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Retailers Perception on Sales Promotion for Beauty and Personal Care Products

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Abstract:
Slow growth and intense competition in retail markets in recent years increases the need for retailers to use strategies focused on retaining and attracting the right customers. However, a strategy that is effective in acquiring new customers may not be the most effective in retaining current customers The occurrence and the choice of appropriate retail sales promotion techniques are important decisions for retailers. It is crucial for them to apprehend the mechanisms involved at the consumer level regarding these sales promotion. The retailers of beauty and personal careb products are the supply side actors of the market. There are different types of retailers, differing in the size of business and mode of selling. They include: Producer's retail outlets, hypermarkets, super markets, departmental stores and traditional and private multiproduct retail shops – all being last link of marketing channel – selling personal products directly to the consumers. The study is conducted using an enquiry schedule from a sample of 50 retailers.

Keywords: *Sales promotion, retailers, beauty and personal care products*

1. Sales Promotion

Sales promotions are the set of marketing activities undertaken to boost sales of the product or service. There are two basic types of sales promotions: trade and consumer sales promotions. The schemes, discounts, freebies, commissions and incentives given to the trade (retailers, wholesalers, distributors) to stock more, push more and hence sell more of a product come under trade promotion. These are aimed at enticing the trade to stock up more and hence reduce stock-outs, increase share of shelf space and drive sales through the channels. However, trade schemes get limited by the cost incurred by the company as well as the limitations of the trade in India to stock up free goods. Incentives can be overseas trips and gifts.

But sales promotion activity aimed at the final consumer is called consumer schemes. These are used to create a pull for the product and are advertised in public media to attract attention. Maximum schemes are floated in festival times, like Diwali or Christmas. Consumer schemes become very prominent in the 'maturity or decline' stages of a product life cycle, where companies vie to sell their own wares against severe competition.

Sales promotions typically increase the level of sales for the duration they are floated. Usually, as soon as the schemes end, the sales fall, but hopefully, settle at a higher level than they were before the sales promotion started. For the company, it can be a means to gain market share, though an expensive way. For consumers, these can offer great value for money. But sustained sales promotions can seriously damage a brand and its sales, as consumers wait specifically for the sales promotion to buy and not otherwise. Therefore, sales promotions are to be used as a tactical measure as part of an overall plan, and not as an end itself.

2. Need for the Study

The retailers of beauty and personal careb products are the supply side actors of the market. There are different types of retailers, differing in the size of business and mode of selling. They include Producer's retail outlets, hypermarkets, super markets, departmental stores and traditional and private multiproduct retail shops – all being the last link of marketing channel – selling personal products directly to the consumers. Sales promotion strategies are powerful tools to give marketing campaigns an extra edge in attracting new customers. Sales promotions rely on consumers' price sensitivity to encourage them to try new products, retry products they may not have tried in a while or purchase a greater volume of products they already buy. Retailers can put numerous components of sales promotion strategies into play, since promotions are often aimed directly at end consumers, which are the retailers' target customers.

3. Problem Statement

Independent and small retail stores, go through periods when daily sales receipts are down. To increase sales, attract new customers, and retain current customers, many retail stores implement various sales promotion techniques. While most business owners would love to sell products at full price all of the time, sales promotions have proven effective at increasing the overall bottom line in many retail stores. It's a tough world for retailers. New technologies enabling consumers to compare products and prices online have permanently changed the in-store shopping experience. Meanwhile, a sluggish economy and rising competition are testing consumers' brand loyalty. Many retailers are responding with price promotions in a bid to keep people coming through the doors. But this short-term fix often exacerbates the very problems retailers aim to remedy. Over time, promotions train consumers to buy only when there's a sale, and each new round of discounts must be deeper than the last to get their attention. As prices fall, margins suffer. Any incremental revenue gains from promotions eventually shrink as the sale sign becomes a fixture in store windows. Most troubling is the long-term damage to a retailer's brand when consumers come to see it as a place that always has sales.

