shampoo pack size by the respondents.

Nine different reasons namely **avoid hair loss, prevents dandruff, suitable for hair, softens hair, fragrance, hair growth, less chemicals, vitamins and easy to rinse** have been considered important for this study.The attribute of **avoiding hair loss** has been seen to be the most important attribute for the respondents, followed by prevention of dandruff.

Keywords: Shampoo, Buying Behaviour, Perception, Women and Kolkata

Introduction

In today's world consumers are treated as the **"King"** by every organization. They play an important role in deciding about which product is to be offered, where is to be offered and at what price they are going to purchase it. Accordingly, their expectations from the products and organizations are also increasing day by day.

The concept has changed from **"Seller's Market to Buyer's Market".**Consumers make buying decisions everyday on a regular basis and most companies conduct research on consumer behaviour to find out answers regarding questions about what consumers buy, when they buy, for whom they buy, how much they buy and why do they buy i.e. it attempts to analyze the **"W's"** of consumer behaviour.

The central question for the marketer is to find out how consumers form their perceptions and what influences their choices that companies offer in the market. Women are very much concerned about beauty and are known for hygienic practices, and shampoo is one such product, which is meant for hair care.

Washing the hair and scalp has become a near universal practice. The method of doing so varies depending on both geographic and economic factors. Women are known to use more amount of shampoo than men, thus they can also be dynamic while purchase habits of shampoo brand is concerned, so there is a gap to be filled in this regard.

In order to fill the above said gap to the extent possible, a study is undertaken to know women consumer behaviour towards shampoo.

The shampoo usage rate is increasing gradually due to decline in excise duty and the use of sachet packaging. Sachet packet substantially increased the sales of shampoo and the sachet packet sale is more than 70% in south India. The shampoo industry is characterized by three benefit platforms: cosmetic, anti-dandruff and herbal.

Anti-dandruff shampoo alone accounts for 20% of the total shampoo market and it is growing at 10% to 12% every year. The leading shampoo industries thus came out to solve the specific problems like hair fall, dandruff, dullness, dryness, damaged hair, and shampoo with herbal intact etc. Different brands claim their characteristics and benefits with a variety of products.

Literature Review

Rahman & Kazi (2013) conducted a study on the expectations of consumers from shampoo brands. After analysis, it was found that Hair fall has come out as the top most preferred reason for using a shampoo brand whereas Hair cleaning appears to be the most preferred expectation of customers. Similarly, Fragrance was considered as the least preferred reason whereas Moisture was considered as the least preferred expectation of the customers.

Birjandi & Birjandi (2013) analysed customer segmentation of shampoo in the Iranian market, based on the 'benefit sought approach'. The findings highlighted that in the benefits prioritization of consumers, cleaning power of the shampoo gains the most important rank and color of the shampoo gains the least important rank among all of the benefits.

Irabatti& Irabatti (2013) conducted a research on the satisfaction level derived by Pantene shampoo users in Western Maharashtra. The mean satisfaction scores of different groups of respondents were calculated to find out the highly satisfied group and two-way tables and charts were framed to find out the distribution of respondents of each category concerning their level of satisfaction. The satisfaction level of Pantene shampoo is derived against different elements such as sex group, age group, price, quality, lather, fragrance, packing, and ability to prevent hair fall.

Mohanty (2012) conducted a study on positioning of Indian shampoo brands, where the purpose of the study was to transform consumer judgments of shampoo usage similarity into distances in multidimensional space. The study identified three important dimensions "Brand Image", "Hair care" and "Value for money" to be taken care off by the shampoo industries. Three-dimensional and two dimensional solutions gave the same output and identified "Brand Image" and "Hair care" as the most important factors for the choice shampoo brand.

A study conducted by **Guru Ragavendran (2009)** emphasized in understanding the consumer perception on brand awareness and position of product in the market. It was observed that consumer's expectations were quality, benefits offered and packaging of shampoos. Hence, the present study is specially focused on the perception of women of Kolkata regarding shampoo.

Objectives of the Study

- ➢ The primary objective of the research is to understand the perceptions that women in Kolkata have in terms of the various attributes of the shampoo product
- ➢ The next objectives are aimed at identifying the various factors, which influence their purchase decisions.
- ➢ To comprehend the preferences towards various **pack sizes** of shampoos

Methodology

A **cross sectional research design** was adopted and primary research was conducted in Kolkata. Convenience sampling, which forms a part of Non-probability sampling technique, has been adopted because a complete population frame was not available for the survey under study to select 100 respondents.

