

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEMAND OF BEAUTY SOAP AMONG FEMALE CONSUMERS IN THE GREATER COLOMBO REGION

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ABSTRACT

The usage of beauty soap among Sri Lankan consumers had been declining since 2003 to 2009, while globally accepted & fully localized brands were recording a negative growth in terms of the usage. Purpose of this study is to explore how the marketing mix & demographical factors influence the brand preference & purchasing behavior of beauty soap among the female consumers in the greater Colombo region. Sample consisted of 91 female consumers in greater Colombo region. Data were gathered by administering questionnaires. The independent variables are 4Ps, Age, Income Level, Education, Marital status, Occupation, skin type, social factors, substitute products & dependent variable is the brand preference. Analysis was done using the Chi-square method at the significant level of 0.05. The results indicated that there were statistical relationships between price, product, education, occupation and brand preference and there was no statistical relationship between place, promotion, age, income level, marital status, skin type, social factors, and substitute product with the brand preference.

Thus the price, product, education & occupation are only having a statistical relationship with the brand preference of female consumers in the greater Colombo region.

Key Word: Beauty Soap, Consumer Behavior, Demography, Marketing Mix

INTRODUCTION

The soap market in Sri Lanka is worth of 7Billion rupees in the year of 2008 (LMRB Data), which is the total market value of toilet soap and baby soap. The total tonnage of toilet soap and baby soap is 22,000MT in the same year (LMRB Data). Hence it is evident that most of the Sri Lankans use either toilet soap or baby soap for their bathing and other purposes. In Sri Lankan context with the introduction and high level spread of television & other media the information began to drift drastically towards households for last 3 decades. Irrespective of urban or rural most of the middle income level people own a television set in nowadays. With the new technology introductions and spread, enabled marketers and manufacturers to explore and influence the consumers thinking patterns and with the infrastructure development of the country in last 3 decades people started to travel and live in far remote places which were impossible in the past. As a result of that new retails started to grow up with new demand created on those places. Then the sales personals began to travel and sell their products to those retails which enhanced the sales volumes. As a result of the new technology & infrastructure developments in the country in last 3

decades demand & competition increased. The toilet soap and baby soap marketers also started to get use of the opportunity and started to put more marketing effort to capture the consumers taste. The soap manufacturers used different marketing strategies to enhance their market share. Where they began to use marketing fundamentals to attack the competition & grab or sustain the share. With this marketing strategies adopted by the soap manufacturers the consumers purchasing behavior also started to fluctuate time to time based on different reasons. Baby soap marketers positioned their products in a very careful manner by adhering to the regulations set by the different government institutes. But toilet soap marketers began to position their products as beauty soaps where the most female consumers got attracted. Almost all the toilet soap manufacturers enhanced the product characteristics to satisfy the female consumers. The advertising campaigns had also been launched using well reputed celebrities. Therefore female consumer behavior patterns happened to change time to time based on different factors. Analyzing the consumer behavior of beauty soap is interesting and critical for toilet soap manufacturers to improve & sustain their share in the market. Thus this study is merely focused on factors influencing the purchasing pattern (demand) of beauty soap among female consumers.

Variety of beauty soap brands can be identified in the Sri Lankan market, which consists of several multinational & local brands. But the market is dominated by the multinational brands. For this study only 6 brands have been categorized based on the market shares to analyze the consumer behavior. Following graph shows the brands and their respective market shares in value (LMRB-Data). This study will be more focused on five brands which were introduced as beauty soap brands from the scratch, which are Lux, Vendol, Khomba, Rani & Velvet. But the brand Lifebuoy will also be considered in this study as it owns a substantially large market share in the toilet soap market, which also could be impacted on the market shares of other beauty soap brands though the Lifebuoy is not positioned as a beauty soap brand.

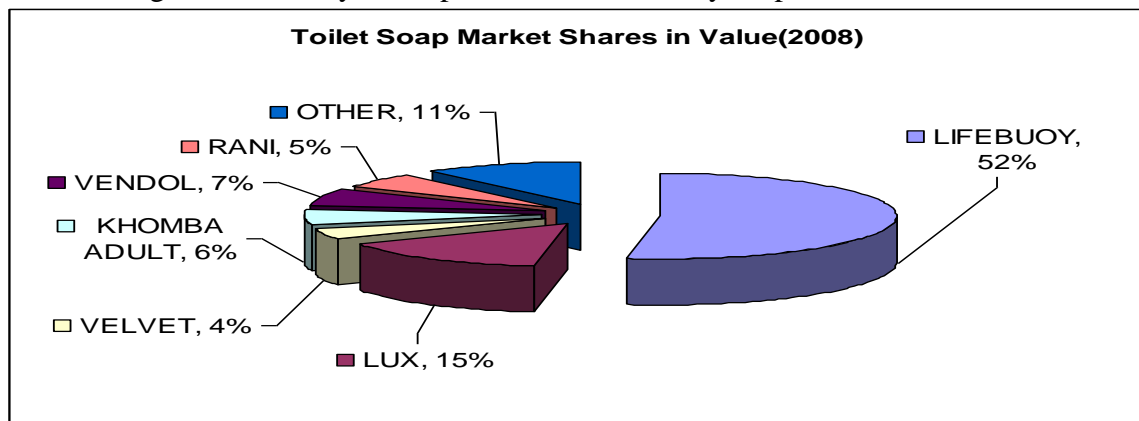


Figure 1 Toilet Soap Market Shares in Value (2008)

When the last 5 years total beauty soap segment of the toilet soap market is analyzed it reflects various fluctuations occurred in the beauty soap market. It is interesting that a globally well accepted brand Lux which is positioned as a beauty soap brand for long years is loosing its market share in the Sri Lankan context. While it is loosing its share in the market from the usage some beauty soap brands have been able to increase their share in the market. The following graph shows how the

different brands have performed in the Sri Lankan beauty soap market segment, which has been derived from the LMRB data.

