A STUDY ON THE UTILITY VALUE OF COSMETICS TO THE CONSUMERS

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INTRODUCTION

Beauty has been the prerogative of the fairer sex since ages. The image a person protects is of basic and significant importance to career development, opportunity, peer status and ultimate achievement. Good health and attractive appearance has always been an asset to a person moving in good society. The cult of beauty is no longer the prerogative of the idle rich women, but a social fact, not a luxury but an obligation and not a necessity but a priority for every woman, whatever is her standing in the society.

During the last two decades, women have understood the importance of beautification more than ever before. This led to an increase in the protection of beauty aids and of toiletries and cosmetics. These cosmetics are used to make an individual appear better, more attractive or more impressive. Cosmetics are produced in various forms like creams, gels, colognes. Cosmetics business provides employment opportunities to millions of people. Today cosmetics play a great role in everyday life and the cosmetic industry has developed into a billion dollar business and earns a huge amount of foreign exchange.

FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

Generally, cosmetics are used to look fresh and avoid body odour. But today's women take it as a status symbol as it enhances their personality and self confidence. Keeping in mind such an attitude of these women consumers, the cosmetic manufactures introduce variety of beauty products in the market with different flavors and colors. But the sustainability of those products depends on various factors such as quality, price, durability and also the level of satisfaction that a product has given to the consumer. When the satisfaction level of the consumer is on the lower end, he/she will not only abandon the product, but also bad-mouth it. At higher levels of satisfaction, consumers are likely to purchase again and even speak well about the company and its products.

The women of the study area enjoy freedom in education, occupation and career selection as their literacy rate is higher than the other districts. Since their financial position is also far better than the other districts in Tamilnadu, they are found to be spending sufficient amount for recreation, education and on luxury items. This makes the researcher to conduct a study on this topic. In this study, the researcher intends to assess the level of satisfaction of the consumers and analyze the relationship between demographic factors and their level of satisfaction towards the utilities of cosmetics.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ju-Young choi-kyung-hee Kim and Mi-sook Kim (2007) made a study to investigate the differences in the purchase pattern and level of satisfaction among female university students of China, Japan and Korea. The results showed significant differences in the purchasing power between Chinese, Japanese and Korean students. Among all students, the Koreans have displayed highest level of satisfaction.

An attempt was made by Sarangapani and Mamathy (2008) to undertake an in-depth enquiry into the buying behavior and level of satisfaction of rural consumers. For this study, three non durables namely food items, toiletries and cosmetics were considered. Regarding cosmetics, it was found that the higher income groups have shown high level of satisfaction. While the moderate and lower income groups have shown moderate and low level of satisfaction. This indicates close relationships between level of income and level of satisfaction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to examine the utility value of Cosmetics. The specific objectives are:

➢ To examine the level satisfaction of the consumers towards cosmetics.

➢ To analyze the relationship between demographic factors and the level of

satisfaction of the consumers towards the utilities of cosmetics.

HYPOTHESES
The study is aimed at testing the following hypotheses in line with the objectives mentioned above
➢   There is no significant relationship between the age and the level of the respondents towards the utilities of cosmetics.
➢   There is no significant relationship between the marital status and the level of satisfaction of the respondents towards the utilities of cosmetics.
➢   There is no significant relationship between the family size and the level of satisfaction of the respondents towards the utilities of cosmetics.
➢   There is no significant relationship between the literacy level and the level of satisfaction of the respondents towards the utilities of cosmetics.
➢   There is no significant relationship between the type of occupation and the level of satisfaction of the respondents towards the utilities of cosmetics.

➢   To offer suitable suggestions to the manufacturers to find new ways to satisfy the consumers.