4. Objectives

i. To examine the tenancy status of the retailers and distribution of retailers by their age and experience;
ii. To determine the response to sales promotion efforts;
iii. To determine the retailers perception on sales promotion;
iv. To find out the retailers opinion to promote beauty and personal care products

5. Research Method

The study is descriptive in nature, Simple random technique was used for the study. A sample of 50 retailers were selected and used for the study. It included Producer's Outlet, Hyper Market, Super Market, Departmental Stores and private retailers. Primary data and secondary data was used for the study and an enquiry schedule was used to collect the primary data from the retailers. To prepare the enquiry schedules a pilot survey was conducted to understand the market conditions for the beauty and personal care products. The type of sellers, brands, promotional efforts, personal business relationship between sellers and buyers, prices, variety of products, size of packages and combos offered for sale were understood. The schedule for retailers had five sections. The introductory part had details like type of firm and tenancy status, distribution of retailers by their age and experience followed by the beauty and beauty and personal carebproductssold. The schedule also had details regarding response to sales promotional efforts and the retailer's perception on sales promotion.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1. Profile of Retailers

The retailers of different types; their representation in the sample of 50 retailers is shown below.

Sl. No.	Type of Retailers	No.	%	Dominant Group of Buyers
1	Producers' Outlet	1	2	Bulk buyers for special shops.
2	Hyper Market	1	2	Middle and High income Urban buyers.
3	Super Markets	1	2	Middle income buyers.
4	Departmental Stores	2	4	Upper and lower middle income buyers – urban and rural.
5	Private Retailer	45	90	Middle and poor income buyers.
6	Total	50	100	

Table 1: Types of Retailers selling Beauty and Personal Care Products

As seen in the table above all the five type of retailers find place in the sample – that too in proportion of their number in the Universe for the study. There are almost all type of buyers for each type of retailers. However, as per the opinion of the retailers, there is difference in the dominant groups of buyers among the five categories of retailers. Producer outlets sell largely to bulk buyers such as beauty parlors, saloons and marriage contractors. Their sales are mostly for further sales and a very few consumers – ultimate (end) users of the products. Though they are called retail outlets, they are de facto intermediaries in the market channel for personal care products. There are negligibly few consumer buyers for them.

The hyper markets are modern shops requiring self-service of the buyer to select and collect the products that they decide to buy. They are run by corporate companies as retail outlets in selected locations. They attract buyers by offering parking facilities for vehicles, discounts bonus points etc. They are located in specific places and reaching them is difficult for buyers from distant places and without their own two wheelers or cars. That explains dominance of high and middle income urban buyers among their regular customers.

The Chinthamani Super Market is a co-operative society – very popular a few decades ago and as a leader for sale of pocketed products with labels showing weight grade and price of the products. Though it has lost its shine today, it is still going. There are private super markets also. They are run on the same way as hyper markets but on smaller scale and fixed locations.

There are departmental stores run by private registered traders, on the same line as hyper and super markets. They attract customers by offering varieties of branded products and their own products in convenient packages.

There are: one producer outlet, one hyper market, one super market and two departmental stores in the sample. Their advantages are large investment that helps attractive display, variety of branded and quality products in convenient packages, wide sales promotional efforts and modern billing facilities etc. However, there relative few locations and impersonal selling are their limitations.
In contrast, there are several multiproduct, private retail shops widely dispersed and in within easy reach of consumers both rich and poor. They are run on small scale and they use personal selling methods by offering products even in very small quantities as for example cooking oil in very small quantities of less than 100 ml or just for Rs.5 and also limited sales on credit and door delivery of products. The sellers develop close personal business relationship that is informal and appealing to retain customers. Nowadays these shops sell several branded products for which, the retailers promote awareness through personal appeal and advice. They are important in both urban and rural areas. They include grocery shops, medical shops, gift shops and fancy stores where branded beauty and personal careb products are readily available and the favourable opinion of the retailers easily convince the buyers. There are 45 such shops (90 percent of the sample). These retailers serve poor and middle income buyers – especially monthly income earners, who are in good rapport with the retailers and constitute largest segment of their customers.

6.2. Tenancy Status

The tenancy status of the retailers largely determines the size of investment, size of sales (market share) and in turn the type of selling (personal or impersonal) and also their business profit. The tenancy status of 50 retailers in the sample is presented below.

Sl. No.	Tenancy Status	Retailers		Rank
		No.	%	
1	Registered Corporate Company	1	2.0	3
2	Registered Private Company	2	4.0	4
3	Cooperative Society	1	2.0	3
4	Private Partnership Firms	20	40.0	2
5	Private Proprietorship Firms	24	48.0	1
6	Unregistered Informal traders	2	4.0	4
	Total	50	100.0	

Table 2: Tenancy Status of the Retailers

As can be seen in the table there is one registered company in the sample and it is a producer outlet for cosmetics and beauty aids. One cooperative society is the Chinthamani Super Market at North Coimbatore. Two registered private companies include: one hyper market and a departmental store. Private partnership firms are large multiproduct retail stores and there are 20 of them in the sample. Private proprietor firms are small multiproduct retail shops with relatively small investment and a few employees serving localized market. There are 24 in number (or 48 percent of the sample). There are two unregistered informal traders with very small investment and few customers served by personal selling.