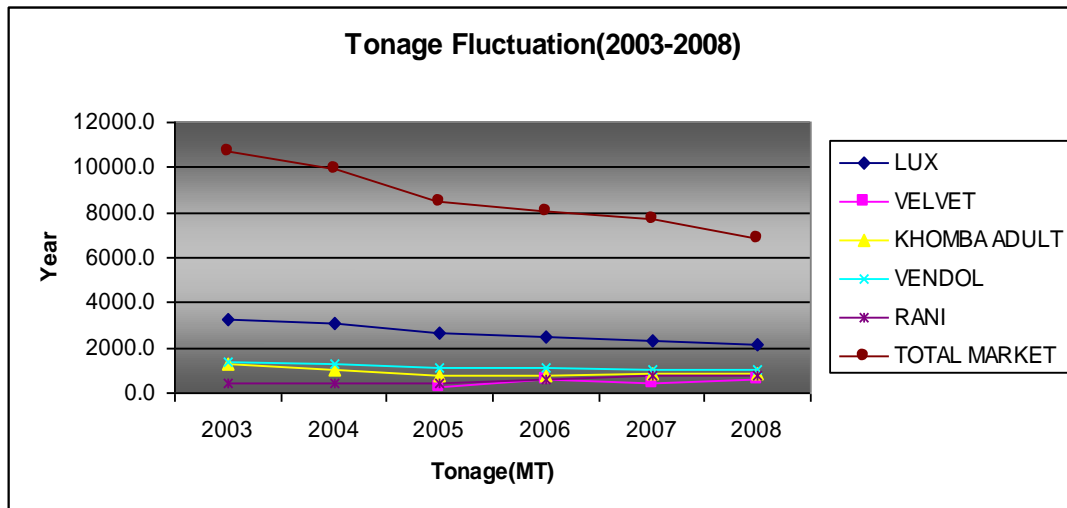


Figure 2 Total tonnage fluctuation of beauty soap

Hence by analyzing the above graph the problem or the rationale for this study can be summarized as below to derive the objective of the study.

1. What factors are influencing the demand of beauty soap among the consumers?
2. Has there been a relationship existing between the demographical factors and other influencing factors?
3. Why the well established global brand Lux market share is declining from 2003 to 2008?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing Mix Factors

There are lots of researches & studies have been done on consumer buying patterns on FMCG products. These researches have been conducted mostly by aiming a specific geographical area. According Kotler & Armstrong (1989) influencing factors for purchasing behavior are marketing mix & personal characteristics. Most of the studies have shown marketing mix factors have a relationship on the purchasing behavior of the consumer. The proper alignment of the marketing mix is essential in achieving the consumers mind share for the brand. Gupta (1988) indicates marketing mix have a strong relationship with consumers buying patterns, brand choices and incidences of purchase. Hence the relationship with brand and the marketing mix factors can be analyzed.

Price

The price of the product may differ based on the economic conditions & consumer perceptions. It could influence the perceived value of a brand. Many consumers use price as an indication of the quality of the brand which is an important factor in purchasing decision (Nilson, 1998; Kotler & Armstrong, 1989)

Place

Place or the distribution channel is a combination of institutions through which a seller markets product to user or ultimate consumer (Peter & Donnelly, 1992). Many companies take the advantage of a strong distribution channel to keep the brand in a strong position. They use different places such as super markets, high end groceries & retails to sell the brand. These selling points are also categorized based on the scale of the operation & the ultimate objective of the shareholders.

Promotion

Different kinds of promotional activities are essential in modern marketing to keep & grow the market share. The promotions can be done as ATL & BTL promotions such as sales promotions, public relations, personal selling's, TV & Radio advertisements. Promotion is communicating information about the product between a seller and a buyer in order to create brand values and brand profile (McCarthy and Pereault, 1984). The four main elements of promotion mix are advertising, sales promotion, public relations & personal selling. The major objective of advertising can be inform, persuade, or remind through the mass media. The advertising includes television, radio, billboards, POSM, etc. In a first purchase situation consumers will have to rely on advertising in order to decide whether to buy or not (Peter & Olson, 1990, and Nilson, 1998). Sales promotions include sampling operations, free banded issues, money-offs and games among consumers, etc. These activities will uplift the sales volumes. Successful sales promotion has to be consistent with the brand values and be consistent with all other aspects of the brand (Peter and Olson, 1990 and Nilson, 1998).

Product

The product characteristics such as package, ingredients, and fragrance of beauty soap play a significant role. The attributes are evaluated by the consumer based on his/her own values, beliefs, past experience (Peter & Olson, 1990). Not only that the product attribute of beauty soap may include moisturizing effect, level of refreshment it provides, Foaming effect, dirt removal capability and many more expected by the consumers.

Kumnoonsate (1983) reveals consumer brand selection is firstly based on the fragrance, research done in Bangkok. He also reveals the second factor is hardness. This survey has specifically done for bar soap in Bangkok.

A survey from Leobernate Company reveals the quality of the product is considered first & the price is considered subsequently. Hence the quality of the product is mostly depending on the quality of the ingredients used in the manufacturing process while the manufacturing process also plays a major role towards the quality of the product.

Demographical Factors

The impact on demographical factors also plays a significant role in consumers buying behavior. Age group is an attribute which has a direct impact on person's attitude towards a brand. In the beauty soap categories age group is used to define the targeted market segment. Based on the maturity the preference for beauty soap or any other product may vary. The education level of a person also influence in the decision making process. A well educated person may analyze the ingredients in particular beauty soap but less educated person may not, due to lack of knowledge. Income level of a person has a direct impact on the purchasing of a product. When the

income levels rises naturally people tend to buy more luxury/premium products. The income affects the type of goods that consumers are likely to buy (McConnell & Brue, 1999). Since the demographical factors help to identify the target groups, the relationship between brand and the demographical factors can be analyzed.

Age

Age is a factor which plays a vital role in purchasing behavior of beauty soap, because it is considered as a criterion in the segmenting process. As an example some beauty soaps are targeted to females' age between 16-24 years & some other brands are targeted to age between 16-45 years. Therefore each brand has its own targeted market. The purchasing behavior in age categories may be similar & or vice versa.

