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INVESTIGATING THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE BRAND CHOICE OF HAIR DYE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WESTERN PROVINCE IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

In today's fiercely competitive world, it is very important for the marketers to realize and figure out the aspects that are necessary to deal with the competitors, changing customer tastes and preferences. The strong competition in terms of product similarity and increased number of challenging brands in the market have led the marketers to think about and study the factors that are influential in consumers' brand choice decisions. Brand choice is a vital factor for the success of any brand. At present globally hair colorants are a rapidly growing over seven billion industry and also Sri Lankan hair dye category has seen a growth in both volume and unit. This study intends to determine factors which affect the brand choice of hair dye. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. The data of the study was collected from the customers who use hair dye, in western province Sri Lanka. The study uses a judgmental sampling. The findings of the study show that Quality, brand image, product features and price are the key variables that influence the brand choice of hair dye and among those quality is the most important and influential factor in brand choice while promotion has negative impact on brand choice. Further finding reveled "Friends and family" does not have a significant impact on brand choice of hair dye.

Keywords: Brand Choice, Hair Dye, Brand Image, Price, Quality, Friends and Family, Features and Promotion

1. Introduction and research problem

In today's fiercely competitive world, it is very important for the marketers to realize and figure out the aspects that are necessary to deal with the competitors, changing customer tastes and preferences. The strong competition in terms of product similarity and increased number of challenging brands in the market have led the marketers to think about and study the factors that are influential in consumers' brand choice decisions and behaviors (Khan & Rohi, 2013). Consumer choice and behavior are a vital factor for the success of any product or brand (Tabassum & Zubedi, 2014). "Investigating the factors that influence brand choice can be an interesting topic for the researchers to study as they can examine the key elements that are vital in choosing a particular brand over the others" (Khan & Rohi, 2013). Media penetration and increase in fashion consciousness among both women and men and availability of products especially the premium brands in the reach of consumers. Today, hair colouring is immensely popular, with over 75 percent of women colouring their hair. At present globally hair colorants are a rapidly growing over-$7 billion industry and also Sri Lankan hair dye category has seen a growth in both volume :21 M units (8.8%) and Value: LKR 1,930M (11%).(Nielsen Report-Category and Brand Review, Hair dye category 2014). The extreme growth of the industry result to increase the brand competition of the industry. Hence it is necessary for the marketers to understand the brand preference of the consumers before invest large sums of money on this industry. Similarly in today's competitive hair dye market, it is very important for the marketers to realize and find out the factors that essential to deal with competitors which changing customer brand choice and preference. Even there are some studies found the factors which affect to the brand choice in different countries as well as different industries, it is very rare to find studies on hair dye industry and special in Sri Lankan context. Therefore this research attempts to identify the factors that affect to brand choice in the context of hair dye market with the purpose provide contributions to the hair dye industry to gain better insights about customer mind and also the findings will help to new product development in the industry.

The following research objectives were met through the literature review. Some objectives specify according to hair care industry expertise opinion.

1. To identify the impact of price on brand choice.
2. To identify the impact of brand image on brand choice.
3. To identify the impact of friends and family on brand choice.
4. To identify the impact of promotion on brand choice.
5. To identify the impact of quality on brand choice.
6. To identify the impact of product features on brand choice.

2. Literature Review

According to American marketing association, "a brand is a name, term, symbol, or design or a combination of them which is proposed to identify the goods or service of one vendor, or group of seller and to distinguish them from those of competitors". Within this view, Keller (2003) referred that at whatever time a marketer creates a new name, logo, or symbol for a new product, this means a brand is created.

