

Influence of Promotional Mix on Consumer Buying Behavior of Natural Cosmetic Products

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Abstract: This paper deals with an analysis of promotional mix namely advertisement, sales promotion, public relations and personal selling (direct marketing) on consumer buying behavior of natural beauty products at Chennai city. It mainly aims at exploring the various promotional activities used by the sellers in order to enhance positive perception and purchase decision of consumers towards natural cosmetic products. The research design was descriptive and analytical in nature. Data was collected using structured interview schedule method. Judgment sampling technique was used to collect data from 100 respondents. Descriptive statistics, regression and Friedman test were done to measure the buying behavior of consumers towards natural cosmetic products. Based on the findings, it was found that there is a significant and strong influence of promotional mix on consumer buying behavior of natural cosmetic products. It also found that advertisement and sales promotion are considered as a major influencing factor to prefer natural cosmetic products.

Key words: Promotional mix, buying behavior, natural cosmetic products.

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I. Introduction

Marketing is the art of selling goods and services to the ultimate consumer. According to Philip Kotler, the ingredients for a good marketing are the 4P's: product, price, promotion and placement. It is the main instrument used by the company to obtain strong position on the concerned markets. In particular, promotional mix namely advertisement, sales promotion, public relations and personal selling (direct marketing) is an effective tool to spread the information about the products and services. A promotional mix should be designed in a way that informs the target market audience about the values, and benefits, of the product or service, offered. It also changes the consumer perception and buying behavior towards products more than ever natural cosmetic products. This is because, cosmetics sector is one of the fastest growing industries in India and it has to adopt various promotional strategies to retain the loyalty of its consumers. In addition, a better marketing communication should be needed for the natural cosmetic products to prove that their products are 100% natural one. This study has been undertaken to identify the perception of consumer towards promotional mix of cosmetic products and their buying behavior based on the same.

II. Problem Definition

In the today's competitive scenario the goal of the organizations is brand awareness, product loyalty and corporate image. Promotional mix is one of the tools used by the natural cosmetic companies to influence the awareness, buying behavior and loyalty of consumers. The purpose of promotion is to reach the targeted consumers and persuade them to buy. But, it is hard to stimulate the buying behavior of consumers without having effective promotional mix. It has to coordinate all seller initiated efforts to set up channels of information and persuade the consumer to buy their goods and services. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of promotional mix on buyer decision making process of consumers towards natural cosmetic products. It also gets insight into the identification of major promotional mix on buying behavior of consumers towards natural cosmetic products.

III. Literature Review

A) Advertisement Influence on Consumer Buying Behavior

According to **Jakstiene, et al. (2008)** advertisements shape the behaviors of the people through cognition, which is the perception of a person towards the information communicated through advertisements. These cognitions are observed by the individual through his senses, perception, attention, memory, reasoning, language, etc. best way of attracting the customers is to understand the psychological cognitive aspects of the consumers. **Sharma and Sharma (2009)** found that, besides advertising, factors like company's brand, quality

of the product and company's reputation affect the sales of a company. **Kumar, et al. (2011)** found that, advertising and sales promotion together with the image of a company influence the consumer buying decision. They added that, the quality and price of a product also influences a consumer's purchase of a good.

B) Sales Promotion Influence on Consumer Buying Behavior

Chandon, Laurent, and Wansink (2000) indicated that sales promotion may be gorgeous for well promotion prone consumers for reasons beyond price savings. Many consumers change brands so that they could receive greater deals that replicate and build up their smart buyer self-perception, and these consumers are favorably promotion prone, these consumers make an attempt to try a new product or service that have been promoted. Discount play an important role in today's markets and its application among retailers has been increasing during the last years and many empirical evidences confirm the use of temporary decrease of price to increase short term sales (**Martinez, 2006**). The reduce in product prices play key parts in persuading customer's product test behavior and through this new customer can be paying attention (**Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2001**). Coupon has direct influence on increase of the sale through which consumer's tendency toward the product increases (**Meng, 2009**).

C) Personal Selling Influence on Consumer Buying Behavior

Ahlam (2006) indicated that workers in personal selling work to convince consumers to make a purchase decision and that the personal characteristics, which are characterized by a man showing great personal strength and confidence and the ability to persuade and negotiate, are instrumental to winning consumers, influencing buying, guiding decision about replacement of items and even trying to help them get unavailable commodities they are seeking to buy. **Ziad (2010)** revealed that salespersons' credibility, commitment to the promises, patience in dealing with customers and their appearance have a great impact on customer satisfaction. Retail merchants in direct sale stores have a fundamental role in gaining customers, providing them with relevant information that affects their buying decision. (**Azam et al., 2016**).

D) Public Relations Influence on Consumer Buying Behavior

Amira et al., (2013) found that the four independent variables that have been used (advertising, internet marketing, public relation, personal selling) have contributed to only 31.5 percent of the buying decision by the target consumers. **Nour et al. (2014)** studied the degree of promotion mix elements used by Jordanian shareholding Ceramic and glass production companies. The results of the study indicated that the degree of Promotion activities used in Jordanian shareholding Ceramic and glass production companies, which has ranked according to their importance are as followed: Advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, followed by publicity, and finally, public relations.