Income Level

Income implies the purchasing power of a consumer. Because purchasing of a lower grade or a highly premium brand is decided based on the income level of the consumer. Even though there is a requirement to purchase a premium brand the income level of a consumer may not support it. Hence income and consumption are positively related. Generally when the income rises, consumers increase their purchases & consumption. But this is not applicable for inferior goods. Further more income also affects the type of goods that consumers are likely to buy (McConnell and Brue, 1999 and Onkvisit and Shaw, 1994).

Education

Based on the education level of a person buying behavior could vary. A well educated consumer may read the ingredients of beauty soap before the buying decision is made. At the same time consumer with a lesser education level may decide to buy the product due to the attractiveness of the package. Hence analysis of the relationship of education level and the brand is very important.

Marital Status

Consumers buy products over their lifetime. Buying behavior will be shaped by the family life cycle, which defines the marital status and life time as young single, young married, middle-aged single, middle aged divorced, older married, and so on (Onkvisit and Shaw, 1994). For a example unmarried consumer may have been using brand "X", but after that consumer got married she may be using brand "Y" because of the influence of her daughter.

Occupation

The occupation of a consumer could vary during the life cycle or else may be occupied in the same occupation until retired, besides field of occupation also may be different during the life cycle. It enables the consumer to build up different types of reference groups around. Moreover it has a relationship with the income level, attitude, interest and life style of the consumer. Hence above factors results in various buying patterns (Guiltinan and Joshep, 1991). Siriwatana (1988) also indicates that differences in occupation have an effect on consumer quantity buying of orchids & carnations.

Skin Type Factors

Since beauty soap is applied directly to the skin brand selection may occur due to the nature of the skin. Because some brands may harmful to different skin types

depending on the ingredients included in the soap. Therefore consumer may pay an especial attention to the skin type, when the brand is purchased. Skin types can be categorized as oily, dry, mixed, normal & sensitive.

Social Factors

The social factors refer to the influences made by the consumer's reference groups such as the family & friends. The weight & powerfulness of the influence may vary depending on the significant of the relationship between the consumer and the reference group. Reference groups can influence the beliefs, attitudes and behavior of a consumer in different circumstances. As result of that purchasing behavior and brand preference could get changed of a consumer. Consumers are more likely to be influenced by word-of-mouth information from members of reference groups than advertisements or sales people (Stanton et al, 1991), in terms of benefit, selecting or changing brands.

Family

The family includes you, children, spouse and close relations. Therefore the impact generated by the family is substantial in the buying decision. A great deal of family interaction happens before the purchase decision is made, especially a expensive product or a personal care product that the family often uses together such as liquid soap (Onkvisit and Shaw, 1994).The family is generally a primary decision making unit with complex and varying pattern of roles and functions (Engel at al, 1995). Hence the influence made by the family members should be analyzed.

Friends & Others

The influence of friends and other parties such a presenter/sales person also plays a vital role in the purchasing behavior of consumers. These friendship groups are classified as informal groups since they are with lack of authority levels. The options and preferences of friends are an important influence in determining the products or brands selecting, especially to a single person, who live alone (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997). Hence friends and other interacting parties can be considered as influences to a consumer when a product is purchased.

Substitute Product Factors

There could be an impact of substitute products on the consumers purchasing behavior of beauty soap. For an example most of the countries has got adopted to shampoos, shower gels & liquid soaps. Instead of buying a beauty soap in bar format consumer could buy it in the liquid format by considering the convenience of use. Beside it could happen on eagerness basis to use a different format of soap and could continue it through out if the consumer is satisfied with the product. Hence it is important to asses the relationship between bar soap brand and the related substitute products

Brand Preference

A brand can be a label of ownership, name, term, design, or symbol. Further brand can be product, service or concept. Brand preference is measure of brand loyalty in which consumers will choose a particular brand in presence of competing brands (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/brand-preference.html>). Also it can be defined that the degree to which consumers prefer one brand over another (<http://www.answers.com/topic/brand-preference>). A greater brand loyalty among

consumers leads to greater sales of the brand (Howard and Sheth, 1969). Brand loyalty leads to certain marketing advantages such as reduced marketing costs, more new customers and greater trade leverage (Aaker, 1991).Quality and personal habits thus influence this situation because consumers prefer risk reduction in familiar products not as in a trial (Nilson , 1998). Hence analyzing the brand preference of consumers is an interesting area for the marketers to develop the marketing strategies for their brands.

RESEARCH MODEL & HYPOTHESES

The research model can be designed as below as per the above variables, Which describes the price, place, promotion, product, age, income level, education, marital status, occupation, skin type, social factors, substitute products as independent variables while brand preference becomes the dependent variable.

