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Analysis of Determinants of Brand Preference for Cosmetics in Abia State, Nigeria

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Abstract:
This study analysed the determinants of brand preference for Cosmetics in Abia State of Nigeria. Factors examined were intrinsic and extrinsic factors which include sex, age, occupation, status, Social Class; Product characteristics like quality, packaging, price, brand name and Shelf life. A multi-stage and simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting a sample size of 300 respondents. Data were analysed using simple descriptive statistics, and probit regression. Key product features influencing consumers' preference for cosmetics products as shown by the study include, price, quality, brand name, shelf-life, packaging and fragrance. Also, consumer's age, marital status, educational attainment, employment status, income status and social class further determine their preference for brands of cosmetics. These factors were all positive and significant in the study. The study recommends that knowing consumers and considering their desires should be precise issues on marketing strategies. Therefore, there is need for organizations to first conduct extensive research to effectively understand the preference behaviour of consumers. Such marketing research will go a long way in revealing the major demographic and other variables that have greater and stronger effects on brand preference for cosmetics products. In order to create and maintain acceptance for their cosmetics products, business organizations must recognize that many of their core product attributes are necessary. Therefore, there is a need to understand the important roles of each cosmetic product attribute, i.e. price, quality, packaging, shelf life, fragrance, active ingredients used, and availability in order to enhance brand appeal.

Keywords: Cosmetics, brand preference, intrinsic, extrinsic, shelf life

1. Introduction

Man has always sought for ways to look and smell nice, and the use of cosmetics is part of such endeavour. Cosmetic has become a common and popular category among Nigeria consumers as it identifies them with a more relaxed lifestyle, greater versatility and comfort.

Cosmetics products are mixtures of natural or synthetic chemical compounds used to improve the appearance or smell of the human body (Schneider *et aL,* 2001). They include a range of products such as creams, lotions, powders, perfumes, lipsticks, fingernail and toenail polish, eye and facial make-ups, permanent waves, hair colours, hair sprays and gels and deodorants. Cosmetics are believed to enhance the best features and cover the blemishes on the person wearing them. They have been in use since ages and constitute an important part of modem day's life, (Shalom *et aL,* 2013). Thompson (1989) defined cosmetics as an item intended to be rubbed into or otherwise applied on the human body or any part for cleaning, beautifying promoting attractiveness or altering the body appearance. The Food and Drug (1974) also defines cosmetic as any part substance or mixture of substances manufactured or sold or advertised for use in cleaning, improving or altering the complexion, skin hair and health.

The research carried out in Nigeria by Euro monitor in 2014 shows that there has been an enormous growth of about 200% in the cosmetic industry activities in the last 10 years. Competition and advertising were major factors in the performance of beauty and personal care in 2013. More celebrities became brand ambassadors, and campaigns for a number of products in beauty and personal care were also targeted towards children, which is a major demographic group in the country. Local manufacturing also increased in 2013 compared with previous years, when the marketing of imported products was the dominant characteristic of the market. Increasing disposable incomes also continued to boost purchases of beauty and personal care products. Globalization and the glamour portrayed by the media, both local and international, also created the desire for the means to improve self-worth and esteem through the use of beauty and personal care products. Variety of cosmetics brands can be identified in the Nigerian market, which consists of

several multinational and local brands. Notable among them include; Nivea, Peauclair, Sivoclair, Cocoa-Butter, Carowhite, Miss Caroline, Skin-light, Beauty Fair, Fair Lady, Silver lime, Erato skin Litener, etc.

Everyday observation tells us that consumers differ widely in their preferences: some like liver, others despise it; some smoke cigarettes, others avoid cigarette smoke like the plague; some want a different pair of shoes for every occasion, others wear running shoes everywhere. Given such diversity in preferences about products, how should we incorporate the influence they have on consumer choices?Shaw and Laura (1997) argued that action factors in (consumer behaviour models) revolve around the thought process of consumer, therefore to determine factors behind the purchase of perfume, researchers should attempt considering what goes on in the mind of the consumer, as in terms of product categories, product consideration, and abstract causality that is consumer's perception on the extent to which the considered product of perfume can triggers attraction.