Research Gap

The above reviews deal with the promotional mix of goods and services with respect to various products. The research gap found that the above studies do not cover influence of promotional mix on consumer buying behavior of natural cosmetic products at Chennai city.

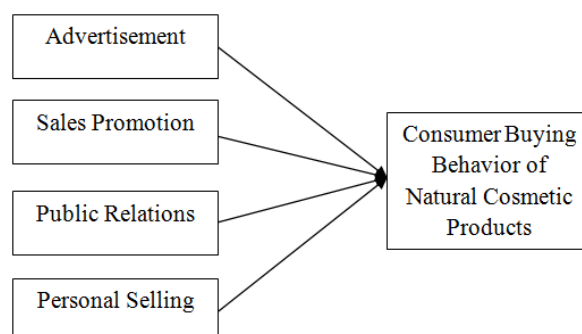
Objectives of The Study

- To examine the perception level of consumers on promotional mix of natural cosmetic products at Chennai city.
- To find out the influence of promotional mix on consumer buying behavior of natural cosmetic products at Chennai city.

Significance Of The Study

This study aids in understanding the influence of promotional mix on consumer buying behavior of natural cosmetic products at Chennai city. It also helps in identifying the perception level of consumers on promotional mix of natural cosmetic products and the major influencing promotional mix on purchase decision with respect to natural beauty products.

IV. Theoretical Framework



V. Research Methodology

The research design of the study was descriptive and analytical design. The target population of this study consists of customers of natural cosmetic products at Chennai city. The sample size was 100 customers. Judgment sampling technique has been used to collect data from the consumers who are experts in the field of natural cosmetic products. The data was collected by using primary and secondary data source. The questionnaire was segregated into three dimensions namely socio-demographic factors of the consumers, perception of consumers towards promotional mix of natural cosmetic products and buying behavior of consumer towards natural cosmetic products. The questionnaire was developed by using a nominal scale, ordinal scale and five point Likert scale. The secondary data used in the study have been collected from related articles, journals, thesis, books, newspapers and internet, etc. In this study, the statistical measures namely reliability, descriptive statistics, regression and Friedman test are used.

Hypotheses Development

On the basis of objectives of the study, the following hypotheses are developed.

H₁₁: There is a significant influence of promotional mix on consumer buying behavior of natural cosmetic products.

H₁₂: There is a significant difference in the mean rank of consumer preferences towards promotional mix of natural cosmetic products.

VI. Analysis and Interpretation

Table-1: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test

Sl. No.	Factors	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
I	Perception of Consumers towards Promotional Mix of Natural Cosmetic Products		
1.	Advertisement	5	0.953
2.	Sales Promotion	6	0.913
3.	Public Relations	5	0.899
4.	Personal Selling	5	0.864
II	Consumer Buying Behavior of Natural Cosmetic Products		0.932

From the above table, it is learnt that Cronbach's Alpha reliability for all the factors was above 80% which means that the variables produce consistent results if measurements are made repeatedly.

Table-2: Descriptive Statistics

Sl. No.	Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation
I	Perception of Consumers towards Promotional Mix of Natural Cosmetic Products		
1.	Advertisement	4.37	0.685
2.	Sales Promotion	4.24	0.702
3.	Public Relations	3.89	0.733
4.	Personal Selling	4.02	0.725
II	Consumer Buying Behavior of Natural Cosmetic Products		0.659

From the above table, the mean value of perception level of consumers on promotional mix namely advertisement, sales promotion, public relations and personal selling (direct marketing) and consumer buying behavior of natural cosmetic products are above 3.80; which means that the customers have positive perception towards promotional mix and have positive attitude towards buying behavior of natural cosmetic products.

a. Regression

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of promotional mix on consumer buying behavior of natural cosmetic products.

H₁₁: There is a significant influence of promotional mix on consumer buying behavior of natural cosmetic products.

Table-3.a: Predictor Variables of Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple R value	R Square value	Adjusted R ² value	F value	Standard Error	P value
0.986	0.972	0.972	2568.202	1.9609	0.001

Table-3.b: Coefficients between Promotional Mix and Buying Behavior of Natural Cosmetic Products

Variables	USC	SE	SC	t value	P value
(Constant)	2.522	0.356	-	7.080	0.001
Advertisement	0.547	0.061	0.576	8.960	0.001

Sales Promotion	0.315	0.046	0.454	6.838	0.005
Public Relations	0.091	0.024	0.160	3.848	0.001
Personal Selling	0.179	0.060	0.114	2.984	0.003

Dependent Variable (Y) = Consumer Buying Behavior of Natural Cosmetic Products
 Independent/Predictor Variable = Advertisement (X₁), Sales Promotion (X₂), Public Relations (X₃) and Personal Selling (X₄)

