

Women Consumers' Buying Behaviour Towards Personal Care Products: An Empirical Study in Chennai City

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Abstract:

Purpose:

This study investigates women's purchasing behaviour regarding personal care products in Chennai, amidst the rapidly expanding Indian personal care market fuelled by increasing disposable incomes, brand recognition, and digital access.

Methodology:

The research adopts a descriptive design using convenience sampling. Primary data were collected from 85 women respondents using a structured questionnaire. The data were analysed in SPSS to identify the influence of demographic and product-related factors on purchasing behaviour.

Findings:

The findings indicate that demographic factors such as age, education, occupation, income, and marital status significantly influence purchasing behaviour. Among product-related features, brand loyalty, product quality, and brand name stand out as the main drivers of purchase decisions. Additionally, brand ambassadors and word-of-mouth recommendations are crucial influences on consumer choices. The study also reveals that women in Chennai are highly aware of brands, receptive to innovations, and increasingly preferring premium and herbal personal care products.

Practical Implications:

The findings provide actionable insights for marketers and personal care brands to develop targeted marketing strategies for Chennai consumers, with an emphasis on brand positioning, perceived quality, and promotion through trusted influencers and advocacy channels. Dixit and Singh (2024)

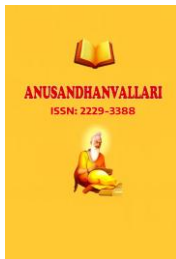
Originality/Value:

This study provides localised insights into consumer behaviour in Chennai, emphasising rising preferences for premium and herbal products. It also examines how demographic and brand-related factors jointly influence women's purchasing choices in the personal care segment.

Keywords: Personal care products, buying behaviour, brand loyalty, decision influencers, Chennai.

Introduction

The Indian personal care industry has experienced significant growth over the past decade, becoming one of the most dynamic parts of the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. It encompasses a broad range of products designed for personal grooming, hygiene, skin care, and cosmetic enhancements—including moisturizers, face creams, hair oils, shampoos, soaps, deodorants, perfumes, toothpaste, and various wellness items. Previously, such products were considered discretionary, and consumers focused on essential, low-value items. However,



rapid urbanisation, rising disposable incomes, exposure to global beauty trends, and the influence of digital media have drastically shifted consumer preferences, transforming personal care into a vital aspect of modern lifestyles.

India's personal care market is projected to reach USD 20 billion by 2025, driven by a growing middle class, rising brand awareness, and increasing demand for premium and natural products. The market competition has intensified due to the expansion of global brands and domestic companies diversifying and innovating. This growth extends beyond major urban centers like Mumbai and Delhi to include other key cities such as Chennai, which is known for its cosmopolitan consumer base, high literacy rate, and evolving lifestyle trends. Huzaif and Supriya (2025)

In Chennai, demand for personal care products is shaped by cultural tastes, climate, and economic conditions. The city's hot, humid weather leads to higher use of skincare items like sunscreens, fairness creams, and moisturizers, as well as hair care products such as anti-dandruff shampoos and hair oils. Furthermore, the rise in working women, growth of social media influencers, and the availability of e-commerce platforms have boosted brand awareness and supply. Urban and semi-urban women in Chennai tend to be more attentive to product quality, brand reputation, and value for money.

The shift toward branded personal care items is driven by aggressive advertising, celebrity endorsements, and online discount stores. Domestic brands such as Lakmé, Himalaya, and Dove have a strong market presence, while international brands like L'Oréal, Maybelline, and Nivea are also influential in Chennai. Furthermore, the rising popularity of organic and herbal products from brands like Forest Essentials, Biotique, and Lotus Herbals reflects a growing preference for natural ingredients.

Understanding women's purchasing behaviour for personal care products in Chennai is crucial for marketers because it reveals key demographic details, motivations, and buying patterns. Variables such as age, education, occupation, and income significantly influence preferences. Additionally, product-specific factors such as brand name, quality, price, and past usage play a role. Purchase decisions are further influenced by factors like social media, celebrity endorsements, and word-of-mouth recommendations.