Blythe (2003) argues that understanding the purchasing behaviour of consumer is somewhat complicated, consumer's attachment and involvement with a product or brand are determined by number of reasons and therefore it is almost impossible to nail a definite reason behind consumer's purchasing behaviour. Nonetheless, some consumers have less inclination towards brand than the benefits same product gives irrespective of the brand.

Brand preference has been receiving increased attention in extant literature. Cooper (1993) noted that most new innovations come with high risks as most of them failed in the marketplace creating the need for marketers to have a clear understanding of success factors in brand adoption. Theories of adoption have often been used to explain how consumers form preferences for various goods and services (Rogers, 1995; Tornatzky and Klein, 1982; Mason, 1990). Generally, these theories emphasize on the importance of complexity, compatibility, observability, triability, relative advantage, risk, cost, communicability, divisibility, profitability, social approval, and product characteristics in brand preference (Wee, 2003). Owing to the volatility of the cosmetics markets, it is essential to identify the factors that influence the brand choice by examining determinants of brand preference, which provides marketing managers with insights for establishing a more comprehensive business strategy.

2. Literature Review

Ling (2009) analysed consumer purchasing behaviour regarding luxury goods in China, heemployed the social psychological theory of planned behaviour, which takes into account theinner and external dimensions of behaviour. The latter leads to the assumption that when tryingto pin down the determinant factors for consumer's behaviour, researchers should tryto understand the extent to which consumers can 'gain both inner experience value and external social status by purchasing luxury goods' such as perfume. Besides, Ling suggested thatcultural perspective paradigm helps in understanding behavioural similarities and differences, where individualist and collectivist tendencies should not be precluded when dissecting consumer purchasing behaviour regarding luxury products like perfume.

Amaldoss and Sanjay (2002) agreed with Ling (2009) that consumers do not just attempt tofulfill their inner impulse but also, 'social needs such as prestige'. Understanding this, producers employ different strategies which include 'exclusive distribution, charging high prices, and limiting production. 'Ling (2009) might have taken into account planned behaviour of consumers. Tinne (2011) considered the unplanned factors worthy enough to influence consumers into purchasing aproduct, be it branded or otherwise. Tinne (2011) argued that "discount offer, various schemes, promotional activities, retail store offers, display of products, behaviour of sales persons, popularity of products, influence of reference groups, income level of customers and festival seasons," are indisputable variables on consumer impulse buying behaviour.

Kunes et al (2011) looked at the purchasing behaviour of perfume users from a gender perspective as to what influences different genders to either purchase ornot. The research addressed the role of sales professionals on the behaviour of male and female consumers, how effective advertisements featuring celebrities and models are, factors that influence male purchase intent for perfumes, and factors that influence female smell intent for perfumes. The outcome of the research suggested that a print advert featuring either amodel or celebrity is irrelevant when an 18-22 year old male is purchasing a fragrance for his mother, while no significant evidence that showed a celebrity endorsed fashion brand fragrance is preferred over a celebrity brand fragrance by 18-22 year old females. Further findings showed that 18-22 year old males are more likely to purchase a fragrance with a sales promotion than the females, and the 18-22 year old males are more likely to seek sales associate help when purchasing a fragrance than their 18-22 year old female counterparts.

Rai and Pradip (2000) argued in view of the globalization and economic liberations unfolding in India. The core of the debate rested on the influence of brand as cogent explanation for the behaviour of perfume users mostly in urban India. Besides, branding accordingly is attached to consciousness and prestige. Such brand consciousness has more to do with the endorsement of celebrities. Male and female consumers in the age bracket of 20 to 25 have similar buying pattern and possess two to three perfume bottles for daily use. The adolescents are price conscious and try celebrity brands that are of low cost. Even though their income levels vary, they are still attracted more to celebrity brands. However, it was found that they are less loyal to a particular brand since they have the tendency to switch brands overtime. The group is more influenced through their friends and families, while advertisements through television and magazines are subconsciously heartwarming.