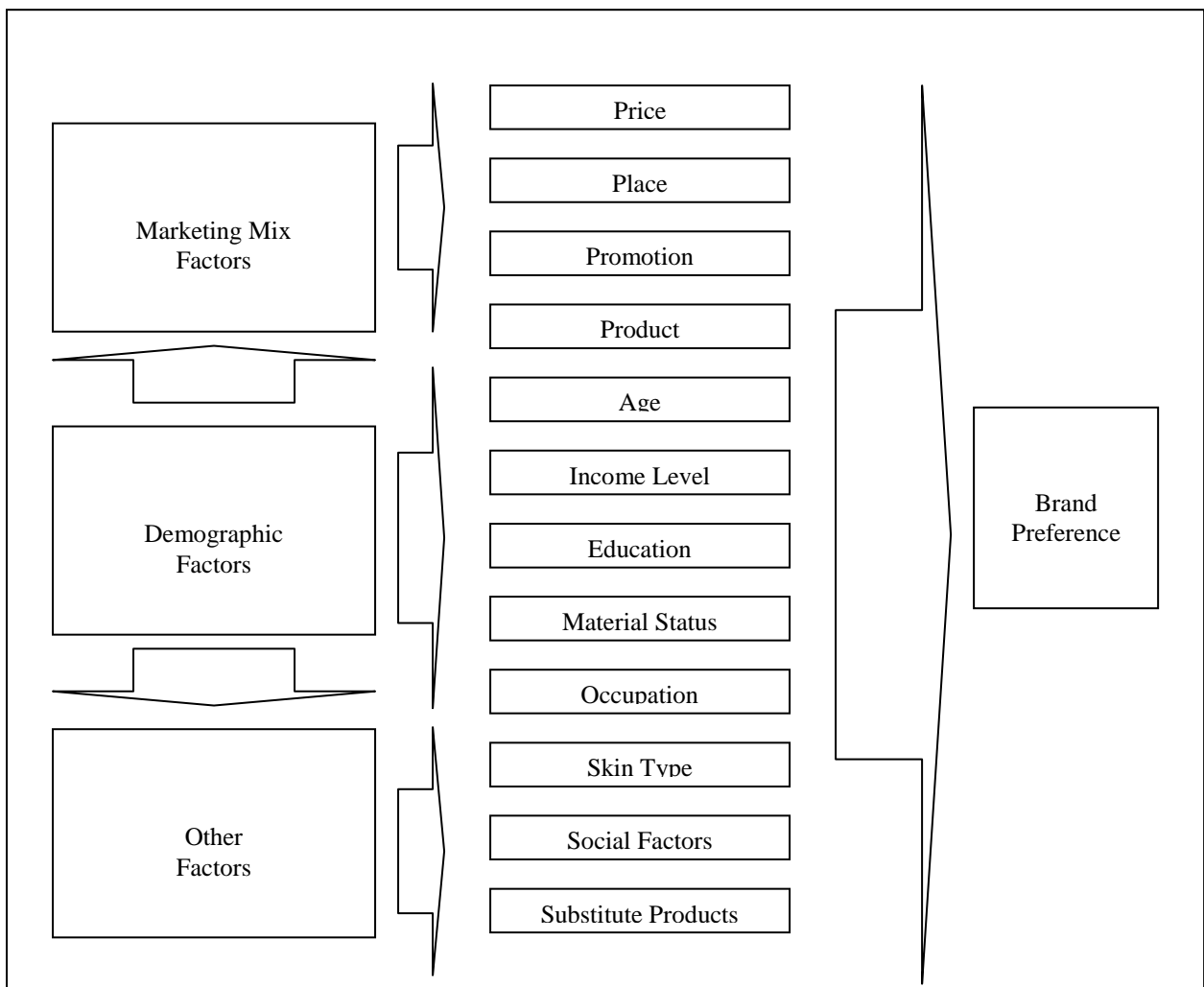


Figure 3 Research Model

The hypotheses of the study can be summarized as below.

Null Hypothesis: price, place, promotion product, age, income level, education, marital status, occupation, skin type, social factors, substitute product are not statistically significant with brand preference

Alternative Hypothesis: price, place, promotion product, age, income level, education, marital status, occupation, skin type, social factors, substitute product are statistically significant with brand preference

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was executed in 2 phases.

First phase of the research is exploratory in nature. The initial phase is to undertake detailed secondary search about soap market in Sri Lanka. Its characteristics, major players in the market & brands, market volumes & values, market segmentation patterns. Secondary data analysis was done to analyze the above. References were taken from LMRB reports. The second phase of the study is a descriptive research, where the primary data were collected from consumers.

Research Approach

The respondents for this study are consumers who are using toilet soap at home, residing in greater Colombo. Research is focused only on female consumers under different demographics. Small scale pilot survey was carried out first and then questionnaires were used as a tool to collect required data.

Sampling Method

The questionnaires were only distributed among the female consumers who live in greater Colombo. Also Questionnaires were only given to the consumers who are using toilet soap at home. It was ensured that the sample would cover adequately all the considered brands in the study, sampling method were convenience judgmental quota sampling. Sample size was 91 and which covers all the brands used by different respondents. Moreover all the demographical variables were covered in the sample.

Data Analysis

The statistical data analysis was done mainly thorough descriptive statistics, using Chi-Square method. The SPSS software was used to execute the analysis process. Methods such as bar charts and tabular formats were used to derive and summarize the data. The MS Excel was also used in data summarization process. The desired level of significant is 0.05 with the chi square test.

RESULTS

Quantity of Questionnaires

The summary of questionnaires collected is shown below.

Distributed Questionnaires	Useful Questionnaires		Useless Questionnaires	
Frequency	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
91	82	90%	9	10%

Table 1 Summary of useful & useless questionnaires

The following table shows the distribution of questionnaires among the considered brands in the study.

Questionnaires		
Brand Name	Received	Percentage
LIFEBUOY	14	17%
LUX	20	24%
VELVET	10	12%
KHOMBA	13	16%
VENDOL	6	7%
RANI	5	6%
OTHER	14	17%
TOTAL	82	100%

Table 2 Summary of questionnaires collected from each brand

Profile of the Respondents

The following tables shows the respondents age, marital status, education, occupation & monthly income level profile.

Age Groups		
Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
16-24 Years	17	21%
25-35 Years	35	43%
36-44 Years	10	12%
45-65 Years	20	24%
Total	82	100%

Table 3 Age groups of respondents

Marital Status		
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	40	49%
Married	41	50%
Other	1	1%
Total	82	100%

Table 4 Marital status of respondents

Education		
Education Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Ordinary Level Or Below	7	9%
Advanced Level	42	51%
Degree/Post Graduate/Professional	33	40%
Total	82	100%

Table 5 Education of respondents

Super Markets	8	1	2	11	7	4	7	40	49%	0.572
Premium Groceries				2	1	1	3	7	8.5%	
Retails	4	3	2	5	5	4	1	24	29%	
Pharmacy				1	1			4	5%	
Fancy Shops								0	0%	
Other	1	2	1	1		1	1	7	8.5%	
Total	13	6	5	20	14	10	14	82	100%	

Table 9 Place & Brand Preference

Promotion

There is no statistical significant relationship between the promotion factor and the brand preference. Most influenced promotional activity is TV advertisements & which was approved by 61% of the respondents. None of the respondents selected POSM as the first influenced factor under the promotional factor while Free banded issues & discounts accounted for 27% of the most influenced factor for purchasing when the promotional activities are considered.

