



Demographic and Socio-Economic Status of Cosmetic Buyers and Their Level of Awareness Towards Herbal Cosmetic Products in Coimbatore City

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ABSTRACT

Herbal cosmetics have been into usage from time immemorial. The Indian cosmetics industry is growing in terms of product development and marketing. The preference of Indian consumers is changing from the 'merely functional' products to more 'advanced and specialized' herbal cosmetic items as the lifestyle of the people across India are changing, due to socio-culture, economic and other influences. This paper focuses on demographic, socio-economic status and women consumers' awareness towards herbal cosmetic products available in Coimbatore city.

KEYWORDS

Consumer awareness, Herbal cosmetics, Demographic profile

Introduction

Herbal cosmetics have been into usage from time immemorial. Herbs have been used in maintaining and enhancing beauty. Plants and plant extracts in cosmetics are used for purposes such as moisturizing, whitening, colouring, sunscreen, antioxidant, immune-stimulant, cleansing, etc. The main advantage of herbal cosmetics is that the natural content in the herbs does not have any side effects on the human body; instead they enrich the body with nutrients and other useful minerals. Some common herbal cosmetics include creams, face packs, hair oils and colouring, shampoos, lipsticks, perfumes, soaps, etc. As chemicals in cosmetics produce harmful side effects, consumer preferences are shifting towards herbal cosmetics. This information has provoked the researcher to a detailed study on the socio economic status and women consumers' level of awareness towards of herbal cosmetics.

Statement of the Problem

Major users of herbal cosmetic are girls and women who are very much peculiar about their skin type and requirement. Synthetic cosmetic being harsh and prone to more side-effects and herbal cosmetic is quickly replacing it and gaining a lot of popularity. As a result it has created an enormous market for itself both domestic as well as export market. Demographic, social and psychological factors affect the way final consumers make choices and can help a manufacture understand how people use the decision process. Within the beauty market and in the consumption of the cosmetic products the age remains an important factor. The young and working women are more open to the use of cosmetic products compared to the older generation. To understand the market potential of herbal cosmetics in Coimbatore city, this study highlights the demographic and socio-economic status of women herbal consumers hailing in Coimbatore city.

Kotler and Keller (2009) comment that personal characteristics also influence a consumer's behaviour. Examples of personal characteristics include the consumer's age and stage in the life cycle, occupation, economic circumstances, personality, self-concept, lifestyle and values. Family, social roles and statuses are some of the social factors that, in addition to culture, affect consumer behaviour.

Aim of the Study

This research article aims to explore demographic and socio-economic status of cosmetic buyers and their level of awareness towards herbal cosmetic products in Coimbatore city.

Research Methodology

The increasing market size in Coimbatore city is the direct re-

sult of the changing socio-economic status of the consumers in this region, especially among women. Thus, Coimbatore city is selected as the study area. This studies both exploratory and description research in nature. The sample in this study is mainly from members of the population were chose based on conveniently available to provide information. Field survey was conducted in five geographical division of Coimbatore city with a small sample population of 75 respondents.

Level of Awareness towards Herbal Cosmetics

These days a number of beauty products that are using the herbal formulae and Ayurveda concepts have got lot of attention and have been witnessing a huge rise in demand not only nationally but also on international arena. Based on this concept the study has analyzed the respondents' level of awareness towards the herbal cosmetics products.

The Indian electronic media i.e. satellite television as well as print media have played an astonishing role in spreading awareness about the herbal cosmetic products and developing fashion consciousness among the Indian consumers. Due to changes in the lifestyle, impact of education, process of urbanisation, role of masses media have changed the attitude of women and increased awareness about their looks which resulted in emerging trend of visiting beauty parlours to enhance and maintain their beauty. Thus, the following table aims to analyse the women consumers' level of awareness towards the herbal cosmetics products with 10 variables.

CUSTOMERS OPINION ON SOURCES OF INFORMATION THAT CREATED AWARENESS ON HERBAL COSMETICS

Sl. No	Particulars	No. of Respondents (N=1350)	Proportionate Percentage
1.	Beauticians	191	18.09
2.	Doctors	136	12.88
3.	Shopkeepers	48	4.55
4.	Friends	452	42.80
5.	Media	221	20.93
6.	Self	103	9.75
7.	General Stores	64	6.06
8.	Exclusive Shops	39	3.69
9.	Malls	56	5.30
10.	Cosmetic Centre	40	3.79

Source: Primary Data

From the above table it has been inferred that, 42.80 per cent of respondents have sourced information about herbal cosmetic products from their friends. Followed by, 20.93 per cent of consumers are influenced by media advertisements and 18.09 per cent are influenced by the beauticians. Similarly, 12.88 per cent of consumers have said that their doctors recommended them to use herbal cosmetic products. Consequently, 9.75 per cent of respondents gained information by their self-effort and 6.06 per cent of respondents sourced in-

formation from general stores. Followed by, 5.30 per cent of respondents came to know about herbal cosmetic products in the shopping malls and 4.55 5.30 per cent of respondents are well-informed by the shopkeepers. Moreover, 3.79 per cent of consumers sourced information from cosmetics centers and 3.69 per cent of consumers gained knowledge about herbal cosmetic products through the advertisements of exclusive shops.

