

## A STUDY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR OF FACIAL CREAMS IN VANIYAMBADI TOWN



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### Introduction

#### A Study of Consumer Behaviour

Our Society is a study in diversity. We see diversity among Consumers, Among marketers, among customs, among nations, even among consumer behavior theoretical perspectives. However, despite prevailing diversity in our society, there are also many similarities. Segmenting target audiences on the basis of such similarities makes it possible for marketers to design marketing strategies with which consumers will identify.

The study of Consumer behavior enables marketers to understand and predict consumer behavior in the market place; It also promote understanding of the role that consumption plays in the lives of individuals. Consumer behavior is the study of how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources [i.e., time, money and effort] on consumption related items.

Consumer behavior is defined as the behavior that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products, services and ideas that they expect will satisfy their needs. A study of consumer behavior involves ``how individuals, groups and organizations select, use and dispose of goods, service, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires``<sup>1</sup>

Consumer behavior is concerned not only with what consumers buy, but also with why they buy it, when and where and how they buy it and how often they buy it. It is concerned with learning the specific meanings that products hold for consumers. Consumer research takes place at every phase of the consumption process; before the purchase, during the purchase and after the purchase. Consumer has been defined as ``a social movement seeking to argument the rights and powers of the buyers in relation to sellers`` One of the important reasons for business to arrive is because of the consumer who buys product by paying money The consumer is the most important case in the wheel of the economic trade cycle. Philip Kotler. 2000. Marketing Management New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Pvt.Ltd.P.160.

The study falls in the broad filed ``Marketing`` the broad area of the study is `Consumer Behaviour` The theme of the study is consumer behaviour with regard to facial cream

The term consumer is often used to describe two different kind of consuming entites: the personal consumer and the organizational consumer. The personal consumer buys goods and services for his or her own use (e.g., shaving cream or shampoo), for the use of the household ( a VCR ), or as a gift for a friend ( a book ). In each of these contexts, the goods are bought for final use by individuals, who are referred to as end users or ultimate consumers. The second category of consumer - the organizational consumer - includes profit and not-for-profit businesses, government agencies (local, state and national) and institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals, prisons), all of which must buy products, equipment and services in order to run their organizations.

Manufacturing companies must buy the raw materials and other components needed to manufacture and sell their own products; service companies must buy the equipment necessary to render the services they

Sell; government agencies must buy the office products needed to operate their agencies; institutions must buy the materials they need to maintain themselves and their populations.

Despite the importance of both categories of consumers, individuals and organizations, who purchases for his or her own; personal use or for household use. End-use consumption is perhaps the most pervasive of all types of consumer behaviour, for it involves every individual, of every age and background, in the role of either buyer, user, or both.

The person who makes a product purchase is not always the user, or the only user, of the product in question. Nor is the purchaser necessarily the person who makes the product decision. A mother may buy toys for her children (who are the users); She may buy food for dinners (and be one of the users); she may buy a handbag and be the only user. She may buy a magazine that one of her teenagers requested or rent a video that her husband requested, or she and her husband together may buy a station wagon that they both selected. Clearly, buyers are not always the users, or the only users, of the products they buy, nor do they necessarily make the product selection decision themselves.

Marketers must decide at whom to direct their promotional efforts: the buyer or the user. For some products, they must identify the person who is most likely to influence the decision- who may be neither the buyer nor the user. To become a successful marketer, a study on the target consumer's wants, likes and dislikes, their motivation and perception, attitudes, preferences and experiences and their habits and behavior should be pursued. Therefore, it is necessary for the business firms to satisfy the needs and wants of the costumers by improved marketing methods, effective distributive systems and good understanding of the buyer behavior.

### **Definition of Consumer**

In general, the concept “consumer” means a buyer. The Random House Dictionary defines consumer as a <sup>1</sup>“person who uses a commodity or service”. According to Markin <sup>2</sup>“consumer is a person who uses goods or services to satisfy his needs rather than to resell them or produce other goods with them”. Richert states that <sup>3</sup>“consumer is one who buys a commodity for use rather than for resale”. According to Buskirk “a customer is an individual who has tastes, desires

### **Importance of Consumers**

Only after the World War II especially from 1950 onwards, businessmen realized that if they want to stay in the business they must offer goods and services according to the needs and wants of the consumers. In India, it is only during the last few year business firms have awakened to the need for improved marketing methods, efficient distribution system and for better understanding of consumer and their behavior. This is mostly due to growing competition and urgent need to compete aggressively in the world market. The survival, growth and success of a firm depends upon understanding the consumer and delivering the goods or services more effectively and efficiently than its competitors.