6.3. Age of the Retailers

Age of the retailers is one of determinants of their business experience and with age they mature in their skill to handle their customers and understanding of customer expectations. They, in turn help them in their sales promotional efforts to make consumers aware of the products and to convince them to buy. This develops a personal rapport with the buyers to make them regular customers. The distribution of the sample retailers among age classes and experience classes is presented in the table below.

Sl. No.	Age Class (Years)	Retailers		Experience class (Years)	Retailers	
		No.	%		No.	%
1	20 ≤	4	8.9	5 ≤	5	11.1
2	21 – 30	11	24.5	6 – 10	9	20.0
3	31 – 40	19	42.2	11 – 15	16	35.6
4	41 – 50	10	22.2	16 – 20	15	33.3
5	> 50	1	2.22	> 20	-	-
	Total	45	100.0	Total	45	100.0

Table 3: Distribution of Retailers by Their Age and Experience

Note: Total refers to the printer partnership and proprietorship and informal retailers only.

In the sample of 50 retailers there are five stores run by employees of the companies, societies and private firms on impersonal business lines. These employees are wage earners and have little share in business policies, promotional efforts and customer relationship. Therefore, they are not able to respond adequately to the information sought for the study and they were dropped. The remaining 45 retailers are persons who run the shop with full responsibility to attract, serve and retain their customers in order to succeed in their job. They are able to respond well. Their age and experience are their assets to help their business.

Among 45 retailers only four (8.9 percent) are younger than 20 years, because teens go to school not for job, especially to be independent entrepreneurs; only school drop outs do small retail business. Nearly 90 percent of the retailers are in the age of 21 to 50 years. Only one retailer is aged 52 years.
The age largely determines experience (years in business). The experience of the retailers varies from three and a half years to 20 years; in the sample there is no retailer experienced more than 20 years. Nearly 88.9 percent of the retailers have experience of six to 20 years.

6.4. Products Sold
The beauty and personal careb products sold in the 50 sample retail shops were first listed to know their relative importance in the retail shops. The details are presented in the Table below.

Sl. No.	Products	Stores*(4)	Private Firms		
			Partnership(20)	**Proprietor(24)**	**Informal(2)**
1	Oral Care: Tooth Paste & Brush	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	Selected
2	Tooth Powder	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands
Sl. No. (1)	**Products** (2)	**Stores*(4)** (3)	**Private Firms** **Partnership(20)** (4)	**Proprietor(24)** (5)	**Informal(2)** (6)
3	Mouth Wash	All Brands	All Brands	None	None
4	Skin Care: Soaps	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	Less priced
5	Talcum Powder	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	Less priced
6	Face Wash	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	None
7	Hair Care: Hair Oil	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands
8	Shampoo	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	Only in Sachets
9	Conditioners	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	-
10	Hair Dyes	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	-
11	Beauty Care: Fairness Cream	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	Only two
12	Perfumes	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	-
13	Nail Polish	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	-
14	Lipsticks	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	-
15	Health Care: Sanitary Napkin	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands
16	Hand Wash	All Brands	All Brands	Two Brands	-
17	Lotions	All Brands	All Brands	-	-
18	Deodorants	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	-
19	Hair remover	All Brands	All Brands	All Brands	-

Contd…

Table 4: Beauty and Beauty and personal careb products Sold by Four Categories of Retailers
Note:) Beauty and personal carebproductsof women only studied.
ii) Stores include Producer outlet, Hyper Market, Super Market – 4 Nos.
iii) Figures within ( ) show number in the sample.

As seen in the table, stores (company outlets, hyper markets, super market and departmental stores) – five in the sample sell all brands of all the 19 beauty and beauty and beauty and personal carebproductsfor women (the study does not cover beauty and personal careb products of men).
The partnership firms also sell all brands of all products. The sample proprietor firms do not sell mouth wash and lotions. They sell only two brands of hand wash (Dettol and Medicare). For other products they sell all brands. Unregistered, informal retailers do not sell mouth wash, face wash, perfumes, nail polish, lipsticks, hand wash, lotions, deodorants and hair remover. They sell only low priced soaps, talcum powders and shampoo in small sachets and only two brands of fairness creams. However, they are just two retailers in the sample of 50 retailers.
Thus, almost all retailers sell all the beauty and personal care products for women and also all the brands in the exception being a few retailers who run small shops.

