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THE IMPACT OF NEED FOR COGNITION IN SELECTION OF DEODORANTS AMONG FEMALE YOUNGSTERS

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ABSTRACT

It is noted that there is an impact of level of need for cognition in buying behavior of consumers, relying on the same marketers / retailers are leaving no stone unturned to entice customers through advertisements. This study tries to explore the effect of need for cognition on selection of deodorants among youngsters. It was a survey and observational study conducted on female subjects belonging to age group between 18 to 22 years. The results were interesting and reflected that there is a significant difference in deodorant evaluation and buying as far as need for cognition level of young females is concerned.

KEYWORDS

consumer behavior, need for cognition, deodorants, preference.

INTRODUCTION

As we know, that personality of consumer has an impact on their evaluation and purchase of products. Each individual has a specific perception about himself, which is referred as self image. It has been observed that people try to buy deodorants which either helps them in enhancing their self-image or reaching an ideal self image.

In Indian context it may be noted that there is no dearth of variety of deodorants in the market across price segments, further this category is being advertised heavily. Most of the advertisements being based on sensual appeal, while there is certain advertisement which indicate to fulfill social and belonging needs. The Need for Cognition Scale is an assessment instrument that quantitatively measures "the tendency for an individual to engage in and enjoy thinking" (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982, p. 116). Cacioppo and Petty created the Need for Cognition Scale in 1982. The original scale included 34 questions. Two years later, Cacioppo and Petty collaborated with Chuan Feng Kao to shorten the scale to the 18-item format. The 18 item format scale has been used to check NFC level in this study.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

As it is known that odour has a capacity to impact the human psychology, it can have an impact on perception of an individual and even mood, thus impacting the cognitive processes and behaviour altogether. Considering the high relevance of need for cognition in the field of consumer behaviour, considering the dearth of specific researches in India on deodorants, it would not only be interesting, but also important from consumer behaviour point of view to note how need for cognition impacts selection of deodorants.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the current buying pattern of female youngsters while shopping a deodorant.
2. To study the impact of NFC level on buying pattern of female youngsters
3. To study the impact of reference group opinion on deodorant buying female youngsters.

HYPOTHESIS

H1: There is no significant difference in impact of deodorant advertisement on females as far as NFC level is concerned

H2: There is no significant difference in switching of a deodorant Brand of females as far as NFC level is concerned.

H3: There is no significant difference in buying of females as far as NFC level is concerned.

H4: There is no significant difference in time taken to evaluate while deodorant buying by females as far as NFC level is concerned.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The thinking disposition that is proved to describe and predict individual differences extraordinarily in cognitive processing is need for cognition (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982).

Need for Cognition refers to dispositional differences in cognitive motivation, as it is thought to reflect stable individual differences in the intrinsic motivation to engage in and enjoy effortful cognitive endeavors (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein & Jarvis, 1996).

Consumers often feel a sense of guilt or shame for making purchases that violate their better interests (Faber and O'Guinn 1992).

Kotler Philip (2009), mentions that though five stages have been identified in decision making of a consumer (Problem Recognition, Information Search, Evaluation of Alternatives, Purchase Decisions and Post Purchase Behaviour), however consumers don't always pass through all five stages. They may skip of reverse some. When you buy a convenience product or has a particular shop patronized you may skip information search and evaluation.

Lenochová P, Vohnoutová P, Roberts SC, Oberzaucher E, Grammer K, et al. (2012), did a study to conclude that fragrance use extends beyond simple masking effects and that people choose perfumes that interact well with their own odour.

Rao K Poranki & Hasouneh A (2014), did a study in Saudi Arabia to conclude that, the young men select their brand according to fragrance and brand image. Further, advertisements are the way through which most of the consumers come to know about the new brands.

According to Syed Imran (2014), female customers are not Brand Loyal for deodorants and they are easily willing switch and use multiple deodorant brands at a single time.