### **Definition of Consumer Behaviour**

According to <sup>4</sup>Markin consumer behavior is “a foundation of what her is, what he has been; what others around him are doing, thinking and talking about; what he has witnessed,

experienced and felt; his expectation about today and tomorrow and for that matter nearly everything else constituting his environment”.

<sup>4</sup>Leon G. Shiffman and LL Kanuk define consumer behavior as , “the behavior that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of product and services that they expect will satisfy their needs”.

According to Rao, <sup>5</sup>“consumers behavior is neither emotional nor rational but both. Both emotion and common sense influence the shopping decisions of a consumers”.

Webster, Frederico, F. 1974 Marketing for Managers, p.19.

Therefore consumer behavior is the study of the processes the consumer used to make purchase decisions as well as the use and disposal of the purchased goods or services.

### Why the Field of Consumer Behaviour Developed

There are a number of reasons for the study of consumer behavior developed as a separate marketing discipline. Marketers had long noted that consumers did not always act or react as marketing theory suggested they would.

The size of the consumer market in this country was vast and constantly expanding. Billions of dollars were being spent on goods and services by tens of millions of people. Consumer preferences were changing and becoming highly diversified. Even in industrial markets, where needs for goods and services were always more homogeneous than in consumer markets, buyers were exhibiting diversified preferences and less predictable purchase behavior.

As marketing researchers began to study the buying behavior of consumers, they soon realized that, despite a sometimes “me too” approach to fads and fashions, many consumers rebelled at using the identical products everyone else used. Instead, they preferred differentiated products that they felt reflected their own special needs, personalities and lifestyles. To better meet the needs of specific groups of consumers, most marketers adopted a policy of **market segmentation**, which called for the division of their total potential markets into smaller, homogeneous segments for which they could design specific products and promotional campaigns. They also used promotional techniques to vary the image of their products so that they would be perceived as better fulfilling the specific needs of certain target segments—a process now known as **positioning**. Other reasons for the developing interest in consumer behavior included the rate of new product development, growth of the consumer movement, public policy concerns, environmental concerns, and the growth of both nonprofit marketing and international marketing.

Indeed, a major stumbling block to many international marketing efforts has been the general lack of familiarity with the needs, preferences and consumption habits of consumers in foreign markets. Marketers now use cross-cultural consumer research studies as the basis for product development and promotional strategies to meet the needs of targeted foreign consumers.

### Ethics in Marketing

Consumer behavior has become an integral part of strategic market planning. The belief that ethics and social responsibility should also be integral components of every marketing decision is embodied in a revised marketing concept—the societal marketing concept— which calls on marketers to fulfill the needs of their target markets in ways that improve society as a whole.

There is no universally accepted definition of the term ethics. A study of ethical philosophies reveals two different groups of theories: teleological theories and deontological theories. Teleology deals with the moral worth of a behavior as determined by its consequences. One’s

choice is based on what is best for everyone involved. Utilitarianism, a teleological theory, is summarized best by the notion of “the greatest good for the greatest number”. Deontology deals with the methods and intentions involved in a particular behavior. Deontological theories focus on the results of a particular action, and they tend to place greater weight on personal and social values than on economic values. Of the two major groups of ethical philosophies, however, deontological theories are favored over teleological theories by most moral philosophers today. Deontology places greater weight on personal and social values than on economic values.

For marketers, deontology is best encapsulated in a revised golden rule; do not do unto others what you would not have others do unto you. Although ethics and morality are usually learned early in life, the explicit study of ethical issues within a business school curriculum serves to focus the attention of future marketers on moral issues and ethical behavior in the market place.

### **The Consumer Movement**

In 1962, President John Kennedy declared that consumers had the rights to safety, to be informed, and to be heard. This consumer’s Bill of rights (subsequently expanded to include the rights to recourse and redress and to a physical environment that enhances the quality of life) set the stage for a consumer movement that started around 1964, triggered by widespread consumer discontent with shoddy merchandise, inadequate warranties, arrogant marketers and widespread abuses in the marketplace.