This study aims to explore these aspects through empirical research with 85 female participants in Chennai. Using statistical methods such as ANOVA and correlation analysis on variables like demographics, products, and influencers, it seeks to identify the key factors influencing purchasing intentions in the Chennai personal care market. The findings are expected to guide manufacturers, retailers, and marketers in designing targeted campaigns, refining product positioning, and boosting consumer satisfaction in a competitive environment. Mehta (2024)

Objectives Of The Study

1. To analyse how demographic factors such as age, education, occupation, income, and marital status influence women consumers' purchasing behaviour towards personal care products in Chennai.
2. To determine the key product-related factors—such as brand name, product quality, price, brand loyalty, affordability, recommendations from salespeople, and prior experiences—that influence women's purchasing decisions.
3. To evaluate how decision influencers such as media channels, brand ambassadors, and references from family and friends affect women consumers' purchasing behaviour for personal care products.
4. Offer insights and suggestions for personal care brands to improve their market positioning and customer engagement strategies in Chennai.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- **H₀₁:** There is no significant mean difference among the demographic groups of women consumers towards buying personal care products in Chennai city.
- **H₀₂:** There is no significant influence of product-related factors on women consumers' buying behaviour towards personal care products in Chennai city.
- **H₀₃:** There is no significant impact of decision influencers on women consumers' buying behaviour towards personal care products in Chennai city.

Review Of Literature

Over the past decade, women's purchasing habits for personal care products have garnered increasing academic and market focus. Recent studies highlight a significant transformation in India's beauty and personal care (BPC) sector, driven by rapid urbanization, rising disposable incomes, and heightened exposure to global beauty trends. Industry reports forecast a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in the double digits, projecting the market to reach USD 20–25 billion by the mid-2020s. This surge is particularly evident in major cities such as Chennai, where a diverse consumer base, high literacy, and extensive digital access contribute to evolving consumption behaviours.

Kumar and Gupta (2022) found that post-pandemic lifestyle changes have shaped product preferences, with a significant rise in demand for herbal, skincare, and hygiene products. They found that working professionals and urban women are more likely to prefer premium products that provide quality and safety guarantees. In the same vein, Mehta and Rao (2021) indicated that social media influence, product quality, and brand image play critical roles in shaping purchase intentions among metropolitan Indian women. Authors highlighted the influence of Instagram and YouTube influencers on perceptions of brands and product trials, a trend most apparent among younger consumers.

Digital commerce now plays a crucial role in personal care. Sharma et al. (2021) found that e-commerce reduces access barriers, boosts brand availability, and broadens choices, leading to more experimentation and brand switching. Similarly, Narayan and Sinha (2023) observed that quick commerce and online marketing effectively attract younger, tech-savvy consumers in urban areas like Chennai.

Climatic and cultural factors clearly influence personal care purchasing habits. In Chennai's hot and humid climate, Lakshmi and Prasad (2020) found that consumers prefer skincare products such as moisturizers, fairness creams, and sunscreens, along with hair care items for managing humidity. Their study indicates that climatic needs often reinforce brand loyalty, promoting repeat purchases.

The shift towards herbal and natural products remains a key trend. Rajan and Joseph (2022) noted that increased concerns about ingredient safety and fears of chemical use have prompted urban women to choose Ayurvedic and herbal brands like Himalaya, Lotus, and Biotique. These brands leverage cultural heritage along with modern branding to connect with urban-educated consumers.

Research on decision factors highlights that word-of-mouth and celebrity endorsements remain influential. Thomas and Varma (2021) revealed that friends and family referrals play a crucial role when trying a brand for the first time, while sustained use often depends on media exposure and the perceived authenticity of celebrities. Additionally, Lavuri and Sreeramulu (2019) discovered a positive correlation between brand endorsers, family referrals, and purchase behavior in the personal care sector.

The literature reviewed indicates that women's purchasing behaviour regarding personal care items is influenced by a combination of demographic factors, product characteristics, and decision drivers. Although national and international research provides a general overview, location-specific research in major cities, such as Chennai, is

required, as the sociocultural context, climate, and digital acceptance collectively influence consumer behaviour. The current research addresses this deficiency by examining these dynamics in the Chennai market using empirical data from 85 women respondents.

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive research design to investigate the buying behaviour of women consumers of personal care products in Chennai. Descriptive research is suitable for obtaining a clear understanding of the characteristics, attitudes, and preferences of a specific population. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to capture demographic details, product-related factors, decision influencers, and purchase patterns. The questionnaire comprised both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions, ensuring that the responses could be quantified and subjected to statistical analysis.