Promotional Activity	Brand Name							Total Freq.	(%)	Sig.(Chi-Square)
	Khomba	Vendol Venival	Rani	Lux	Lifebuoy	Velvet	Other			
	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.			
TV Advertisement	4	6	4	10	10	6	6	46	61%	0.347
Radio Advertisement					1			1	1%	
POSM								0	0%	
Hoardings	1							1	1%	
Newspaper/Magazine				1				1	1%	
Discounts	2				1	3	1	7	9%	
Free Banded issues	5		1	6	2		1	15	20%	
Other				2		1	2	5	7%	
Total	12	6	5	19	14	10	10	76	100%	

Table 10 Promotion & Brand Preference

Product

There is a statistical significant relationship between product factor and brand preference at the significant level of 0.012. Around 29% of the respondents' major objective was to protect the skin when a brand is selected for use and while 18% look for the fragrance as the first choice. Around 15% of the respondents expect the softness provided by the product as the prime characteristic when a brand is selected.

Product Characteristics	Brand Name							Total Freq.	(%)	Sig.(Chi-Square)
	Khomba	Vendol Venival	Rani	Lux	Lifebuoy	Velvet	Other			
	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.			
Attractive packaging	1				1			2	2%	0.012
Shape of the tablet					1			1	1%	
Color of the tablet	1							1	1%	
Fragrance/Odor /Smell	5		1	4		2	3	15	18%	
Size/Weight			1					1	1%	
Ingredients	1	1	1	2	2		1	8	10%	
Moisturizing effect		2				4	2	8	10%	
Lathering/Foaming effect					1			1	1%	

Softness		1	2	4		1	4	12	15%
Refreshment							1	1	1%
Dirt removal /Cleansing				1	1		1	3	4%
Removal of dandruff		1						1	1%
Skin protection	5			9	5	3	2	24	29%
Germ protection		1			3			4	5%
Total	13	6	5	20	14	10	14	82	100%

Table 11 Product & Brand Preference

Demographic Factors & Brand Preference

Age

There is no statistical significant relationship between the age factor and the brand preference.

Age	Brands							Total Freq.	Sig.(Chi-Square)
	Khomba	Vendol Venival	Rani	Lux	Lifebuoy	Velvet	Other		
16-24 Years	1	2	1	5	1	4	3	17	0.213
25-35 Years	5	4	3	5	10	1	7	35	
36-44 Years	3		1	3		1	2	10	
45-65 Years	4			7	3	4	2	20	

Table 12 Age & Brand Preference

Income Level

There is no statistical significant relationship between the monthly income level factor and the brand preference.

Monthly Income	Brands							Total Freq.	Sig.(Chi-Square)
	Khomba	Vendol Venival	Rani	Lux	Lifebuoy	Velvet	Other		
Below Rs.20,000	4	5	2	3	6	6	4	30	0.157
Rs.20,000-Rs.39,999	4	1	1	12	6	3	9	36	
Rs.40,000-Rs.59,999	4		1	4	1			10	
Rs.60,000 & Above	1		1	1	1	1	1	6	

Table 13 Monthly Income & Brand Preference

Education

There is a statistical significant relationship between education factor and brand preference at the significant level of 0.004

Education	Brands							Total Freq.	Sig.(Chi-Square)
	Khomba	Vendol Venival	Rani	Lux	Lifebuoy	Velvet	Other		
Ordinary Level Or Below	1	3			1	2		7	0.004
Advanced Level	9	2		12	8	5	6	42	
Degree/Post Graduate/Professional	3	1	5	8	5	3	8	33	

Table Education & Brand Preference

Marital Status

There is no statistical significant relationship between the marital status factor and the brand preference.

Marital Status	Brands							Total Freq.	Sig.(Chi-Square)
	Khomba	Vendol Venival	Rani	Lux	Lifebuoy	Velvet	Other		
Single	3	4	3	9	8	5	8	40	0.630
Married	9	2	2	11	6	5	6	41	
Other	1							1	

Table 14 Marital Status & Brand Preference

Occupation

There is a statistical significant relationship between occupation factor and brand preference at the significant level of 0.002

Occupation	Brands							Total Freq.	Sig.(Chi-Square)
	Khomba	Vendol Venival	Rani	Lux	Lifebuoy	Velvet	Other		
Private	3	3	4	7	8	4	10	39	0.002
Public	3		1	9	2	5	3	23	
Student		1		4	1	1	1	8	
Other	7	2			3			12	

Table 15 Occupation & Brand Preference

Other Factors & Brand Preference

Skin Type

There is no statistical significant relationship between the skin type factor and the brand preference.

Skin Type	Brands							Total Freq.	(%)	Sig.(Chi-Square)
	Khomba	Vendol Venival	Rani	Lux	Lifebuoy	Velvet	Other			
	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.			
Oily Skin	1	2	2	4	2	1	2	14	17%	0.535
Dry Skin	3	2	1	1	3	2	3	15	18%	
Mixed Skin				1	1	1	3	6	7%	
Normal Skin	8	2	1	13	7	6	3	40	49%	
Sensitive Skin	1		1	1	1		3	7	9%	
Total	13	6	5	20	14	10	14	82	100%	

Table 16 Skin type & Brand Preference

Social Factors & Brand Preference

There is no statistical significant relationship between the social factors and the brand preference, around 60% of the respondents selected the brand without any influence while 16% selected the brand based on the suggestion/influence made by their friends.

Influencing Group	Brands							Total Freq.	(%)	Sig.(Chi-Square)
	Khomba	Vendol Venival	Rani	Lux	Lifebuoy	Velvet	Other			
	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.			
Children					1	2	1	4	5%	0.535
Friends	1	2	2	3	2	1	2	13	16%	
Yourself	10	4	1	13	7	6	8	49	60%	

Husband	1		2		3		1	7	9%
Presenter/Sales Person	1		1		1			3	4%
Other			3	1			2	6	7%
Total	13	6	5	20	14	10	14	82	100%

Table 17 Social Factor & Brand Preference

Substitute Products & Brand Preference

There is no statistical significant relationship between the substitute products and the brand preference. Around 25% of the respondents were using a particular soap brand and had totally given up that brand and shifted in to substitute products, But it does not mean they do not use beauty soap instead they have shifted in to another beauty soap brand while using a substitute product. But 12% of the respondents who had been using Lux had shifted in to a substitute product.