For this research work, Descriptive Studies design has been used since the objective of the study is to answer the "who, what, when, where and how" of the buying behaviour of consumers under investigation by undertaking a quantitative analysis of the data collected. The **Demographic profile of the sample** in terms of **gender and age** comprised of women respondents between the age of 20-44 and residing in Kolkata.

The **research instrument** used was a structured questionnaire, containing Multiple-choice questions, Dichotomous questions, and questions based on the Likert-scale to collect the desired information. In all, a total of 100 female respondents were taken into considerations, who reside in Kolkata. The area planning was done in such a manner that good representation of target population could be ensured despite the use of convenience sampling method.

Limitations

The study has been conducted among a sample size of 100 women respondent only which may go down as a limitation of the present study and not sufficient to reach a conclusion but is a small step to understand the perception of women towards shampoo in Kolkata.
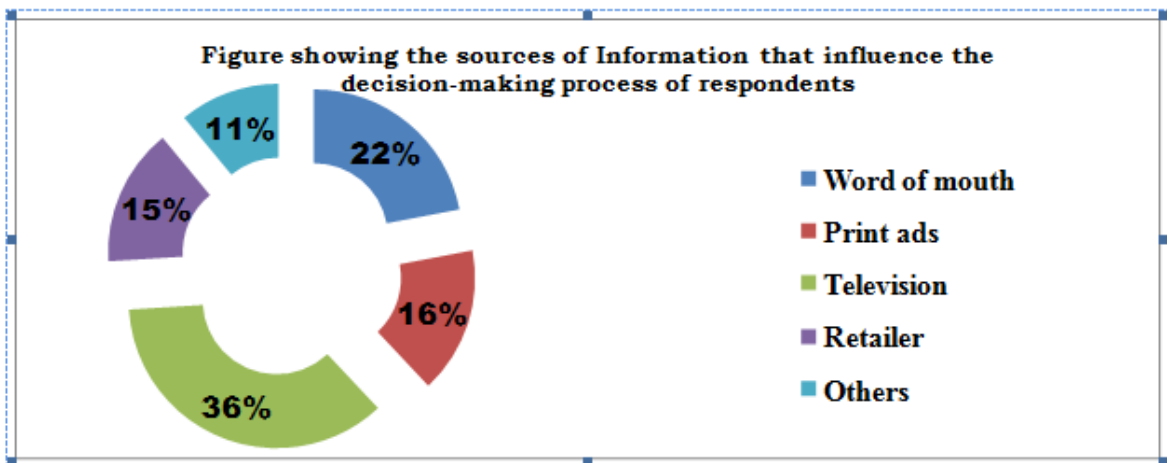
Data Analysis and Findings

FIGURE 1: Showing the sources of Information that influence the decision-making process of respondents
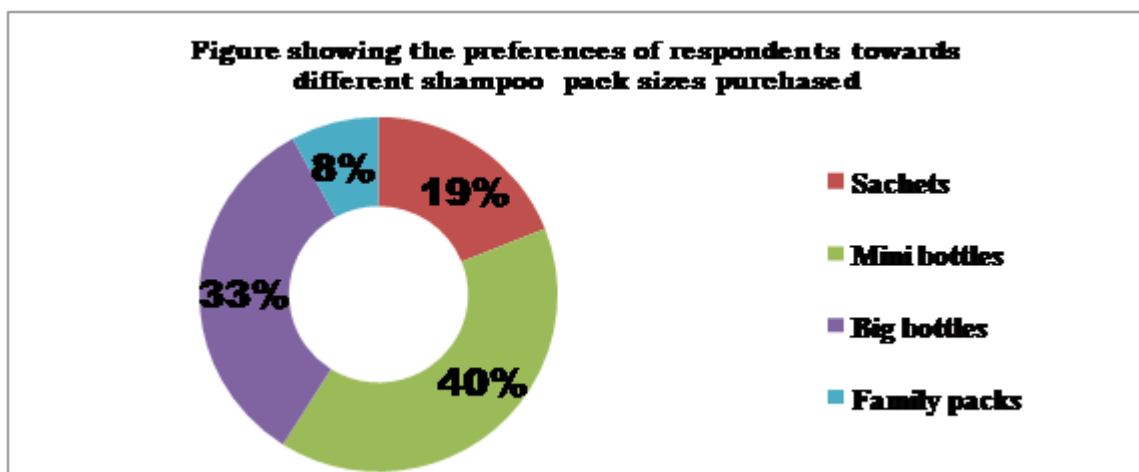