The above table revealed that consumer buying behavior towards natural cosmetic products can be predicted at R² = 0.972. In this model, the value of R² denotes that 97.2 per cent of the observed variability in consumer buying behavior of natural cosmetic products can be significantly explained by the promotional mix of natural cosmetic products. The remaining 2.8 per cent is not explained which means that the rest 2.8 per cent of the variation of consumer buying behavior towards natural cosmetic products is related to other variables which are not depicted in this model. Since the p value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 per cent level of significance. Hence the linear combination of promotional mix of natural cosmetic products is significantly related to consumer buying behavior of natural cosmetic products (F = 2568.202 and P = 0.001). The Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) equation for predicting consumer buying behavior towards natural cosmetic products is:

$$\text{Consumer Buying Behavior of Natural Cosmetic Products (Y)} = 0.547X_1 + 0.315X_2 + 0.091X_3 + 0.179X_4 + e$$

The coefficient of X₁ is 0.547 which represents the direct relationship between advertisement and buying behavior of consumers towards natural cosmetic products. The estimated positive sign indicates that for each additional unit of advertisement, there is a 0.547 unit increase in the buying behavior of consumer towards natural cosmetic products and it is significant at 1 per cent level.

The coefficient of X₂ is 0.315 which represents the direct relationship between sales promotion and buying behavior of consumers towards natural cosmetic products. The estimated positive sign indicates that for each additional unit of advertisement, there is a 0.315 unit increase in the buying behavior of consumer towards natural cosmetic products and it is significant at 1 per cent level.

The coefficient of X₃ is 0.091 which represents the direct relationship between public relations and buying behavior of consumers towards natural cosmetic products. The estimated positive sign indicates that for each additional unit of advertisement, there is a 0.091 unit increase in the buying behavior of consumer towards natural cosmetic products and it is significant at 1 per cent level.

The coefficient of X₄ is 0.179 which represents the direct relationship between personal selling and buying behavior of consumers towards natural cosmetic products. The estimated positive sign indicates that for each additional unit of advertisement, there is a 0.179 unit increase in the buying behavior of consumer towards natural cosmetic products and it is significant at 1 per cent level.

b. Friedman Test

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean rank of consumer preferences towards promotional mix of natural cosmetic products.

H₁₂: There is a significant difference in the mean rank of consumer preferences towards promotional mix of natural cosmetic products.

Table-4: Consumer Preferences towards Promotional Mix of Natural Cosmetic Products

Promotional Mix	Mean Rank	Chi-square value	P value
Advertisement	1.41	464.809	0.001
Sales Promotion	2.18		
Public Relations	3.62		
Personal Selling	2.79		

Since P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 per cent level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is a significant difference among the consumer preferences towards promotional mix of natural cosmetic products. Based on mean rank, the most significant promotional mix which influences the consumer to prefer natural cosmetic product is Advertisement (1.41) followed by Sales Promotion (2.18), Personal Selling (2.79) and Public Relations (3.62).

VII. Findings

Based on the descriptive analysis, it is clearly understood from the mean value that the consumers have positive perception towards promotional mix of natural cosmetic brands and they have positive buying behavior towards natural cosmetic products. From the regression model, it is found that there is significant impact of

promotional mix on buying behavior of consumers towards natural cosmetic products. From the Friedman test, it is proven that the advertisement and sales promotion are considered as the major influencing promotional mix to prefer natural cosmetic products.

VIII. Suggestions

To get success in cosmetic marketing, it is mandatory for the cosmetic companies to ensure possible combination of promotional mix to reach all levels of consumers and to obtain wide marketing area. They have to produce the advertisement which should answer all customers questions related to the product and allow the company to reach a large number of people effectively. The main purpose of public relations is to build a positive public image for a company. It often seems to be a more credible tool of selling natural cosmetic products if the publicity is achieved through right media like popular newspapers and magazines. The sales promotion tool used by the natural cosmetic company should stimulate the consumer purchases without going for judgment or comparison with other products. The company should train expert sellers if it is going for personal selling strategy. Because, personal selling serves as a highly interactive tool which exchanges lot of detailed information about the goods and services between buyer and seller and it build-up strong relationship between them in long run.

IX. Conclusion

The promotional mix today not only include advertising, sales promotion, public relations and personal selling (direct marketing) but it also consist of various promotional gimmicks such as dirigibles at football games, on pack offers, coupons, sweepstakes and games. Earlier the main goal of promotion used to be longer product awareness. But now the scenario is changed due to competitive products entering the market. It is also renowned that there is a revolution in the buying behavior of consumers towards cosmetic products i.e., consumers consider the natural cosmetics as essential items for daily use, rather than as luxury products for indulgence. Thus, without adopting proper promotional mix it is very hard for the natural cosmetic products to survive in the market. It is obligatory for the natural cosmetic products to prove their products a natural, quality and absence of environmental deterioration through appropriate communication media. To enhance their sales and purchase decision of the consumers, they have to espouse new sales promotion tools and effective advertisement.

Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited to influence of promotional mix on consumer buying behavior of natural cosmetic products at Chennai city.
- The consumers are limited to 100.

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