2.1 Brand choice

Brand choice basically indicates the consumer's selective selection of particular brand. It shows the first choice or demand of an exact brand over the competitors' brand (Khan & Rohi, 2013). Considering the literature relates with brand choice, Brand choice is "the selection of one brand from a set of alternative brands" (American Marketing Association) There could several factors that influence to brand choice. A large amount of brand choice research has been through probability models to test the effect of marketing mix variables as a forecaster of brand choice(Carl, Gupta, & Lehmann, 2015). These variables are elements for instance product features, advertising, sales promotions, availability and price. According to the Khan & Rohi (2013) various factors influence the consumers when they are making a choice among alternate brands. These factors consist of price, quality, features, family and friends' recommendation, innovative features, celebrity endorsement, user friendliness, brand image, stylish appearance, post purchase service and promotion effectives. Those factors could be general as well as particular to industry or according to product category. In this research study pay researches attention to the factors which most appropriate to hair care category. The influence of following factors on brand choice has been measured: price, quality, family and friends' recommendations, brand image, innovative features, promotion, user friendliness.

2.2 Price

As one of the marketing mix variables, price plays a fundamental role in influencing consumers' perception of products, increasing demand, attracting customers, and promoting brand loyalty, among other things (Dhurup, Mafini, & Dumasi, 2014). According to the Khan & Rohi (2013) most of consumer buying behavior and choices are determined by price. Moreover customer uses relative judgments in order to evaluate a potential purchasing decision and the customer utilizes reference prices with the intention of make these comparisons (Alvarez & Casielles, 2005) The product's price may vary based on economic conditions and perceptions of the consumers. It may affect the brands' perceived value. (Spowart, J; Oosthuizen, Heydenrych, 2015).Price is used by many of the consumers as an indication of the brands' quality which is a vital factor in the purchase decision (Khan and Rohi 2013) Since price is a significant mechanism in shaping the performance and final destiny of brand choice, it is rational to suppose a positive impact on brand choice of hair dye brands in Sri Lankan context.

2.3 Quality

Product Quality encompasses the features and characteristics of a product or service that bears on its capability to satisfy stated or implied needs. In other words, product quality is defined as "fitness for use" or 'conformance to requirement" (Khan, Aabdean, Salman, & Nadeem, 2016) argued customers may repeat the purchase of single brands or switch around several brands due to the tangible quality of the product sold. (Khraim, 2011) There is two part of quality such objective quality perception of quality. Objective of quality is assessment of the product based on physical characteristics. Such quick-dry, breathable, waterproof, lightweight, and finally, durability in cosmetics(Khraim, 2011).While perception of quality considers subjective note which is consumer estimation of the product and decision that based on some attributes. (Anselmsson, Johansson, & Persson, 2007) According to above mentioned explanation found from literature both perceived and objective qualities are an important indicators.

2.4 Brand image

Brand image refers to the schematic memory of a brand (Yuvaraj, 2014). Further it define as the set or bundle of beliefs which a customer holds regarding a particular brand.(Khan & Rohi, 2013) It conveys the overall image or impression of what we think of and feel when we hear of see a brand. According to Durrani, Godil, Baig, & Sajid, (2015) brand Image plays a key role to enhance a business performance because brand image has a direct impact which can change people's purchasing behavior. Further it revealed today's marketplace, customers often decide to purchase brands based on their image or identity. Hence Durrani et al., (2015) highlight Brand image is one of the most powerful aspects that establish the reputation of a specific brand in the market and without a positive and strong Brand Image, businesses unable to get a great part of the market share.

2.5 Family and Friends

Reference groups include groups or people whom one can look up for guidance and ask for opinion and it is an important source of influencing the brand choice (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997). Reference group include friends and family who influence ones buying decisions due to special skills, knowledge, personality. If a friend had a bad experience with a product, it is more likely that one will refrain from buying it. (Khan & Rohi, 2013)

2.6 Promotion

Promotion is a marketing mix element, which is a kind of communication with consumers. Promotion contains the advertising, sales promotions, personal selling and publicity (Khraim, 2011). Advertising is a non-personal, mass media about a product, brand, company or store. It significantly influence consumers' images, beliefs and attitudes towards products and brands, and in turn, effects their purchase behaviors (Lovelock, 2010). This indicate that promotion, can help establish ideas or perceptions in the consumers' minds as well as help differentiate products against other brand.