FIGURE 2: Showing the preferences of respondents towards different shampoo pack sizes purchased.
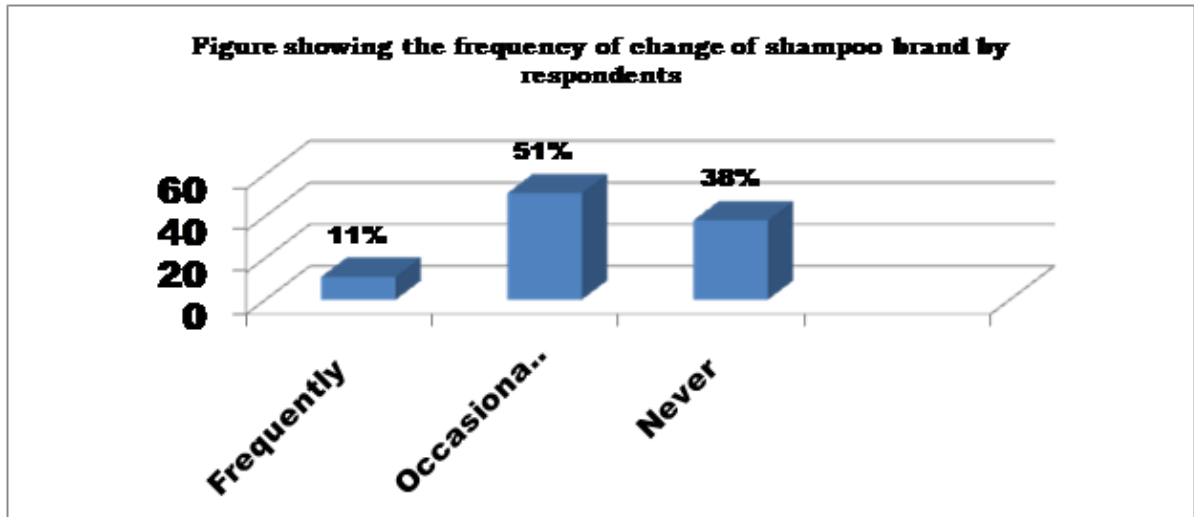
FIGURE 3: Showing the frequency of change of shampoo brand by respondents
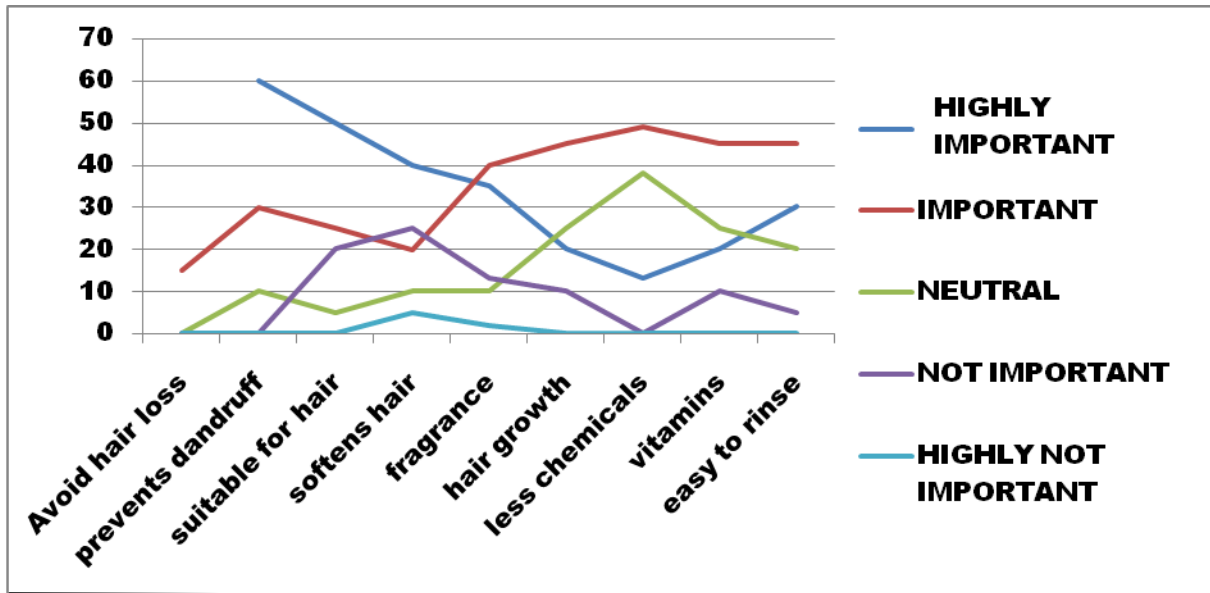