The Consumer movement tried to correct the imbalance that had developed between buyers and sellers. Consumers complained of poorly made, hazardous products. In response to consumer complaints, Congress enacted several major pieces of legislation designed to protect consumers and dozens more were enacted by state and local governments. Ultimately, consumers express their approval or disapproval of a company’s policies by their actions in the marketplace. In an effort to systematize such marketplace activity, some consumer groups have urged their members and other consumers to take concerted action against specific marketers in the form of consumer boycotts. The purpose of a boycott, defined as the concerted refusal by a group of consumers to do business with one or more companies, is to express disapproval of certain company policies and to attempt to coerce the target companies to modify those policies.

Under appropriate circumstances, consumer boycotts can be very effective. For example, a consumer boycott by animal rights advocates resulted in the gradual elimination of product testing on animals by cosmetics companies. For a boycott to be successful, the consumer group must accurately assess the commitment of the target company to the disputed policy and its own ability to generate sufficient economic pressure and negative publicity to accomplish its objective effectively.

### **The Need and Importance of the Study of Consumer Behaviour**

The field of consumer behavior holds great interest for us as consumers, as marketers and students of human behavior. As consumers, we benefit from insights into our own consumption related decisions; what we buy, why we buy, how we buy, and the promotional influences that persuade to buy. As marketers and future marketers, it is important for us to recognize why and how individuals make their consumption decisions, so that we can make better strategic marketing decisions.

As students of human behavior, we are concerned with understanding consumer behavior; with gaining insights into why individuals act in certain consumption related ways and with learning what internal and external influences impel them to act as they do.

Consumer behavior was a relatively new field of study in the mid-to late 1960s. With no history or body of research of its own. Consumer behavior is interdisciplinary; it is based on concepts and theories about people that have been developed by scientists in such diverse disciplines as Psychology, Sociology, Social Psychology, Cultural anthropology and Economics. Consumer research is the methodology used to study consumer behavior.

Consumer research designed to predict consumer behavior is called positivism; research designed to understand consumption behavior is called interpretivism. Rather than take a polar approach to the study of consumer behavior, it explores both approaches, because it recognizes the dual importance of both understanding and prediction in making strategic marketing decisions.

### Objectives of the Study

Against this background a study was designed with the following objectives:

1. To find out the number of students who use the Facial Creams.
2. To study whether the income of the family affects the purchasing power of the users of the Cream.
3. To understand whether the creams are not used due to side effects.
4. To find out whether the uses of Fair and Lovely cream will switch over to other brands.
5. To find out which cream is mostly used by respondents.

### Hypothesis Tested

As a part of the above objectives, the following hypotheses are to be tested based on the data gathered for the study.

- H1 Arts groups students use facial cream than the science students.
- H2 Using of cream is not related to the income of the family.
- H3 Creams are not used due to side effects.
- H4 Most users of the cream will not switch over to other creams.

### Research Methodology

#### The Sample of the Subjects for the Study

The study uses primary data collected by the researcher. The universe for the collection of primary data were the College students between the age of 18 to 21 who were studying in Marudhar Kesari Jain College for Women in Vaniyambadi town (Vellore District). Convenience sampling method was adopted because it was considered most appropriate for this type of study where it was important that student responded completely to questions. However, the respondents were not contacted on any pre-determined convenience plan and hence the sampling had a certain element of randomness. 85 students from 7 departments all are female students and socio economic conditions were covered in this study.

### Questionnaire

To collect the primary data the questionnaire was designed. It was meant for college students to elicit information relating to the viewing behavior, discriminating ability, understanding capacity, recalling ability of the advertisement given in TV commercials. The socio-economic background was collected and the students were informed about the purpose of the study and the value of their co-operation in this regard.

**Statistical Tools Used**

Simple statistical tools like chi-square test and standard error were used for the analysis. Percentages were used to quantify the responses of different age groups. The chi-square test of significance was used to test the hypotheses. Standard error was used to find out the reasons for not using the creams.

**Implication of the Study**

The findings of the study can be taken as the basis for further research by those academics and businessmen who are interested to know more about the consumer behavior of college students in a more analytical way. Since the study is probably the rate of its kind among the academic researchers, there is adequate scope to test its findings in other areas and with college students of other age groups.