According to Pathak Nitin & Sehgal Mili (2011), Brand plays a significant role in choice of deodorant & consumers prefers the deodorant that has fragrance longevity, aroma, intensity, brand value and seasonality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An observational research was conducted in Kangra City of Himachal in India. The entire study was divided into three steps. First a group of female participants were asked their preference of deodorant brands. Then those participants who did not like Brand 'A' and Brand 'B' (to maintain secrecy in research Brand Names not mentioned) were shown 2 different advertisements of both brand (A1, A2 & B1, B2), A 1 & B1 highlighting product attributes facts with common man appeal, while A2 & B2 specifically having a celebrity & visual appeal. After the show of advertisements, they were administered a questionnaire, where 1st part was to ask their preference of advertisements and the second was to specific to calculate their need for cognition level. In the second step all these participants were observed for various mock studies regarding taste evaluation of sweet candies, biscuits, and different advertisement for a span of one week. Then the subjects which were overt and lucid in expressing their views were specifically selected for step three. In the last step subjects were offered 6 different deodorants of foreign make of

unknown brand sourced from Delhi & which are not available in the local market, two of them being deodorants for males. It was ensured that colour / anything written on the deodorant bottle did not indicate any specific gender. They were asked to evaluate and arrive at a decision to buy any one. They were observed how much time they took actually for analysing the deodorants. The original price of the items was masked and were re-labelled on a continuum as Rs.125, Rs.150, Rs.175 (Male Specific), Rs.200 (Male Specific), Rs.225, Rs.250

PRIMARY DATA

Judgemental & Convenience Sampling was done among the college going youth of 18 to 22 years. Only known and those subjects were included who regularly use deodorants and who were comfortable with the researcher and able to express their views/opinion/behaviour freely. The samples had almost common background in terms of education and belonged to family with an annual income between 4Lkhs to 8Lkhs.

SAMPLE SIZE

Final research was conducted on 30 subjects, although in the first step 162 participants were taken, it reduced to 62 in step two on filtration and ultimately 30 subjects were selected for final step. Although 31 subjects qualified for the final step, however after calculation of NFC the subject scoring the median value of NFC was dropped, hence the final research is based on the sample that consisting of 30 female respondents of 18-22 years of age.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

The data collected through questionnaire were tabulated and analyzed by using excel. 18 item format devised by Cacioppo and Petty with Chuan Feng has been used to check NFC level in this study. As 9 point was used to calculate the NFC Scores, the highest score possible was 72 (18 items multiplied by 4 points each) and the lowest possible score was -72 scale (+4 = very strong agreement, +3 = strong agreement, +2 = moderate agreement, +1 = slight agreement, 0 = neither agreement nor disagreement, -1 = slight disagreement, -2 = moderate disagreement, -3 = strong disagreement, -4 = very strong disagreement). The highest score was 51 and the lowest was -3, while the median value was 26, thus all the subjects having score below 26 were labelled as low scorers relatively to those having higher than 26 were considered as High Scorers. The subject median scoring of NFC (26) was dropped from final list.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1: ADVERTISEMENT CHOICE AND CELEBRITY APPEAL

Advertisement Choice	High NFC	Low NFC	Total
Celebrity & Visual Appeal	5	15	21
Product Characteristic & Facts	9	0	9
Grand Total	15	15	30

Source: Primary Data

It is evident from the table 1, that majority of female youngster (70%) prefer advertisements with celebrity and visual appeal. While 100% of the respondents with low NFC prefer advertisements with celebrity and visual appeal, even 33 % of the respondents with High NFC Level prefer with celebrity and visual appeal. 77 % of respondents with high NFC prefer advertisements with product characteristics & common man appeal.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING (H1)

H1: There is no significant difference in impact of deodorant advertisement on females as far as NFC level is concerned

TABLE 2: EXPECTED CELL FREQUENCY CALCULATION FOR H1

Expected Cell Frequencies (e)			
Advertisement Choice	High NFC	Low NFC	Total
Celebrity & Visual Appeal	10	10	21
Product Characteristic & Common Man Appeal	5	5	9
Grand Total	15	15	30

Source: Table 1 and Primary Data

TABLE 3: CHI SQUARE TESTING FOR H1

Observed Frequency (o)	e	(o-e) ²	(o-e) ² /e
5	10	25	2.5
10	5	25	5
15	10	25	2.5
0	5	25	5
Sum of (o-e)²/e			15.000

Source: Table 1 and Table 2

Since calculated value 15.0 of chi square is much greater than the table value of 3.84 at 1 degree of freedom and 5% level, hence proposed hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in Advertisement Appeal as far as NFC Level of female youngsters is concerned.