FIGURE 4 - The degree of importance of various selected attributes of shampoo product.
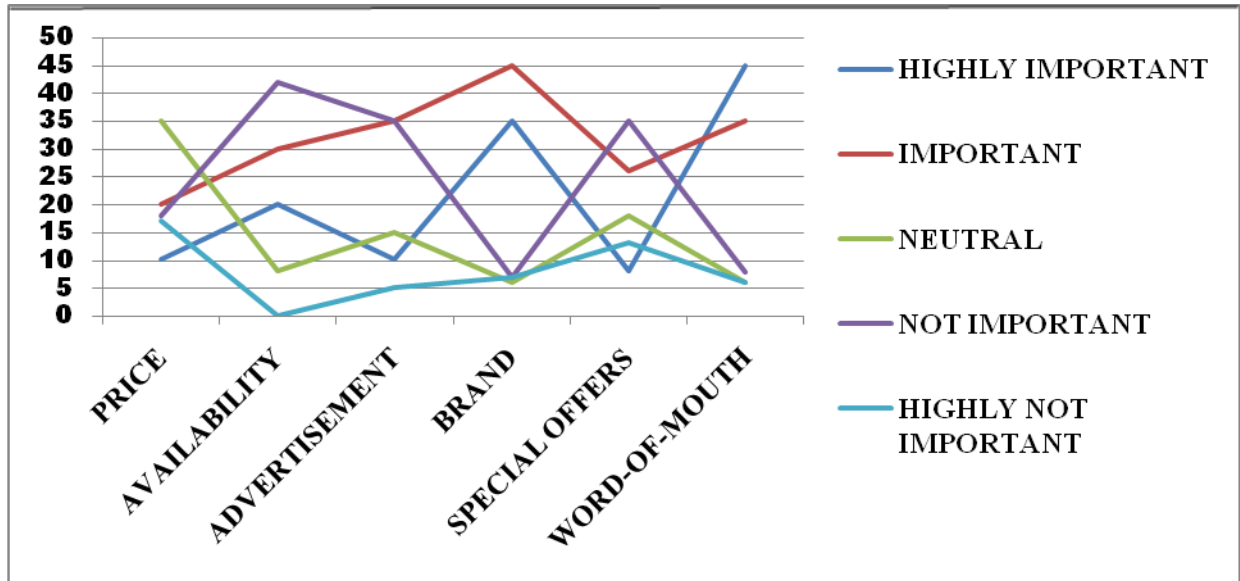
FIGURE 5- The degree of importance of the product characteristics of shampoo for the respondents.

The Study revealed that **98% of the women in Kolkata use shampoo** for their hair care while the remaining 2% continue to follow the traditional system of using soaps. It also revealed that 36% of the respondents are **influenced by the television** in their decision-making process, making it the most dependable medium by the respondents. Next is word of mouth, which corresponds to 22% of the respondents i.e. 22% of the respondents are heavily influenced by family and friends. Print advertisements correspond to 16%, while Retailers correspond to 15%. Other sources of information such as the internet and other media influence 11% of the respondents in forming their perceptions and making decisions. The **mini bottles are the most preferred shampoo pack size by the respondents**. From the survey, it can be deduced that shampoo product has a **high frequency of usage** among women in Kolkata.

The respondents have shown a tendency to be **brand loyalwith 38% of the respondents never switching over to another brand**, 51% changing their brand occasionally as 52% of the respondents were quite satisfied with their current shampoo brand and 16%being highly satisfied.11% of the respondents frequently switch to another brand of shampoo since 5% of the respondents were seen to be highly dissatisfied with their current shampoo brand and 20% being dissatisfied. Reasons of consumers for using different products and brands and their expectations from them vary from individual to individual.