**Limitations of the Study**

Only 85 students taken for the study among 860 students in the Marudhar Kesari Jain College for Women, Vaniyambadi.

The consumer satisfaction was not tested in depth.

**Table - Consumer Behavior of Respondents Regarding switching over to another Creams**

Brand Name	Switch Over	Not Switch Over	Total
Fair & Lovely	19	27	46
Fair Ever	5	3	8
Fair Glow	1	-	1
Ponds Cream	2	5	7
Emami	2	3	5
Mythili’s Fairness Cream	-	1	1
Lacto Calamine	-	1	1
Vicco Turmeric	2	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>72</b>

H4: Most users of the cream will not switch over to other cream. Among the sample students(85 students) only 43% of them expressed that they will switch over to the other cream, if it is better than the existing cream, but 57% of them are not ready to do so. Hence the hypothesis accepted.

And it was also observed that the user of Ponds cream only two out of seven of them changed the cream and not others. Among Fair & Lovely cream users only 41% have change to other Cream since it was better.

**Summary of the Findings**

The Study reveals the following results.

**Factors Influencing the Purchase of Personal Needs**

The study involves analyzing the degree of impact on TV advertisements, magazines, family, friends and relatives towards the purchase of Personal needs like facial creams. The users are influenced by many sources. 9.7% of Mothers influence and suggests cream to their daughters, Student gets Fathers Suggestion is 8.3%, TV influence 27.8% of them, 19.4% of them are influenced by their friends, 20.8% of suggestions were got from other sources and 13.9% of them decide them on their own.

**Relative Importance of Different Factors in Purchase Decisions**

The results from the study on the importance given to various factors like that keeps face fresh, skin soft, fairness and good smell. The results are, very high importance are given to the

freshness 27%, skin soft 10% fairness 10% and good smell 15%. They are interested in purchasing branded products with latest utility and freshness.

### Attitude of the College Girls towards Buying Practices

1. The study reveals that out of 85 students, nearly 37.6% of respondents are from commerce department, 9.4% are from Computer Science department, 17.6% are from Computer Application department, 10.6% are from Corporate Secretaryship department, 11.8% are from Business Administration department, the same 11.8% are from Mathematics department and 1.2% are from Psychology department.
2. Out of 85 samples taken for the study 85% of them are using the creams and 15% are not using the cream. Among the 85% of the users Arts group students are 66% and Science group students are 34%. Most of the science students are using facial creams than the Art Students.
3. It is noted from the study that 23.5% of respondents age is 18 years, 28.2% of respondents 19 years, 21.2% of respondents are 20 years, 27.1% of respondents fall in the age of 21 years
4. Among 85 College Students survey 72 of them are using the facial creams. 23.6% were used by 18 years, 29.2% were used by 19 years, 20.8% were used by 20 years and 26.4% were used by 21 years old students.
5. The income distribution shows that 16.5% of the respondents fall income group of Rs.2000 and below. 12.9% of them having income of Rs.2001-4000, 28.2% belongs to the income group of Rs.4001-6000. 16.5% fall in the group of Rs.6001-8000 and 25.9% of the respondents comes under the income group of Rs.8000 and above
6. An analysis shows that the users and the non-users of the facial creams. That is 84.7% of the respondent were using the creams and the 15.3% of the respondents were not using the creams because of some reasons.
7. The study reveals that student's interest is more on the Fair & Lovely cream that is at 55.6%, For Fair Ever is 6.9%, Fair Glow is 9.7%, Ponds Cream is 9.7%, Emami is 2.8%, Mythili's Fairness Cream is 2.8%, Lacto Calamine is 4.2% and Vicco Turmeric is 8.3%. It is clear that the users of Emami Cream and mythili's Fairness cream are very few numbers. And the users of Fair and Lovely are in large number.
8. So many reasons are collected from the respondents for using of the facial cream. 66.7% of respondents were using the facial cream because of the quality of the cream, 5.6% of respondents were using the facial cream because of the quality discount, 11.17% of respondents were using the facial cream because of the premium, 9.7% of respondents were using the facial cream because of the reasonable price and 6.9% of respondents were using the facial cream because it is lasting for many days. Most of the respondents are using the facial cream because of the good quality of the product.
9. Among the sample studied ( 85 students) 13 students are not using the facial cream . 69.2% of the students were not using the cream because of side effect; 7.7% of students were not using because of additional expenditure and 3 % of students were not having the habit of using cream.
10. On the basis of the language the students were distributed, As only Tamil, Urdu, Telugu and Kannada Students were covered. There 60% of students are Tamil, 14.1% are Urdu, 23.5% are Telugu and 2.4% are Kannada students.
11. Users are impressed to buy the product in many ways. For Example, due to the good slogan, the character, the portrayed, quality of product and some other features. Among the user of