TABLE SHOWING WOMEN CUSTOMERS' LEVEL OF AWARENESS TOWARDS HERBAL COSMETICS

Sl. No	Variables	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Sum	Mean	Rank
1.	Herbal Healing	278 (26.32)	287 (27.18)	323 (30.59)	120 (11.36)	48 (4.55)	3795	3.59	1
2.	Solutions for Problems	103 (9.75)	277 (26.23)	389 (36.84)	215 (20.36)	72 (6.82)	3292	3.12	10
3.	Herbal Ingredients	119 (11.27)	268 (25.38)	405 (38.35)	160 (15.15)	104 (9.85)	3306	3.13	9
4.	Authenticated Brands (Available in the Market)	224 (21.21)	238 (22.54)	371 (35.13)	159 (15.06)	64 (6.06)	3567	3.38	4
5.	Product Quality	190 (17.99)	397 (37.59)	342 (32.39)	79 (7.48)	48 (4.55)	3770	3.57	2
6.	Product Usage	174 (16.48)	303 (28.69)	340 (32.20)	160 (15.15)	79 (7.48)	3501	3.32	6
7.	Product Variety	120 (11.36)	302 (28.61)	396 (37.50)	167 (15.81)	71 (6.72)	3401	3.22	7
8.	Price Ranges	221 (20.93)	287 (27.18)	310 (29.36)	150 (14.20)	88 (8.33)	3571	3.38	4
9.	Price of Sales	183 (17.33)	254 (24.05)	317 (30.02)	191 (18.09)	111 (10.51)	3375	3.20	8
10.	Manufacturer of the Product	270 (25.57)	192 (18.18)	388 (36.75)	103 (9.75)	103 (9.75)	3591	3.40	3

Source: Primary Data

The above data analysis indicates the consumers' level of awareness towards the herbal cosmetics products. It has been inferred that majority i.e. on an average of 3.59 respondents have stated that they are aware of the medicinal values of the herbal cosmetics; it is ranked in first position. Consequently, they are well aware of the features such as product quality, product manufacturing and price ranges & authenticated brands of the herbal cosmetic products. These variables are rated in second, third and fourth places with an average score of 3.57, 3.40 and 3.38, respectively. Consumers have gained information about the product usage, variety and price of sales. These variables are placed in sixth, seventh and eighth

positions with the mean score of 3.32, 3.22 and 3.20, respectively. Further, on an average of 3.13 respondents are aware of herbal ingredients incorporated in the product, it is ranked in ninth position. Similarly, mean of 3.12 respondents have opined that they know about the solutions for skin / hair or other problems and it is placed in the tenth rank.

From the above data analysis it has been observed that majority i.e. on an average of 3.59 respondents have stated that they are aware of the medicinal values of the herbal cosmetics; it is ranked in first position.

H1: Socio-economic status of the women consumers significantly influences their level of awareness towards herbal cosmetic products.

CUSTOMERS' LEVEL OF AWARENESS TOWARD HERBAL COSMETICS PRODUCTS AND THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Variables	Age		Educational Qualification		Occupation		Marital Status		Income	
	Chi-Value	Sig	Chi-Value	Sig	Chi-Value	Sig	Chi-Value	Sig	Chi-Value	Sig
Herbal healing	149.013	.000	146.650	.000	217.298	.000	210.701	.000	78.905	.000
Solutions for skin / hair or other problems	152.085	.000	332.583	.000	187.786	.000	124.874	.000	100.253	.000
Herbal ingredients	144.668	.000	137.720	.000	130.037	.000	17.023	.002	128.295	.000
Authenticated Brands (available in the market)	147.440	.000	186.397	.000	106.814	.000	37.018	.000	83.629	.000
Product quality	161.577	.000	173.301	.000	218.773	.000	80.046	.000	68.039	.000
Product usage	178.146	.000	114.004	.000	404.891	.000	19.023	.001	95.633	.000
Product variety	279.632	.000	185.799	.000	93.644	.000	65.728	.000	101.233	.000
Price ranges	125.570	.000	119.982	.000	113.665	.000	26.636	.000	74.428	.000
Price of sales	101.806	.000	141.724	.000	58.488	.000	1.783	.776	158.012	.000
Manufacturer of the Product	107.590	.000	123.155	.000	184.802	.000	6.446	.168	108.570	.000

Source: Primary Data

Based on the cross-sectional analysis and hypothesis test results it has been concluded that socio-economic status of the women consumers i.e. their age, educational status, occupation, marital status and income levels significantly influence their level of awareness towards herbal cosmetic products.

Cosmetics enter into women's lives on a daily basis. The act of beautifying physical appearance not only becomes a distinct way to express one's image but also a pattern to show respect to other people. Based on this concept it is hypothetically believed that there exists a close association between women consumers' level of awareness towards herbal cosmetic products and sources of information through which they gain information may influence their awareness level.

The women consumers' awareness towards herbal cosmetic features like: herbal healing characteristics, herbal products as solution for skin/hair care and consumers' knowledge about herbal ingredients used in cosmetics is analyzed. Women consumers' awareness of the descriptive features or characterized a product or service-that provoke the consumer to thought about the product or service and involved with its purchase or consumption.

Conclusion

Herb-based products are historically believed to promote healthy living. Herb-related products are generally believed to improve health and to cure ailments. Healthy choice is a variable that can influence consumers' preference. India is a nation which has unbelievably 85 per cent of youth and young workforces to its population below the age of 45 years, and 55 per cent of its people are below the age of 25 years of age. Young adults, the group between 20-35 years, who represent nearly 25 per cent of the consumer base in the country, drive the lifestyle trends. Majority of herbal cosmetics consumers in Coimbatore are aged between 18-22 years and most of them have sourced information about herbal cosmetic products from their friends. Similarly 71.80 per cent of women consumers are well aware of the medicinal values of the herbal cosmetics. Respondents primarily prefer cosmetics for their medicinal values and they believe that herbal cosmetic products ensure safety in comparison to the other cosmetics products as they may do harm to their skin.

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