Nine different reasons namely **avoid hair loss, prevents dandruff, suitable for hair, softens hair, fragrance, hair growth, less chemicals, vitamins and easy to rinse** have been considered important for this study.

The attribute of **avoiding hair loss** has been seen to be the most important attribute for the respondents, followed by prevention of dandruff and suitability for hair type. The least important attributes are vitamins present in the shampoo and the ease with which the shampoo foam can be rinsed.

The data analysis revealed that respondents give highest importance to the **brand of shampoo** and least importance to special discounts and offers available. Characteristics like **price, availability, advertisements and communication and word-of-mouth** are also relatively important.

Scope for Further Research

The respondents for the survey have been limited to women residing in Kolkata only; making the research geographically, limited.The sample size is 100, which is not sufficient to reach a conclusion but has been selected for the feasibility of the research paper.

In future the study can be taken forward among more respondents in a wider geographic area and the impact of various demographic variables on purchase and consumption pattern may be studied.

Conclusion

It is evident from a study that every consumer is unique and it is this uniqueness, which makes the job of a marketer more and more challenging. This uniqueness can be observed in the shampoo market too with respondents having different perceptions about the same product. Companies will be successful only when they tap this uniqueness and cater to it and offer products to suit this uniqueness.

Consumer behaviour cannot be predicted precisely due to various factors. Starting and ending of the survey highlight that **'Consumer is the King',** so companies must concentrate on analyzing the requirements of consumers thoroughly to satisfy and retain them.

Shampoo is a fast moving consumer good with a very high frequency of usage among women in Kolkata since women give a lot of importance to their external appearance and beauty. There are a number of shampoo brands available in the market, which offers different attributes for different reasons.

Since television is the most significant source of information for consumers, marketers must communicate effectively in order to attract customers and sell their products to the right person at the right time so that they can influence the consumers' decision-making process positively.

Thus, it has been concluded that the usage rate of shampoo among the select individuals, as well as the frequency of purchase has been high. Price, brand, availability and packaging of the product also plays an important role in buying the shampoo products.

Advertisement has a very important role in consumers buying behaviour and also in switching behaviour. It has been found that most of the consumers are not influenced by preferred gifts, extra quantity, discount, price off while making decision for buying the shampoos.

The present study is expected to provide valuable insight to marketers regarding the perceptions of women in Kolkata towards shampoo.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire -

Section A: Please tick "√" in the boxes that best describe you

1) **Age:**

☐ **20-24**
☐ **25-29**
☐ **30-34**
☐ **35-39**
☐ **40-44**

2) **Occupation :**

☐ **Student**
☐ **Homemaker**
☐ **Government**
☐ **Employed**
☐ **Others** ☐

3) Do you use shampoo?

☐ **YES**
☐ **NO**

4) Which shampoo brand are you using currently? Please specify in the box given below:

☐

5) What is the source of information about these brands?

Word of mouth

☐ **Newspapers/ Magazines**
☐ **Television**
☐ **Retailer**
☐ **Online advertisements**
☐ **Others** ☐

6) Pack size you purchase most often:

☐ **Sachets**
☐ **Mini Bottles**
☐ **Bottle/ Big Packs**
☐ **Family Packs**

7) Number of times you shampoo your hair:

☐ **Daily**
☐ **Alternate days**
☐ **Bi-weekly**
☐ **Weekly**
☐ **Occasionally**

8) How often do you change your shampoo?

☐ **Frequently**
☐ **Occasionally**
☐ **Never**

9) Level of satisfaction you get from the current shampoo brand that you are using:

☐ **Highly satisfied**
☐ **Satisfied**
☐ **Neutral**

10) For each statement please indicate the extent to which it is important or unimportant by giving a tick "√" on one answer.

PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES	DEFINITELY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	NOT IMPORTANT	DEFINITELY NOT IMPORTANT
Anti-hair loss					
Prevent dandruff					
Suitable for hair					
Softens hair					
Fragrance					
Hair growth					
Less chemicals					
Vitamins					
Conditioner					
Easy to rinse					
Oil control					

11) For each statement please indicate the extent to which it is important or unimportant by giving a tick "√" on one answer.

CUSTOMER NEEDS	DEFINITELY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	NOT IMPORTANT	DEFINITELY NOT IMPORTANT
Price					
Availability					
Advertisement					
Brand					
Special offers					
Word-of-mouth					