6.5. Promotional Efforts

The retailers are small traders, except the stores - and the beauty and personal have a small share in their total sales (12 to 23 percent only). Therefore, the retailers are not able to spend on costly promotional efforts for personal care products. However, several personal care products, such as conditioners, mouthwash, face wash, hand wash, sanitizer, fairness cream, perfumes, nail polish, lipstick, deodorants and hair removers are not popular in Tamil Nadu till recent years. This is more so among rural women. So, they need promotional efforts to build awareness and create demand for them. Therefore, producers of these products help the retailers. The sources of promotional efforts and funding, consumers response and response time were studied. Details are presented in Table 5 below

Sl. No.	Sources of Promotional Efforts	Funding Reported by Retailers				Response Mean Score	Retailers (No) reporting response time (days)		
		P	LS	PR	Combo		7 <	8 – 15	> 15
1	TV	50	-	-	-	5	48	2	-
2	Radio	21	-	-	-	3	-	32	18
3	Cinema Slides	-	9	6	-	4	-	15	-
4	Documentary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	Papers	18	7	-	P + LS 3	4.6	44	6	-
6	Journals/ Magazines	15	8	11	LS + S 6	3.8	20	26	4
7	Posters	-	4	-	-	3.14	32	11	7
8	Melas	5	7	-	-	1.0	-	-	-
9	Brochures	11	8	21	All 17	4.1	21	19	10
10	Sales agents	10	-	5	-	4.5	40	7	3
11	Personal efforts	-	5	45	-	4.8	39	11	-

Table 5: Response to Sales Promotion Efforts

Note:: *i) P – Producers; LS – Local Stores; PR – Private Retailers; Combo - Combination*
ii) Strength of Consumer response – mean score on a five point graded scale:
Excellent: 5, Good: 4, Fair: 3, Poor: 2, Very Poor: 1
iii) Response time in days

As seen in the table, advertisement in TV and radio is largely done by the producers, because it is costly. Even local hyper and super markets and departmental stores cannot afford to spend that much. Private retailers – both big and small ever think of them.

However, there advertisement helps all the sellers of personal care products.

In the perception of the retailers the effect of these advertisement is excellent for TV (mean score is the maximum possible 5) and fair for radio (mean score is 3). The TV dominates the media to reduce the response to advertisement in radio but of 50 retailers report that the response of the buyers to the advertisement in TV is within seven days and two retailers say it takes eight to 15 days. For advertisement in radio, the response time is eight to 15 days according to 32 retailers (64 percent) and more than 15 days for 18 retailers.

Only nine local stores and six private retailers use cinema slides promote their products including beauty and personal for women and all of them find the response of buyers to be good (mean score 4). They all agree that the full response to the advertisement by cinema slide takes eight to 15 days to come from their buyers.

Documentary films to advertise the products is not used by any producer or retailers and hence there is no opinion.

Advertisement in Newspapers – especially in Tamil is done by 18 producers and seven local stores and three combinations of producers and retailers. The buyers' response is near excellence (mean score is 4.6 for a maximum possible 5). The response time is less than seven days and eight to 15 days as assessed by 44 and six retailers respectively.

Use of posters to inform people about beauty and personal carebproductsis done by only four local stores. However the response of the buyer is good, better than even for the use of journals and magazines (mean score is 3.14). Majority of the retailers (32 No. or 64 percent) find the response time of the customers is less than seven days, for 11 retailers it is eight to 15 days and few (four) retailers find it to be longer than 15 days.

Advertisement in journals and magazines is done by 15 producers, eight local stores, 11 private retailers and for six by a combination of local stores and private retailers. The response to the advertisement is good (mean score 3.8). The buyers respond to it within seven days, eight to 15 days and longer than 15 days, according to 20, 26 and four retailers respectively.

Melas are organized by producers (5 No.) and local stores (7) only; private retailers are not for it, largely because the response of the buyers is very poor (mean score 1) except on mela days. Hence, the retailers are not able to state the response time.