Exploring Indians as fashionable people, Borgave and Chaudhari (2010) suggested that the preference and usage of perfumes will have to be placed in accordance with demography, situation, mood and buying motives of the consumer. Although the paper focused on adolescents between 20 to 25 years of age and their preferences for perfumes, yet it discovered that gender difference does not change the buying pattern of this age group. Meanwhile, the paper also concurred with the belief that Indian youths are enchanted to buying perfumes on account of price and celebrity brands. Fah et al (2011) investigated the relationships between advertising appeals, spending tendency, perceived social status and materialism on perfume purchasing behaviour among Malaysians. The research

outcome delineated a picture which does not totally break from the global trend and perception. The outcome showed the willingness and readiness of surveyed respondents to purchase and spend money on perfumes that had high levels of advertising appeals, yet influenced by perceived social status and materialism, although their spending inclination is moderate.

3. Methodology

This research adopted a descriptive method to explain the determinants of brand preference for cosmetics. This study was carried out in Abia State of Nigeria. Abia State is a State in the southeastern part of Nigeria. The Capital is Umuahia and the major commercial city is Aba. The State was created in 1991 from part of Imo State and its citizens are predominantly Igbo people (95% of the population). It is one of the nine constituent states of the Niger Delta region. Abia State covers an area of 5,834 square kilometers (*Wikipedia.org/Abia.State*). It lies within approximate latitudes $4^o40'$ and $6^o14'$ north, and longitudes $7^o10'$ and 8° east. It has a population of 2,845,380 (2006 census figures) and a population density of 578 people per square kilometer. The State accounts for 2.0 percent of Nigeria's total population. Abia State is bounded on the north and northeast by the states of Anambra, Enugu and Ebonyi. To the west of Abia is Imo State, to the east and southeast are Cross River State and AkwaIbom, and to the south is Rivers State. The industrial center of the state is in Aba, with textile manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, soap, plastics, cement, footwear, and cosmetics.

3.1. Sampling

The researchers applied both the probability and non-probability sampling methods. In using non-probability sampling method, multistage sampling method was employed, while simple random sampling was used to select the sample for the study. Using multistage sampling method, Abia State has 17 local government areas which fall into three (3) geographical zones. The zones are; Abia North comprising of Bende-Ohafia, Abiriba, Isiukwuato, and Arochukwu. Abia central has Ikwuano, Ibeku, Olokoro, Ubakala, Ohuhu, Ntigha, and Nbawsi. While Abia South has Asa, Ndoki, Ukwa East and Ukwa West, Isiala and Osisioma, Obingwa, and Ugwunagbo. With a simple random sampling, the eight (8) following local government areas were selected; Umuahia North, Umuahia South, Ohafia, Aba North, Ukwa West, Umunneochi, Aba South, and Bende. Samples were finally drawn randomly from the selected local government thereby, coming up a sample size of 300 respondents. Data were collected on consumers' demographics (age, sex, gender, marital status, education, occupation, etc); and product characteristics (price, quality, brand name, ingredients, packaging, fragrance, shelf life)

3.2. Pilot Study Results

Before the data collection instrument (questionnaire) was used for actual study it was pilot tested in Aba metropolis for comprehensiveness, relevance and completeness. Two forms of pilot test was conducted .The first test was carried out with five academicians and the second with ten users of cosmetics products. At the end of the first and second pilot tests, a refinement of the study instrument to enhance its suitability in consumers' preference for cosmetics was performed. Thereby, eliminating questions that were ambiguous.

3.3. Model Specification

The probit regression model was used for data analysis through the help of SPSS software. According to Nagler (1994), the probit model assumes that while we only observe the values 0 and 1 for the variable Y, there is a latent, unobserved continuous variable Y* that determines the value of Y.