Substitute Product Shift	Brands							Total Freq.	(%)	Sig.(Chi-Square)
	Khomba	Vendol Venival	Rani	Lux	Lifebuoy	Velvet	Other			
	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.			
Yes	3	1		9	3	1	2	19	25%	0.205
No	9	5	5	10	9	7	12	57	75%	
Total	12	6	5	19	12	8	14	76	100%	

Table 18 Substitute Product & Brand Preference

Cross Analysis of Demographic Factors

Age

Around 60% of the consumers who is belonging to the age group 36-44 were looking at the suitability to the skin as their first preference while 51% of the 25-35 & 40% of the 45-65 age groups also look at the same characteristic in the brand. But 53% of the respondents belonging to the age group 16-24 search the product characteristics as the first preference.

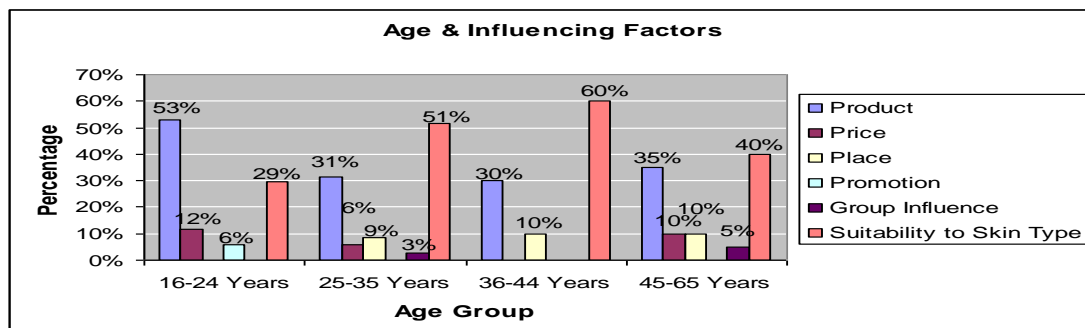


Figure 4 Age Group & Influencing Factors

Income Level

For the income levels Rs.20, 000 – Rs.39, 999 & Rs. 60,000 & above categories first preference was suitability to the skin type with 61% & 50% respectively while 50% of the respondents who were getting less than Rs. 20,000 income per month looked at the product characteristics as the first preference when a brand is selected

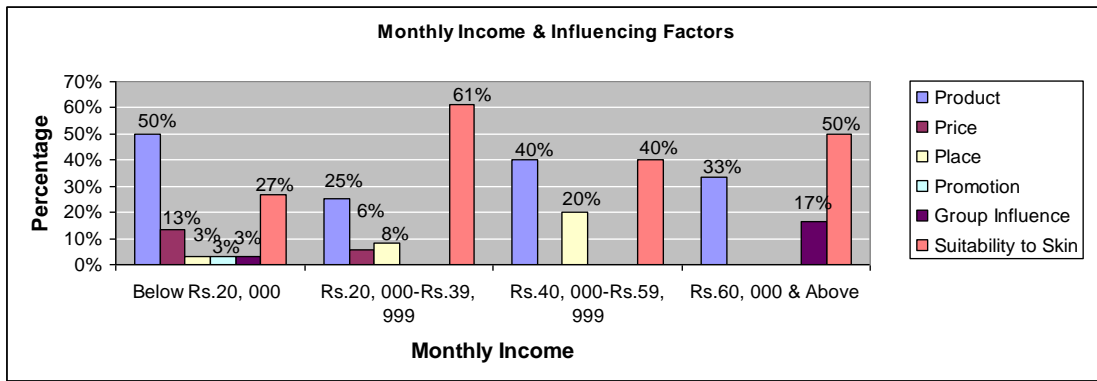


Figure 5 Monthly Income & Influencing Factors

Education

While 74% of the ordinary level or below & 40% of the advanced level qualified respondents were more concern about the suitability to the skin factor 53% of the respondents who has a degree/professional or upper qualification were looking at the product characteristics as the first preference when selecting a brand.

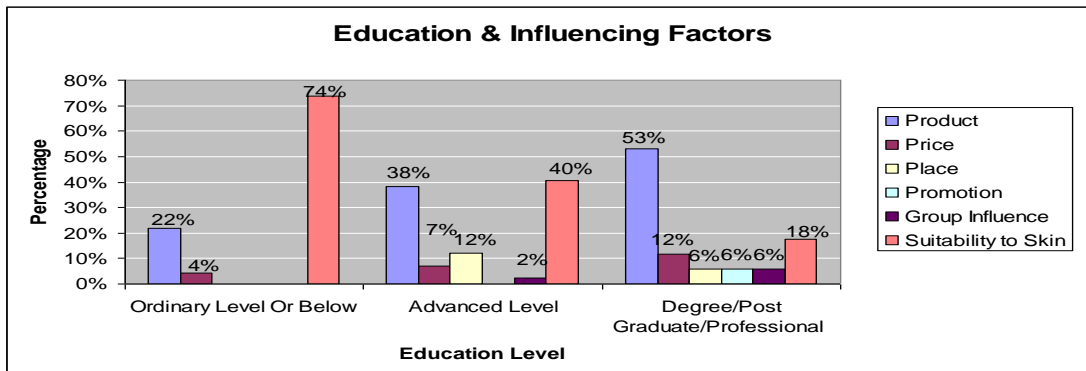


Figure 6 Education & Influencing Factors

Marital Status

Around 48% of the married respondents and 44% of the single respondents were first looking at whether the brand is suitable to the skin type.