Brochures in Tamil are distributed to the visitors at the retail outlets by 11 producers, eight local stores, 21 private retailers and 17 combinations of them. The brochures promote awareness and the people come seeking more information and their decision to buy the products comes sooner (in less than seven days) or later (longer than eight days) or much delayed (longer than 15 days) according to 21, 19 and 10 retailers respectively. The response rate is very good (mean score is 4.1)

Use of sales agents is seen with 10 producers and five private retailers only; but the response rate is near excellence (mean score is 4.5). The response time for the buyers is reported to be less than seven days by 40 retailers, eight to 15 days by seven retailers and longer than 15 days by three retailers.

All the 50 retailers – five local stores and 45 private retailers take efforts to inform and to build awareness among their customers about the products, prices and opinion of other buyers on quality and benefits of the products in the opinion of earlier users. This personal persuasion is very effective (mean score is 4.8). The response is said by 39 retailers to be quick (five to seven days) and eight to 15 days by 11 retailers. Furthermore this promotional effort is least costly and a few free-bees and price discounts make the response time still shorter – 22 retailers opine.

Assessed by the mean score and the response time, the effectiveness of the promotional efforts of the retailers are ranked as follows (from excellent to poor or very poor): TV, personal efforts, newspapers, sales agents, brochures, posters, journals and magazines, and melas in the descending order. Use of documentary films is not reported by any of the retailers and its effectiveness cannot be assessed. This ranking is useful to the retailers to choose the media for sales promotion to meet their ambitions (sales targets) within their means.

6.6. Sales Promotion

The retailers say that promotional efforts are very essential for the beauty and personal careb products for atleast two reasons: first, many people are not aware of several products that have come to the market in recent years and second, these product help care for health, sanitation and beauty and they are easy to use. Therefore, on the basis of information collected from pilot study and with the help of experts and research guide several statements were prepared and field tested. Some statements were dropped and some other statements were rewarded to discernible five attributes that described the perception of the retailers on the need for and strategies of sales promotion. The attributes are:

i. Ads are essential for personal care products.
ii. Retailers have a big role.
iii. Market Segmentation is useful.
iv. Ads must be effective.
v. Ads must be supplemented with discounts/gifts

Each of these five attributes were described by three to six statements. The sample retailers (50) were asked to evaluate the statements and to assign scores on a five point scale. The mean scores of these statements were used to know their relative importance in describing the attributes. The weighted mean scores of all the statements of an attribute, the weight being the number of retailers who responded to the statements, (some retailers had no comment (not able to give score) for one or more statements), showed the relative importance of five attributes (perception of the retailers).

The attributes, the statements, number of retailers who assigned scores (and did not say 'no comment') and the mean scores for the statements and the weighted mean scores for the attributes (in bold type) are presented in Table 6.

Sl. No. (1)	**Attributes and Statements** (2)	**Retailers @ (No.)** (3)	**Mean Score *** (4)	**Ranks** (5)
A	**Ads core essential**		**4.23**	**1**
1	Ads are life blood of business	50	5.00	
2	They inform people and bring customers	42	4.12	
3	Ads must also motivate	50	3.96	
4	They have to appeal to personal needs and values of customers	46	3.80	
B	**Retailers have a big role**		**3.62**	**2**
5	Retailers' proximity to customers give a big role for them	48	4.08	
6	Use Brand Ambassadors	30	4.00	
7	Retailers must be helped in ads by Producers	49	3.76	
8	Retailers feedback help producers in strategy planning	47	3.78	
9	Use Sales - agents to follow up awareness	50	2.68	
C	Market Segmentation is useful		3.16	4
10	Ads must discriminate and segment buyers	50	3.08	
11	Women are a target group for beauty care products	50	3.32	
12	Teen age girls need more attention	50	3.92	
13	Children are a target group for oral care products	44	2.24	
D	Ads must be effective		3.28	3
14	Seasonal melas are effective mass appeal	26	2.80	
15	Ads must go with discount prices and free gifts	38	3.08	
16	Market research help design effective ads	36	3.08	
17	A mix of ads is more effective	50	4.12	
18	Avoid monotony in ads	40	2.86	
19	Ads must be evaluated periodically	42	3.32	
E	Supplement ads		2.94	5
20	Price discrimination must help ads	43	3.00	
21	Build brand loyalty	49	2.80	
22	Health care products must show authentic facts	44	3.05	

Table 6: Retailers Perception on Sales Promotion
*Note: * Mean scores on a five point graded scale with score values 1 to 5.*
@ Number of Retailers who actually assigned scores. Total number of Retailers is 50.