Where Y_i^* can be specified as follows;

$\quad\quad Y_i = 1$ if $Y_i^* > 0$

$\quad\quad Y_i = 1$ if $Y_i^* \leq 0$

To estimate the determinants of brand preference for cosmetics products, the probit regression model is stated as follows;

$$Y^* = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \beta_5x_5 + \beta_6x_6 + \beta_7x_7 + \beta_8x_8 + \beta_9x_9 + \beta_{10}x_{10} + \beta_{11}x_{11} + \beta_{12}x_{12} + \beta_{13}x_{13} + \beta_{14}x_{14} + \beta_{15}x_{15} + \varepsilon$$

…………………………………………….(i)

Where;

$\quad\quad Y^*$ = Brand preference (1=preference, 0=no preference)

x_1 = age (years)

x_2 = sex (1=male, 0=Female)

x_3 = marital status (1=married, 0=single)

x_4 = education (0=informal, 1=formal)

x_5 = employment status (1=employed, 0=unemployed)

x_6 = social class (2=high, 1=middle, 0=low)

x_7 = income (0=below ₦20,000, 1=₦21,000-₦50,000, 2=₦51,000-₦100,000, 3=above ₦100,000)

x_8= price(1=high, 0=moderate)

x_9= brand name(1=known, 0=unknown)

x_{10}= quality(1=high, 0=low)

x_{11}= shelf life(1=long, 0=short)

x_{12} = fragrance(1=harsh, 0=mild)

x_{13} = packaging(1=attractive, 0=unattractive)

x_{14} = active ingredients(1=harmless, 0=harmful)

x_{15} = skin colour (1=dark, 2=Fair)

ε = stochastic variable

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. The Demographic Characteristics of Cosmetics Users
The demographic characteristics of cosmetics users in Abia State are presented in tables 1 – 7
Table 1 shows the age brackets of cosmetics consumers as was revealed by the questionnaire.

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 – 29 years	71	24
30 – 39 years	83	28
40 – 49 years	60	20
50 – 59 years	41	15
60 – 69 years	40	13
Total	**295**	**100**

Table 1: Age of cosmetics consumers in Abia State
Source: Survey data, 2015

Table 1 shows that 71 cosmetics consumers in Abia State representing 24% were within the age bracket of 20 and 35, 28% were between 35 and 45, 20% between 45 and 55, 15% were within 55 and 65, while the remaining 13% were above 65 years of age. Age group is an attribute which has a direct impact on person's attitude towards a brand. In the cosmetics market, age group is used to define the targeted market segment. Based on the maturity, the preference for cosmetics or any other product may vary. Also, it can be observed from the study that consumers preference for cosmetics decline as their age advances. People above the age of 65 use lesser cosmetics.

4.1.1. Monthly Income of the Consumers
Table 2 shows the average monthly income of the consumers of cosmetics in Abia State.

Income (₦)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20,000 - 39,000	42	14
40,000 - 59,000	90	31
60,000 - 79,000	104	35
80,000 – 99,000	59	20
Total	**295**	**100**

Table 2: Average monthly income of the consumers
Source: Survey data, 2015

Analysis of the result reveals in Table 2 that 14% of the cosmetics users earned between ₦20,000 and ₦39,000 as their monthly income, 31% earned between ₦40,000 and ₦59,000 as monthly income, 35% of the consumers earned between ₦60,000 and ₦79,000 as monthly income, while the remaining 20% earned between ₦80,000 and ₦99,000 as their monthly income. Income level of a person has a direct impact on the purchasing of a product. When the income levels rise, naturally people tend to buy more luxury/premium products. The income affects the type of goods that consumers are likely to buy.

4.1.2. Consumers' Social Class
The consumers' social class structure is presented in Table 3

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High class	91	31
Middle class	150	51
Low class	54	18
Total	**295**	**100**

Table 3: Social class of consumers
Source: Survey data, 2015

From the results in Table 3, 91 cosmetics users, representing 31%, felt they were of the high social class, 150 cosmetics users, representing 51%, said they belonged to the middle social class, while the remaining 54 consumers, representing 18%, belonged to the low social class. The social class that a person belongs to has a great impact on what he/she buys. Some consumers prefer certain brands of cosmetics because they enhance their self-image as being cosmopolitan, sophisticated, and modern. According to Ger

(1999), cosmetics tend to be targeted and positioned based on a deep cultural understanding and therefore create "a sustainable unique value and offer the symbolism of authenticity and prestige".