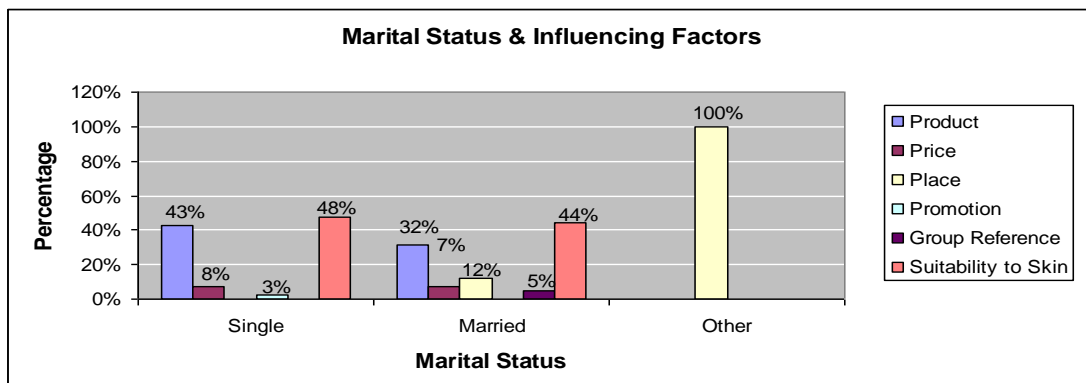


Figure 7 Marital Status & Influencing Factors

Occupation

Around 46% and 57% of the private and public sector employees were more concerned about the suitability to the skin factor respectively, while 50% of students

& 50% of the other category employees' major preference was the product characteristics when selecting a brand.

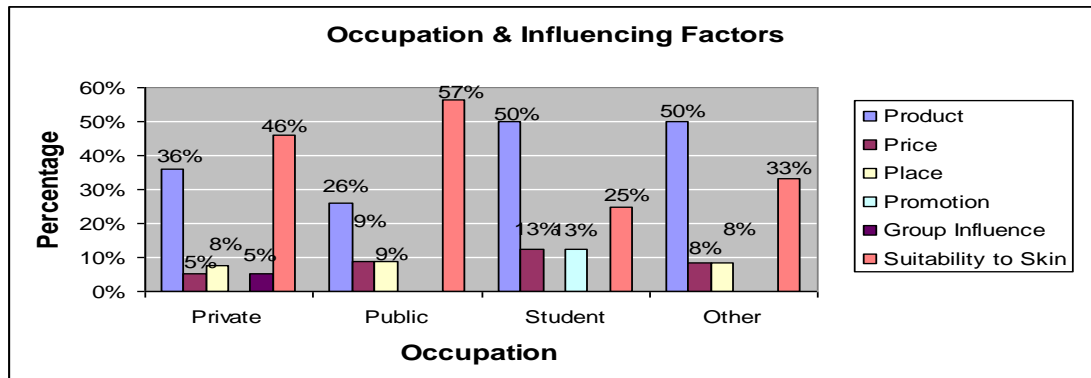


Figure 8 Occupation & Influencing Factors

Brand Shift from Lux to another Soap Brand

Out of 82 respondents 15 of them had totally shifted from one brand to another soap brand in the last 5 years, Out of 15 brand shifted respondents 9 of them had used Lux and shifted in to another brand which is 60% of the shifted respondents and 11% of the total respondents considered in the sample.

Previously Used Brand	Shifted Brand	Freq.	Reason
Lux	Lifebuoy	2	Suitability to Skin
Lux	Khomba	2	Suitability to Skin
Lux	Khomba	1	Product
Lux	Khomba	1	Price
Lux	Velvet	2	Suitability to Skin
Lux	J & J	1	Suitability to Skin
Total		9	

Table 19 Brand Shift Frequency of Lux

Brand Shifted Freq.	Freq. of Shift From Lux to Other Brands	% of Shift From Lux to Other Brands only from shifted respondents	% of Shift From Lux to Other Brands from total respondents
15	9	60%	11%

Table 20 Brand Shift Percentage of Lux

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Marketing Mix Factors

There was a statistical significant relationship between price & product with the brand preference at 0.05 significant level. Almost 85% of the respondents felt price was at a medium level as per their perception irrespective of the brand. Which indicates majority of the respondents did not feel these brands were not high end brands when their purchasing decision is made except for 35% of Lux users had felt price level was at a high end. Moreover Kohomba, Rani, Lifebuoy & Velvet users had never felt that the brands were at a high end since none of the respondents indicated that the price level was high for the above four brands. The majority of respondents search for the skin protection (29%) characteristic while fragrance (18%) is the second priority for the brand selection. Then consumers look for the softness (15%)

followed by ingredients (10%) and moisturizing effect (10%) of the product. Above details indicates that the consumers are more conscious on perception of price & product characteristics of the brand at the point of purchase. Therefore it can be recommended to improve the skin protection attributes of the product while providing a considerable emphasis to enhance the fragrance of the product, which will enable the brands to capture more market share in the beauty soap segment. Further price aspect of the brand should be communicated to the consumer by avoiding creating any high end price perception in the consumers mind.

There was no statistical significant relationship between promotion & place with the brand preference at 0.05 significant level, While TV advertisements being the most influenced promotional activity (61%) none of the respondents being influenced by the POSMs. Then 27% of the respondents made their purchasing due to discounts & free banded promotions. Majority of the respondents purchased the soap from super markets (49%) while none of them wanted to buy it from fancy shops. The recommendation can be made to introduce more free branded issue or discount time to time to remind the brand to consumers, while paying less emphasis on POSM cost and using it for above mentioned consumer promotions.

Demographic Factors

There was a statistical significant relationship between education & occupation with the brand preference at 0.05 significant level. This indicates that the brand preference varies with the education qualifications & the occupation. Hence marketing organizations can direct their marketing campaigns specifically addressing to the different occupation categories & qualification levels.

There was no statistical significant relationship between age, income level & marital status with the brand preference at 0.05 significant level. This implies that the age, income levels & marital status does not significantly influence on the purchasing decision of a beauty soap brand.

Other Factors

There was no statistical significant relationship between skin type of the consumer, social factor and substitute product factor with the brand preference at 0.05 significant level. Majority of respondents (60%) selects the brand by themselves while substantial amount of respondents (16%) were influenced by the friends. Out of 82 respondents 12% of them had been using Lux and shifted in to substitute products with in the last 5 years & it is almost half of the substitute product shifters, which could be a reason for the consecutive decline of the Lux market share in the last 5 years.

Cross Analysis of the Demographic Factors

The majority of respondents belonging to the age between 25 to 65 were more concerned whether the selected brand is suited for their skin at the first place, but the first preference of the respondents belonging to the age between 16 to 24 was product characteristics such as fragrance, packaging, etc. Hence brand extensions can be recommended to cater the prime requirements of different age groups by positioning the brand variants to suit the needs of the age groups.