In the perception of retailers ads are very essential for beauty and personal careb products and more important for beauty and personal careb products for women, as they are seen to be a large segment of the prospective buyers in the market. This perception ranks top most with a weighted mean score of 4.23 (against a possible maximum of 5). In their opinion ads must inform people to build awareness about the products among women and to motivate them to buy. (They have to speed up the process from awareness to conviction to buy the products). Therefore, the ads must appeal to the personal needs of women and their values for the beauty and personal care product in the modern life of these days. For these reasons, ads are indeed life blood of the market for these products.

The second ranking, perception of the retailers is that they have a big role to play (weighted mean score in 3.62). This role comes from proximity and personal interaction of the retailers with their customers. Use of brand ambassadors in advertisement is very effective in reaching out to the prospective customers. However, the retailers can rarely afford to go for advertisement in mass media (TV, Radio, Papers, Journals and Magazines). So the producers (Companies) of beauty and personal careb product shave to take this job to help all retailers. To such ads response is large and quick as already seen (vide Table 4.4). Use of sales agents is viewed with low priority (mean score is 2.68). A big advantage of ads in mass media, is that it helps retailers to appraise the producers with feedback on the response of their present customers and its impact to motivate peers, friends and relatives. Such a feedback would be very useful in planning promotional strategies by all the actors in the market (mean score is 3.78).

The retailers insist that the ads must be effective (weighted mean score is 3.28 and rank is 3). The retailers are able to offer specific measures to make ads very effective. They include; seasonal melas, discount in prices, free gifts and a mix of ads in several medial rather in a single source. The retailers suggest that market research, and periodical evaluation would greatly help design pragmatic ads and to avoid monotony in them.

The retailers report that market segmentation is useful to focus attention on target groups (weighted mean score is 3.16). Women are the target group for personal care products. Among them, teenage girls need special attention because this group is growing larger and faster in recent years children are the groups for oral care and skin care products and for diapers and sanitizers, the retailers observe.

The retailers recommend supplementing promotional efforts with price discrimination, to promote brand loyalty and to show authentic facts for health care products. However, this recommendation is weak as shown by the small weighted mean score (2.94).

Thus, the retailers perception sales promotion for beauty and personal careb products for women are pragmatic. Their strong emphasis on sales promotion and retailers role in it deserve attention of the dealers (producers and their agents). Market segmentation, special attention to teenage girls are strategies for the present day marketers of personal care products. Their opinion that a mix of ads is more effective than any one ad and brand ambassadors and sales agents would speed up the process of motion are practical ways for sales promotion. The retailers are right on emphasizing periodical appraisal, feedback from retailers and market research to make sales promotion effective. These right perceptions arising from their long experience must guide dealers in planning their policies and strategies for sales promotion involving retailers in it, for follow up and feedback.

6.7. Suggestions

On the basis of their perceptions, the retailers have offered specific suggestions to promote the demand for beauty and personal careb products for women. They are listed in Table 7 below.

Sl. No. (1)	**Suggestions** (2)	**Retailers (No.)** (3)	**Mean Score** (4)	**Rank** (5)
1	The producers must do more promotional efforts	30	4.10	3
2	Dealers (producers, agents) must support retailers	41	4.85	1
3	Increase retailers margin	44	4.22	2
4	Give more free gifts	24	3.16	5
5	Dealer must get feedback from retailers	35	3.98	4

Table 7: Suggestions of Retailers to Promote Personal Care Products

Note: Mean score on a five point graded scale – scores 1 – 5. Ranks are based on mean scores.

The top ranking suggestion is that dealers must do more promotion and support retailers. The support has to come with increase in retailers' margin and free give to buyers. Feedback from retailers to the dealers is insisted and it should be a regular activity and would help both of them.