TABLE 4: BRAND SWITCHING AND NFC LEVEL

Brand Switching	High NFC	Low NFC	Grand Total
Never	3	0	3
Yes, But Not Frequently	10	9	19
Yes, Very Frequently	2	6	8
Grand Total	15	15	30

Source: Primary Data

The data analysis of table no 4, shows that almost 90% have switched their Deodorant Brand in past. Only a 10% are Brand Loyals in terms of deodorant. It also interesting to note that out of total almost 67% have changed it very frequently, while 27% have changed their brand less frequently. 100 % of low level NFC respondents have switched their Brand; however, 20% of high level NFC have never changed their Brand, while 67% have changed very frequently and 13% have changed less frequently. Only 40% of Respondents with Low NFC have changed their deodorant brand less frequently.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING (H2)

H2: There is no significant difference in switching of a deodorant Brand of females as far as NFC level is concerned.

TABLE 5: EXPECTED CELL FREQUENCY CALCULATION FOR H2

Expected Cell Frequencies (e)			
Brand Switching	High NFC	Low NFC	Grand Total
Never	1.5	1.5	3
Yes, But Not Frequently	9.5	9.5	19
Yes, Very Frequently	4	4	8
Grand Total	15	15	30

Source: Table 4 and Primary Data

TABLE 6: CHI SQUARE TESTING FOR H2

Observed Frequency (o)	e	(o-e) ²	(o-e) ² /e
3	1.5	2.25	1.5
10	9.5	0.25	0.0263158
2	4	4	1
0	1.5	2.25	1.5
9	9.5	0.25	0.0263158
6	4	4	1
Sum of (o-e) ² /e			5.053

Source: Table 4 and Table 5

Since calculated value 5.053 of chi square less than the table value of 5.991 at 2 degree of freedom and 5% level. Hence we accept null hypothesis no 2, i.e. there is no significant difference in switching of a deodorant Brand of females as far as NFC level is concerned.

TABLE 7: BASIS OF BUYING OF DEODORANT

Buying/Switching Basis	High NFC	Low NFC	Grand Total
Celebrity Endorsement / Advertisement	1	1	2
Smell/Perfume	14	14	28
Grand Total	15	15	30

Source: Primary Data

The point represented by Table 6, asked in open ended form, reveals that all respondents have a similar parameter while buying a deodorant, most (93%) of them are impacted by smell / perfume of the deodorant. While a miniscule 3% are impacted by celebrity endorsement / advertisement. The trend remains exactly same for high and low NFC Level.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING (H3)

H3: There is no significant difference in buying of females as far as NFC level is concerned.

TABLE 8: EXPECTED CELL FREQUENCY CALCULATION FOR H3

Expected Cell Frequencies (e)			
Buying/Switching Basis	High NFC	Low NFC	Grand Total
Celebrity Endorsement / Advertisement	1	1	2
Smell/Odour	14	14	28
Grand Total	15	15	30

Source: Table 7 and Primary Data

Since the expected cell frequencies for 2 parameters were less than 5, hence it was not viable to conduct chi square further.

TABLE 9: TIME TAKEN TO EVALUATE DEODORANT

Evaluation Time	High NFC	Low NFC	Grand Total
Less than 3 Minutes	12	6	18
More than 3 Minutes	3	9	12
Grand Total	15	15	30

Source: Primary Data (observational study)

As per table 9, Overall 60% respondents took less than 3 minutes to evaluate the deodorant while buying. Out of high NFC respondents almost 80 % took less than 3 minutes and 20% took more than 3 minutes. While for low NFC only 40% took less than 3 minutes, majority 60% took more time to evaluate.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING (H4)

H4: There is no significant difference in time taken to evaluate while deodorant buying by females as far as NFC level is concerned.

TABLE 10: EXPECTED CELL FREQUENCY CALCULATION FOR H4

Expected Cell Frequencies (e)			
Evaluation Time	High NFC	Low NFC	Grand Total
Less than 3 Minutes	9	9	18
More than 3 Minutes	6	6	12
Grand Total	15	15	30

Source: Table 9 and Primary Data

TABLE 11: CHI SQUARE TESTING FOR H4

Observed Frequency (o)	e	(o-e) ²	(o-e) ² /e
12	9	9	1
3	6	9	1.5
6	9	9	1
9	6	9	1.5
Sum of (o-e) ² /e			5.000

Source: Table 10 and Table 11

Since calculated value 5.00 of chi square is much greater than the table value of 3.84 at 1 degree of freedom and 5% level. Hence null hypothesis is rejected and it is established that there is significant difference in time taken to evaluate while deodorant buying by females as far as NFC level is concerned.