- 13.9% of them influenced by slogan, 30.6% of users influenced by character, 38.9% of users influenced by product merit and 16.7% of users influenced by some other features of creams
12. It is noted from the study that the opinion of the users of the cream has been collected . 80.6% of respondents expressed that they believe the cream has made them fair. And 19.4% of respondent do not find any change in their skin
  13. The users are influenced by many sources. 9.7% of Mothers influence and suggests cream to their daughters, Students gets Fathers suggestion is 8.3% TV influence 27.8% of them, 19.4% of them are influenced by their friends, 20.8% of suggestions were got from other sources and 13.9% of them decide them on their own.
  14. The facial cream is used by the respondent in number of days is, 26.4% of respondent used for 15 days, 55% of respondent used for 20 days, 12.5% of respondent used for 30 days, 8.3% of respondent used the cream more than a month
  15. How many times the respondents use the cream in a day was 68.1% of students used the cream only once, 25 % students used the cream twice and 6.9% of students used the cream more than twice in a day.
  16. Facial Cream users followed some method for using the cream 84.7% of them use the cream before powder, 9.7% of user use cream only and no powder, 5.6% of user the cream with powder.
  17. The users of the cream are not only using it for their face but also to other parts of the body. 84.7% of them use the cream only to face 15.3% of them apply the cream to their face , hand and neck.
  18. The study reveals that there is no relationship between the income of the family and using of the facial cream by the students. Out of 85 sample studied 85% were the users of the cream and 15% were does not use the cream. Among the ( 85%) 60% of them of the users, fall between the monthly income of Rs.4001- Rs.6000. When it is compared to the non-users of creams (15%) 45% of them are fall in the income group of less than Rs.6000 and 55% of the higher income group. It is clear that income is not related to the using of creams.
  19. The non-users of the cream are due to side effect. There is relationship between the use and the side effects. Among 23.1% of the non-user of the cream, 69.2% of them are expressed their opinion for not using the cream is due to side effect and 8.8% says it is an additional expenditure and 23.1% say that they are not accustomed to it.
  20. Out of 85 students study 43% of them expressed that they will switch over to the other cream, if it is better than the existing cream, but 57% of them are not ready to do so.

The user of Ponds cream only two out of seven of them changed the cream and not others. Among Fair& Lovely cream users only 41% have change to other cream since it was better. The study under took to find out he reason why some students are not using the facial cream. Among the sample studied 13 members were not using the cream. Among them nine members expressed that they are not using it due to the side effects.

### **Concluding Observation**

Taking the findings of the study as basis, the following concluding observations emerge.

- It is true that nowadays college girls make purchase decision in all aspect. They also influence to a great extent, the buying decisions of others like friends, relatives and family members.
- A TV advertisement is a very important factor where most of the respondents are influenced by it. It plays a vital role in influencing them in making purchase of personal needs. So it

would be better for the marketer to concentrate more on TV Advertisements, which in turn improve the purchase of the college girls.

- The study reveals that, college girls are more interested in buying durable, fresh, branded and latest design products. Marketers are advised to condition the product according to this situation in order to reach the target group. It is also suggested to provide quality products.
- The research design should be improved by developing richer depended variables. For example the experimental method may be adopted and student may be given money to spend buying their chosen products.
- Future research should be designed to correlate other variable with student's responses to television commercials.
- A chance may be given to the non-user of cream to use it and know their opinion
- An in-depth analysis on the nature of skin and the using of cream need to considered for the future study.

To conclude, the marketer should consider the attitude of teenage students, while making and marketing their products, because nowadays they are playing a major role in buying the products, which in turn improve the country's economic activities as a whole.

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