7. Summary

Producer outlets sell largely to bulk buyers. Their sales are mostly for further sales and to a very few consumers – ultimate (end) users of the products. Though they are called retail outlets, they are *de facto* intermediaries in the market channel for personal care products. There are negligibly few consumer buyers for them. The hypermarkets are modern shops requiring self-service of the buyer to select and collect the products that they decide to buy. They are run by corporate companies as retail outlets in selected locations. They attract buyers by offering parking facilities for vehicles, discounts, bonus points etc. They are located in specific places and reaching them is difficult for buyers from distant places and without their own two wheelers or cars. That explains dominance of high and middle income urban buyers among their regular customers. Super Market is a co-operative society – very popular a few decades ago and as a leader for sale of pocketed products with labels showing weight, grade and price of the products. Though it has lost its shine today, it is still going. There are private supermarkets that are run on the same way as hyper markets but on a smaller scale and fixed locations. There are departmental stores run by private registered traders, on the same line as hyper and supermarkets. They attract customers by offering varieties of branded products and their own products in convenient packages.

In contrast, there are several multiproduct, private retail shops widely dispersed and within easy reach of consumers both rich and poor. These shops sell several branded products for which, the retailers promote awareness through personal appeal and advice. They are important in both urban and rural areas. They include grocery shops, medical shops, gift shops and fancy stores where branded beauty and personal careb products are readily available and the favourable opinion of the retailers easily convinces the buyers. These retailers serve poor and middle income buyers, especially monthly income earners, who are in good rapport with the retailers and constitute largest segment of their customers.

Among the retailers, private firms (50 Nos.) are the major source of data for the study of retailers. Nearly 90 percent of the retailers are in the age of 21 to 50 years. Only one retailer is aged 52 years. The experience of the retailers varies from three and a half years to 20 years; in the sample there is no retailer experienced more than 20 years. Nearly 88.9 percent of the retailers have experience of six to 20 years.

Almost all retailers sell on the beauty and personal careb products for women and also all the brands with the exception being a few retailers who run small shops.

Assessed by the mean score and the response time, the effectiveness of the promotional efforts of the retailers are ranked as follows (from excellent to poor or very poor): TV, personal efforts, newspapers, sales agents, brochures, posters, journals and magazines, and melas in the descending order. Use of documentary films is not reported by any of the retailers and its effectiveness cannot be assessed. This ranking is useful to the retailers to choose the media for sales promotion to meet their ambitions (sales targets) within their means.

The retailers perception about sales promotion for beauty and personal careb products for women are pragmatic. Their strong emphasis on sales promotion and retailers role in it deserve attention of the dealers (producers and their agents). Market segmentation, special attention to teenage girls are strategies for the present day marketers of personal care products. Their opinion that a mix of ads is more effective than any one ad and brand ambassadors and sales agents would speed up the process of motion are practical ways for sales promotion. The retailers are right on emphasizing periodical appraisal, feedback from retailers and market research to make sales promotion effective. These right perceptions arising from their long experience must guide dealers in planning their policies and strategies for sales promotion involving retailers in it, for follow up and feedback.

The top ranking suggestion is that dealers must do more promotion and support retailers. The support has to come with increase in retailers' margin and free samples to buyers. Feedback from retailers to the dealers is insisted and it should be a regular activity and would help both of them.

8. Conclusion

The market for beauty and beauty and personal careb products, is fast growing in India. Women are seen to be a fast growing and large segment of the market. Young and educated women appear to be target groups for personal care products.

The retailers have a crucial role in informing women and motivating them to buy the products. Their feedback is an important source of data for planning not only sales promotion, but also product promotion to meet their changing preferences of women. Producers and their agents have to recognize this role of the retailers and assist them for effective selling.

9. Implications

Above conclusions have specific implications for the marketers of beauty and beauty and personal careb products and for future research they are stated below.

The supply actors in the market for beauty and personal careb products include producers, their marketing agents and the retailers – they are the marketers. Among them retailers – who are mostly multiproduct sellers. They are in direct contact with the consumers. Through appeal and advice they promote awareness and sales. The post-purchase experience of buyers get reflected in their interaction with retailers – both appreciation and complaints on products. These are important for beauty and personal careb products for women because the products are not basic needs and are usually priced high. Therefore, the retailers play a crucial role in the market chain. The results show that

- Retailers role must be recognized, its effectiveness be assessed and suitably used in planning market strategies for personal care products.
- Retailers need help in sales promotion in terms of supply of publicity materials, cost of advertisement and periodical appraisal.
- Retailers are seen to be an important source of information on market sentiments. Feedback from retailers will be very useful to the dealers to plan promotional efforts – not only for sales but also for product promotion. This will identify target groups such as young educated girls of middle and high income groups and the scope and need for market segmentation combined with market research, their feedback from retailers may even help customization of products. This potential is, at present, not exploited fully and needs special attention of producers.

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