TABLE 12: DEODORANT SELECTION

Price Range	High NFC	Low NFC	Grand Total
125	2	2	4
150	2	2	4
175	4	1	5
200	3	4	5
225	2	3	7
250	2	3	5
Grand Total	15	15	30

Source: Primary Data

As per the facts established by the table no 12, it is interesting to note that the deodorant which was preferred by highest 13% respondents was Rs.225 one, followed by Rs.250,200,175 ones which were preferred by 17% respondents each, while deodorants of price Rs.125 and Rs.150 were preferred by 13% each respondents. It is to be noted that deodorants with price range Rs.175 & Rs.200 were male deodorants, and this be almost similar to blind test, confirms that a considerable (as per test almost 34% respondents) no of female youngsters may prefer masculine deodorants.

FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

- Majority of female youngster (70%) prefer deodorant advertisements with celebrity.
- While 100% of the respondents with low NFC prefer advertisements with celebrity and visual appeal.
- Only 33 % of the respondents with High NFC Level prefer with celebrity and visual appeal. 77 % of respondents with high NFC prefer advertisements with product characteristics & common man appeal.
- There is a significant difference in Advertisement Appeal as far as NFC Level of female youngsters is concerned.
- Almost 90% have switched their Deodorant Brand in past. Only a 10% are Brand Loyal in terms of deodorant.
- There is no significant difference in switching of a deodorant Brand of females as far as NFC level is concerned
- Most (93%) of them are impacted by smell / perfume of the deodorant. While a miniscule 3% are impacted by celebrity endorsement / advertisement, thus although having advertisement with celebrity appeal may create awareness/ brand image, however for actual purchase having a good smell/perfume is the key.
- This indicates that while buying the smell/perfume is the key parameter considered, however if the consumer find product irrelevant/ unsatisfactory they may again switch the brand.
- There is significant difference in time taken to evaluate while deodorant buying by females as far as NFC level is concerned.
- The respondents with High NFC level take considerably less time in evaluating and arriving at a decision to purchase a deodorant as compared to the Low NFC level respondents.

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

- It is also interesting to note that although most of the female youngsters prefer deodorant advertisements with celebrity appeal, however while actual purchase majority of them buy deodorant on the basis of smell/perfume, thus deodorant brands may rely on advertisements for generating awareness accordingly, however they must understand that having a good smell/perfume as per target market is the key.
- Although not indicated by the respondents, longevity of the smell, etc might also be the other factors but at the time of buying/ evaluating a deodorant smell/perfume is the factor which is on the top of mind followed by only the brand image created by celebrity endorsement/ advertisement.
- This indicates that while buying the smell/perfume is the key parameter considered, however if the consumer find product irrelevant/ unsatisfactory they may again switch the brand, thus marketers need to work on other parameters, like longevity etc, as well which are now considered mandatory.
- As Brand Loyalty in the deodorant is low in female youngster market, brands must work hard to remain relevant to their target group.
- In other terms it can also be seen as an opportunity to introduce new deodorant brands for females.
- As the respondents don't mind switching their brands quite often, it is very important for the brand to only work for brand image, and get included in the preferred set of consumers, however they need to keep an eye on competitors as well and keep themselves relevant accordingly.

LIMITATIONS & SCOPE OF FURTHER STUDY

- The study being confined to the extent of interpreting data collected from a set of limited participants might not be the actual representation of the total population.
- The samples were chosen from a national college in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India, belonging to different states of India, however chances of regional biases cannot be denied.
- Further research may be carried with a larger sample size.
- Similar Research may also be carried out for the other age groups of and may be scaled to other regions of India.
- As this study limited to certain specific factors & factors expressed by the respondents as per their top of mind awareness for buying deodorants, a study to find out all the factors which impact the buying may also be carried out separately.

CONCLUSION

With the introduction of new deodorant brands every day, Indian market for deodorant is becoming matured. With more educated and aspirational consumers the deodorant brands are targeting niche market. With the market flooded with different me too brands, it is interesting that consumers are also losing their brand loyalty in the deodorant market. They are ready to experiment and switch, thus making it imperative for the deodorant brands to keep them relevant at every step and follow their competitors

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