The target population for this study consisted of women consumers residing in Chennai who regularly purchase personal care products. A convenience sampling method was employed because it was suitable for reaching respondents within the given time and resource constraints. The sample size for this study was fixed at 85 respondents, representing various age groups, educational backgrounds, occupations, and income levels. Efforts were made to ensure a diverse sample to capture varied consumer perspectives.

Data were collected through a combination of personal interviews and online surveys, enabling coverage of both tech-savvy consumers and those less active in digital spaces. Secondary data were also reviewed to provide contextual background, drawing on published research papers, industry reports, market surveys, and credible online resources.

The collected data were analysed using SPSS to apply statistical tools, including descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and correlation analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise demographic characteristics and purchasing patterns. ANOVA was used to determine whether significant differences existed between demographic groups in their buying behaviour, and to assess the impact of product factors and decision influencers. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships between demographic variables, product attributes, and decision influencers.

This methodology provides a systematic approach to identifying the key determinants influencing women's buying behaviour towards personal care products in Chennai, ensuring that the findings are grounded in empirical evidence and can be effectively applied in marketing and strategic decision-making.

Data Analysis And Interpretation

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents' demographic characteristics.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 85)

Particulars	Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 25	18	21.2
	26–30	22	25.9
	31–35	20	23.5
	36–40	15	17.6
	41 and above	10	11.8

Education	Below Graduation	12	14.1
	Graduation	30	35.3
	Post Graduation	28	32.9
	Above PG	15	17.7
Occupation	Govt. Employee	10	11.8
	Private Employee	22	25.9
	Business	8	9.4
	Home Maker	15	17.6
	Student	30	35.3
Monthly Income	Below ₹20,000	8	9.4
	₹20,001–30,000	40	47.1
	₹30,001–40,000	15	17.6
	₹40,001–50,000	12	14.1
	₹50,001 and above	10	11.8
Marital Status	Unmarried	60	70.6
	Married	25	29.4

The sample is diverse in terms of age, education, and occupation. A significant proportion (35.3%) are students, followed by private employees (25.9%). The majority fall in the monthly income bracket of ₹20,001–30,000, and most respondents (70.6%) are unmarried.

ANOVA Analysis

a) Demographic Factors vs. Buying Behaviour

Table 2: ANOVA – Demographic Factors and Buying Behaviour

Variable	F-Value	Sig. Value	Result
Age	2.156	0.034	Significant
Education	3.022	0.005	Significant
Occupation	2.484	0.021	Significant
Monthly Income	2.711	0.014	Significant
Marital Status	2.091	0.04	Significant

All demographic factors show a significant difference in buying behaviour ($p < 0.05$). Education and income emerge as particularly strong differentiators, suggesting that higher educational attainment and income levels are associated with greater brand consciousness and purchase frequency.

b) Product Factors vs. Buying Behaviour

Table 3: ANOVA – Product Factors and Buying Behaviour

Product Factor	F-Value	Sig. Value	Result
Brand Name	2.345	0.017	Significant
Product Quality	3.102	0.003	Significant
Product Price	2.012	0.046	Significant
Brand Loyalty	3.565	0.001	Significant
Affordability	2.228	0.025	Significant
Recommendations of Salespeople	1.954	0.049	Significant
Previous Usage Experience	2.601	0.012	Significant

All product factors significantly influence buying behaviour. Brand loyalty, product quality, and brand name are the strongest motivators, indicating that women consumers in Chennai prioritise trusted brands and superior product quality over low pricing.

c) Decision Influencers Vs. Buying Behaviour

Table 4: ANOVA – Decision Influencers and Buying Behaviour

Decision Influencer	F-Value	Sig. Value	Result
Media Vehicles	2.213	0.027	Significant
Brand Ambassadors	3.741	0.000	Significant
Family & Friend References	3.412	0.001	Significant

Decision influencers play a significant role in shaping purchase decisions. Among these, brand ambassadors and recommendations from family/friend recommendations have the greatest impact, reflecting the importance of trust and social proof in Chennai's consumer market.