➢   There is no significant relationship between the monthly income and the level of satisfaction of the respondents towards the utilities of cosmetics.
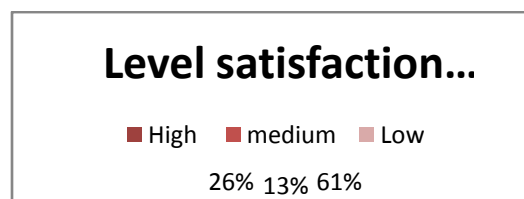
METHODOLOGY
The present study is based on the both primary and secondary data. Primary data have been collected from women who are placed in both government and private organizations. Secondary data have been collected from journals, books, reports and websites.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES
A well-structured questionnaire, systematically designed, was used for collecting primary data from four hundred salaried respondents, who were selected by applying convenient random sampling technique. For analysis purpose, necessary statistical tools were applied.

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION OF THE RESPONDENTS TOWARDS COSMETICS
Based on the individual scores, the respondents were classified into three categories namely high level, medium level and low level of satisfaction. The following table shows the level of satisfaction of 400 sample respondents.

In the present study, the satisfaction level of the respondents towards the utilities of cosmetics was measured with the help of satisfaction scale, for which 22 explanatory statements were developed. The responses of the sample respondents to each statement were elicited with the help of Likert's five point scale.

Table:1 Level satisfaction of the sample respondents

Level of satisfaction	No .of. respondents	Percentage (%)
High	52	13.0
medium	244	61.0
Low	104	26.0
Total	400	100

It is observed from table 1 that out of 400 sample respondents, majority, i.e., 61 % of the respondents, have shown medium level of

To examine whether there is any significant relationship between the identified variables and the level of satisfaction of the sample

Level satisfaction…

■ High   ■ medium   ■ Low

26% 13% 61%

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satisfaction where as 26% of the respondents have recorded low level of satisfaction. Only 13% of the respondents have shown high level of satisfaction.

TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE
respondents towards the utilities of cosmetics, Chi-square test has been used. Table 2shows the Chi-square values and the table values for the

identified variables at their concerned degrees of freedom and level of significance at 5%.

Table :2 Chi-square test results- extent of influence of variable

Variables	Chi-square value	Table value	Deg. of. freedom	Level of significance	Remarks
Age	4.40	9.49	4	5%	N.S
Marital status	2.175	5.99	2	5%	N.S
Family size	24.628	9.49	4	5%	S
Literacy level	5.819	9.49	4	5%	N.S
occupation	0.279	5.99	2	5%	N.S
Monthly income	21226	12.66	6	5%	S

N.S- non significant S-Significant

Since the Chi-square values of the variables family size and monthly income are greater than their corresponding table values at 5% level of significance as found in Table:2, the null hypotheses is rejected. Hence there exists a significant relationship between the variables such as family size, monthly income and the level of satisfaction towards the utilities of cosmetics.

At the same time, since the calculated values of the variables such as age , marital status, literacy level and occupation are less than their corresponding table values, the null hypotheses is accepted. Hence, it is concluded that the variables age, marital status, literacy level a occupation do not have any significant relationship with the level of satisfaction towards the utilities of cosmetics.

SUGGESTIONS
➤ To give maximum satisfaction to the consumers, the players in cosmetic industry have to deliver the best quality products at reasonable prices.
➤ Region wise specific consumer profiles have to be developed to understand the characteristics of the target consumers
➤ The manufactures have to introduce products in such a way that it will not create any side effects or health problems
➤ Cosmetic companies must go further and train and encourage their distributors, dealers etc., to serve their customers in the best possible manner so as to build brand loyalty.
➤ Cosmetic firms should ensure that the products which are ready for sale are manufactured, packed and stored under conditions which meet international standards.

CONCLUSION
It is true that, in this competitive world, cosmetics are considered a necessity, as they are used almost by all. Even those who do not have a liking for makeup and other cosmetics, cannot ignore the basic cosmetics such as face powder, face creams, perfumes, nail polish etc., this trend gives ample opportunities to the cosmetic manufactures to grab the major portion of the market share in the cosmetic market. But this can become a reality only when they supply the cosmetic products that will give maximum satisfaction to the customers. Thus, it is the duty of the manufactures to take possible steps to distribute the products in such a manner that they will give enough satisfaction to the customers.

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