4.2. Determinants of Brand Preference for Cosmetics Products

Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	Z-value
Intercept	2.97042	0.105327	28.2018
Age	0.05269	0.018301	2.87908**
Sex	-0.0139	0.003602	-3.85897***
Marital Status	0.032802	0.012278	2.671608*
Education	0.053560	0.014024	3.819167***
Employment status	0.009639	0.004512	2.136303*
Income level	0.10376	0.02496	4.15707***
Social class	0.07654	0.03631	2.10804*
Price	0.02795	0.006719	4.159964**
Brand name	0.0016	0.000736	2.17475*
Quality	0.06821	0.012524	5.446343***
Shelf life	0.027274	0.009389	2.904889**
Fragrance	0.017018	0.009548	1.782361*
Packaging	0.026383	0.007061	3.736453***
Ingredients	0.023031	0.006034	3.816806***
Skin colour	0.335823	0.081290	4.131172***
No of Observation	295		
Chi-square	1804.174		
DF	280		
Prob	<0.005	0.0000	

Table 4: Probit regression showing key determinants of brand preference for cosmetics products
Source: Survey data, 2015
*Note: ***= Significant at 1% level; **= Significant at 5% level; * = Significant at 10% level*

Table 4 shows that age, marital status, education attainment, employment status, income, social class, price, quality, brand name, shelf-life, packaging, fragrance and skin colour were all positive and significant product features and demographic factors influencing brand preference for cosmetics products. However, sex, was negative, but a significant factor affecting consumers' preference for cosmetics.

Age was significant at 5% probability level and positively related to consumers' preference for cosmetics products. This indicates that brand preference for cosmetics products increases with age. Thus, as a consumer advances in age, he/she begins to prefer those cosmetics products that he/she feels suit his/her age. Age is a factor which plays a vital role in consumers' preference for cosmetics, because it is considered as a criterion in the segmenting process. As an example, some cosmetics products are targeted at consumers' age between 20-35 years and some other brands are targeted at age between 55-65 years. The consumers' brand preference in age categories may be similar and or vice versa

Marital status was significant at 10% probability level and positively related to brand preference for cosmetics products. This implies that preference for cosmetics products increases among married people. Consumers buy products over their lifetime. Consumers' preference 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. For 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 husband or daughter.

Educational attainment was significant at 1% probability level and positively related to consumers' preference for cosmetics products. This means that preference for cosmetics products increases as one advances in education. Based on the educational level of a person, preference could vary. A well educated consumer may read the ingredients of a lotion or cream before the buying decision is made. At the same time consumer with a lesser educational level may decide to buy the product due to the attractiveness of the package. Hence, analysis of the relationship of educational level and the brand is very important. Thus, as a consumer acquires more academic knowledge, his/her preference for cosmetics products will increase as the consumer can easily compare prices, quality and other product attributes before actual purchase.

Employment status was significant at 10% probability level and positively related to consumers' preference for cosmetics. This indicates that preference for cosmetics products will increase with an increase in employment. Thus, as people get gainfully employed, they become more disposed to spend on their desired cosmetics products than their unemployed counterparts. The occupation of a consumer could vary during the life cycle, or may be the same 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. Siriwatana (1988) indicated that differences in occupation have an effect on consumer preference for orchids and carnations.

Income was significant at 1% probability level and positively related to consumers' preference for cosmetics products. This implies that preference for cosmetics products among consumers will increase as their income increases. Income implies the purchasing power of a consumer. 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 and consumption. But this is not applicable for inferior goods. Furthermore, income also affects the type of goods that consumers are likely to buy. This further conforms to *a priori* expectation and shows that consumers will prefer more quality cosmetics as their income rises.

Social status was significant at 10% probability level and positively related to consumers' preference for cosmetics products. This means that preference for cosmetics increases as ones social class increases. Consumers may prefer some brands because of associations of higher prestige. Some brands may have a higher prestige than others due to their relative scarcity and higher price. Furthermore, some brands may also stand for cosmopolitanism. Some consumers prefer such brands because they enhance their self-image as being cosmopolitan, sophisticated, and modern.