Correlation Analysis

Table 5: Correlation between Demographic Factors and Buying Behaviour

Demographic Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Sig. Value	Result
Age	0.432	0.000	Strong Positive
Education	0.591	0.000	Strong Positive
Occupation	0.402	0.002	Moderate Positive
Income	0.578	0.000	Strong Positive
Marital Status	0.421	0.001	Moderate Positive

Table 6: Correlation between Product Factors and Buying Behaviour

Product Factor	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Sig. Value	Result
Brand Name	0.562	0.000	Strong Positive
Product Quality	0.544	0.000	Strong Positive
Brand Loyalty	0.603	0.000	Strong Positive
Affordability	-0.421	0.001	Negative
Previous Usage Exp.	-0.438	0.001	Negative

Table 7: Correlation between Decision Influencers and Buying Behaviour

Decision Influencer	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Sig. Value	Result
Media Vehicles	0.412	0.002	Moderate Positive

Brand Ambassadors	0.629	0.000	Strong Positive
Family & Friend Ref.	0.584	0.000	Strong Positive

Correlation results reveal that education, income, brand loyalty, and brand ambassadors have the strongest positive associations with buying behaviour. Interestingly, affordability and prior usage experience are negatively correlated, suggesting that some consumers are willing to switch brands despite prior satisfaction if a product offers greater value or novelty.

Findings

The study on women consumers' buying behaviour towards personal care products in Chennai city highlights several important trends. It was found that demographic variables such as age, education, occupation, income, and marital status significantly influence purchasing behaviour. Women with higher levels of education and income exhibited greater brand consciousness and purchased personal care products more frequently, indicating that socio-economic status plays a major role in shaping buying patterns. Brand loyalty, product quality, and brand name emerged as the most influential product-related factors, whereas price and affordability were of secondary importance. This suggests that consumers are willing to pay more for trusted brands that deliver consistent quality. The study also revealed that influencers such as brand ambassadors and recommendations from family and friends play a significant role in purchase decisions, whereas media platforms, particularly social media, have a growing impact among younger consumers. Correlation analysis confirmed strong positive associations between buying behaviour and factors such as education, income, brand loyalty, and brand ambassadors, whereas affordability and prior usage experience showed negative correlations, suggesting a willingness to explore new products despite prior satisfaction.

Suggestions

Based on the research, several suggestions emerge for marketers and product developers in the personal care industry. Companies should prioritise boosting brand engagement by maintaining consistent product quality, launching innovative variants, and strengthening brand identity through targeted marketing campaigns. The significant role of brand ambassadors and peer recommendations underscores the importance of investing strategically in influencer marketing and social media, leveraging relatable personalities to foster trust. As demand for premium and herbal products grows, brands should broaden their natural, high-quality offerings to attract health-conscious, educated urban consumers. Marketing efforts should also be tailored to Chennai's cultural and climate conditions, focusing on products suitable for humid weather, sun protection, and regional hair care needs. Consumer education via awareness campaigns about ingredient safety and product benefits can further boost brand credibility and promote product trials. Moreover, creating a strong omnichannel presence—combining offline availability with online ease—will be vital to meet the changing purchasing habits of women in Chennai.

Conclusion

The present study provides valuable insights into the buying behaviour of women consumers of personal care products in Chennai. The findings clearly indicate that purchasing decisions are shaped by a combination of demographic characteristics, product-specific attributes, and decision influencers. Women with higher levels of education and income tend to exhibit greater brand loyalty and a preference for high-quality products, reflecting a shift towards value-based, quality-driven consumption. Brand loyalty, product quality, and brand name remain the strongest motivators, while the influence of brand ambassadors and peer recommendations underscores the

importance of trust and social influence in the purchase process. The results also suggest that affordability and prior usage experience are not always decisive, as consumers are willing to explore new products and brands.

The study confirms that Chennai's personal care market is both brand-conscious and open to innovation, with an increasing interest in premium, herbal, and natural product lines. For marketers, these insights emphasise the need for targeted strategies that align with the city's cultural preferences, climatic conditions, and digital engagement patterns. By leveraging influencer marketing, maintaining product quality, and adopting localised communication approaches, brands can strengthen their position in an increasingly competitive market. Overall, the research highlights that understanding the nuanced buying behaviour of women consumers is essential for developing effective marketing strategies and sustaining long-term customer loyalty in the personal care sector.

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