Majority of the respondents who were getting a monthly income of Rs.20, 000 to Rs. 39,999 & above Rs.60, 000 were more focused on the suitability to the skin factor and majority of getting a Rs. 20, 000 or below were more focused on the

product characteristics. It can be recommended to address & highlight the preferences of every income category substantially in all the ATL & BTL activities.

The first preferences of the majority of respondents who has gained advanced level or below qualification was the suitability to the skin factor and while majority of degree or upper qualification holders were searching at the product characteristics as their first preference when selecting a brand. Hence new variants can be introduced to cater the different needs of the consumers having different education backgrounds.

Irrespective of the marital status majorities first preference was whether the brand is suited for the skin. Hence marketing campaigns should not highlight thoroughly the marital status of the consumer, since it does not add any significant benefit for the brand.

Majority of private & public sector employees' first preference was whether the selected brand is suited for the skin and while the majority students and other category employees first preference was the product characteristics.

Brand Shift from Lux to another Soap Brand

Majority of respondents who had been using a one brand and shifted in to another brand were Lux users, which is more than half of the brand shifters. Also shifted Lux users are substantial percentage from the total respondents. Hence the high level of brand shift of Lux users could be another reason for the decline of market share of the brand .Majority of respondents shifted from Lux searching for more suitable brand for the skin. Therefore it can be recommended to enhance the skin suitability attributes of the product while emphasizing the skin care factors in the marketing campaigns.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am very much thankful to Mr. Ruwan Abeysekera who had guided through out the study to make it a success by devoting his time, His vast industrial exposure enlighten this study with practical insights of consumer behavior

An enormous amount of gratitude to all the respondents who provided their utmost commitment in answering the questionnaires by spending a valuable time

I am very grateful to all my beloved friends assisted in numerous ways to make the project a success story

I salute to my parents for their support, encouragement provided during my life to make it more worth full in all aspects

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APPENDIX

Project Title: Factors Influencing the Demand of Beauty Soap among Female Consumers in the Greater Colombo Region

Degree Program: Masters in Management and Information Technology,
Department Of Industrial Management,
University Of Kelaniya.

Please mark “x” in the relevant box/boxes and write down answer/answers for other questions as per the instructions given in for each question.

1. Age

16-24 Years

25-35 Years

36-44 Years

45-65 Years

2. Gender

Female

Male

3. Marital Status

Single

Married

Other Specify:.....

4. Highest education qualification gained

Primary

Ordinary Level

Advanced Level

Degree/Post Graduate

Other Specify:.....

5. Sector of Occupation

Private

Public

Own Business

Student

Other Specify:.....

Convenience of place of purchase (Super Market, Retail Shop, Groceries etc)		
Promotional Activities(TV/Radio advertisement, Free Issues, Money-Offs, Discount, etc)		
Influence/Suggestion of a person(Family Member, Friend, etc)		
Suitability to the skin type		

11. What are the **top 5 most important** product characteristics to buy the above **brand mentioned in question 9?**

Please indicate the prioritization using **only number 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5.**

Product Characteristic	Prioritization	Remarks
Attractive packaging		
Shape of the tablet		
Color of the tablet		
Fragrance/Odor /Smell		
Size/Weight		
Ingredients		
Moisturizing effect		
Lathering/Foaming effect		
Softness		
Refreshment		
Dirt removal /Cleansing		
Removal of dandruff		
Skin protection		
Germ protection		
Other		

12. What are the **top 3 most influenced** promotional activities to buy the above **brand mentioned in question 9?**

Promotional	Prioritization	Remarks
TV Advertisement		
Radio Advertisement		
POSM (Posters, Dangers, etc)		
Hoardings		
Newspaper/Magazine		
Discounts		
Free Banded issues (ex: Buy 2 get 1 free, etc)		
Other		

13. From which **place** you **most frequently** buy the above **brand mentioned in question 9**?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Super Markets | <input type="checkbox"/> Premium Groceries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retails | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fancy Shops | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Specify..... |

14. Who influence/suggest you to make the purchasing decision of the **brand mentioned in question 9**?

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yourself | <input type="checkbox"/> Husband |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presenter/Sales Person
Specify..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

15. As per **your perception** please indicate the price level of the **brand mentioned in question 9**?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High | |

16. How often do you buy the **brand mentioned in question 9**?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than 1 times a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once in two months | <input type="checkbox"/> Once more than 3 months |

17. What is your skin type?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oily Skin | <input type="checkbox"/> Dry Skin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Skin | <input type="checkbox"/> Normal Skin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive Skin | |

18. Have you ever **totally given up** using **toilet soap** and **shifted totally** to a **substitute product** in last 5 years?

i.e. You do not use toilet soap in any means, Only use substitutes

Examples of substitute products: Shampoo, Shower Gel, Face Wash, Etc

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

19. **If Yes for the 18th question** what are the **previously used** toilet soap brand/brands?

- Khomba
- Rani
- Lifebuoy
- Other Specify.....
- Vendol Venival
- Lux
- Velvet

20. **If Yes for the 18th question** to which substitute **product/products** you have **totally shifted**?

- Shampoo
- Face Wash
- Other Specify.....
- Shower Gel
- Body Lotion

21. Have you ever **totally given up** using a **toilet soap brand/brands** and **totally shifted** to another **toilet soap brand/brands** in last 5 years?

- Yes
- No

22. **If Yes for the 21st question** please fill the below.

Previously used brand/brands

Current brand/brands

.....

.....

.....

.....

23. What are the **most important 3 reasons** which made you to **totally shift** from **previously used toilet soap brand/brands** to the **currently using toilet soap brand/brands**?

Please indicate the prioritization using **only number 1, 2 & 3**

Factor	Prioritization	Remarks
Enhanced product characteristics (Quality, Packaging, Fragrance, Ingredients, etc)		
Price		

Convenience of place of purchase (Super Market, Retail Shop, Groceries, etc)		
Promotional Activities(TV/Radio Advertisement, Free Issues, Money-Offs, Discount, etc)		
Influence/Suggestion of a person(Family Member, Friend, etc)		
Suitability to the skin type		