Perceived quality is defined as the consumers' judgment about an entity's overall excellence or superiority. Quality was significant at 1% probability level and positively related to consumers' preference for cosmetics products. The estimated regression equation indicates that quality is directly related to consumers' preference. It further confirms to *a priori* expectation and explains that as the quality of cosmetics products increases, consumers' preference for them also increases.

Fragrance was significant at 10% probability level and positively related to consumers' preference for cosmetics. This indicates that preference for cosmetics products will increase with an increase in the quality of fragrance of the products. Thus, consumers will prefer cosmetics products with improved fragrance.

Brand name was significant in the study at 10% probability level and positively related to consumers' preference for cosmetics products. A good name, they say, is more precious than silver and gold. Thus, when consumers create a good image about a particular brand, they tend to shift their preference to such brands. Therefore, company reputation gives a psychological affirmation that the brands from certain companies will more likely perform better than those from rival, non-reputable ones.

Packaging was found to be statistically significant at 1% probability level and positively related to consumers' preference for cosmetics. Consumers by this result will always prefer those cosmetics products that are attractively packaged. Cosmetic products that are attractively packaged are likely to create a perception in the cognitive mind of a customer, as if they are of a superior value than cosmetic products without attractive packaging.

Skin colour was found to be statistically significant at the 1% probability level and positively related to brand preference for cosmetics. Skin colour thus, significantly exerts considerable influence on the preference of consumers towards body cream and lotion brands. A unit change in skin colour will result in about 0.335823 units change in consumers' preference for body lotion and cream brands. Since body creams and lotions are applied directly to the skin, brand selection occurs due to the nature of the skin. Some brands may be harmful to different skin colours, depending on the ingredients included in the cream/lotion. Therefore, consumers may pay special attention to their skin colour when the brand is purchased. Skin colour can be categorized as dark and fair.

5. Conclusion

Nowadays, it is noticeable that the markets are conducted towards the Global Market by employing of evolution services and goods to patronize their customers. Therefore, marketers have to better understand their customers based on their needs and wants. Results of the study conclude that factors such as age of consumers, gender, marital status, education, employment status, income, social class, price of cosmetics product, the brand name, quality of product, shelf life, fragrance, packaging characteristics, ingredients, skin type and colour, all play a very important role in influencing brand preference for cosmetics in Abia State. Long-term success and sustainable reputation of an organization depends on customer patronage. This study supports the view that understanding consumers' personal variables should remain prime focus for marketers to attract customers and thereby maintain their market share in today's competitive business environment.

A consumer does not buy the same cosmetics products at 20 or 70 years. It is obvious that the consumers change the purchase of goods and services with the passage of time. Understanding the family life-cycle which consists of different stages such young singles, married couples, unmarried couples etc will help marketers to develop appropriate products for each stage. For example, during his life, a consumer could change her body cream or lotion from natural oil to a skin lightener during mid-life with family before needing to switch to Cocoa Butter during her aging stages.

Several product attributes influence consumers in their preference for cosmetics products particularly, body lotions and creams. However, the ultimate decisive elements are lasting fragrance and quality of the body cream and lotion. Any firm offering body cream or lotion who can come up with a desirable fragrance of high quality and combines it with right type of product elements i.e. attractive price, long shelf life, packaging, skin-friendly ingredients, and container/bottle design will be confident in obtaining success.

Study of brand preference is great way to success in the marketplace. Hence analyzing the preference of consumers is an interesting area for the marketers to develop the marketing strategies for their brands. Therefore, there is need for organizations to first conduct extensive research in effectively understanding the preference behaviours of consumers. Such marketing research will go a long way in revealing the major demographic and other variables that have greater and stronger effects on brand preference for products. In order to create and maintain acceptance for their cosmetics products, business organizations must recognize that many of their core product attributes are necessary. Therefore, there is a need to understand the important roles of each cosmetic product attribute i.e. price, quality, packaging, shelf life, fragrance, active ingredients used, and availability in order to enhance brand appeal.

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