2.6 User Friendliness

The phrase "user friendliness" (usability) stands for 'easy to use and understand'. In other words, no complexity and the person using it will not discover it hard to learn how to use it. (Sultan, Memmon, & Amhed, 2016). In recent years, as the markets are becoming saturated with the challenging brands, companies find it helpful to expand such products that are user- friendly. Customers usually seem to choose such hair dye brand which they can use easily without facing any problem. According to Khan & Rohi (2013)user friendliness appears as the leading factor regarding whether people build a negative or positive belief about a brand.

2.7 Product attributes

Sujata, Yatin, Abhijit, Noopur, & Ruchi, (2016) highlight the importance of product attributes in predicting choice of mobile phones. Further it revealed usability is important in mobile phone choice but not as much as users themselves believe. In actual fact, other attributes particularly features, aesthetics and cost may well be more of a priority when it comes to brand choice. Hence it is rational to suppose a positive impact on brand choice of hair dye brands in Sri Lankan context.

The Figure 1 below shows the theoretical framework of this research, that is, the Interrelationship between the dependent and independent variables is shown below.

Based on the conceptual framework in Figure 1, the following hypotheses were developed.

H_1: Price has a significant impact on brand choice of hair dye brands.
H_2: Brand image has a significant impact on brand choice of hair dye brands.
H_3: Friends and family have a significant impact on brand choice of hair dye brands.
H_4: Promotions have a significant impact on brand choice of hair dye brands.
H_5: Quality have a significant impact on brand choice of hair dye brands.
H_6: Product features have a significant impact on brand choice of hair dye brands.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model
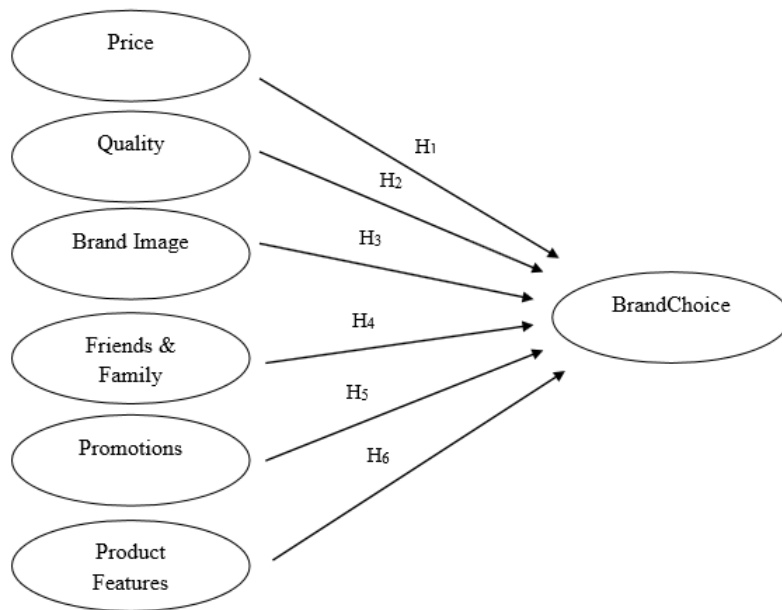
3. Research Methodology

This study follows deductive process that is accessible knowledge and theories will be use to clarify certain phenomena. "The fact is more than one method employed in the development of measures will result in greater confidence in findings" (Webb et al. 1966) for that reason both qualitative and quantitative approach will be used to collect the data for this study .Qualitative data is subjective while quantitative collection of data through numerical (Bryman & Bell, 2010). Quantitative approach help to measure factors that influence on brand choice while qualitative data help to justify the quantitative findings. From the theoretical framework the study expect to find out factors that influence on brand choice of hair dye.

Study conducted in the nature (field) environment with minimum interference by the researcher with the normal flow of procedures related to the researching environment. The target population in this study can be considered as all the consumers who consume hair dye in western province, Sri Lanka and unit of analysis is an individual who use hair dye in Sri Lanka moreover the researcher treated each and every respondent as an individual data sources. The judgmental sampling technique is used to collect quantitative data for the research while two focus group discussions held for female hair dye users and male users. In addition to that eight in-depth interviews were carried out. "A sample size should be sufficient enough that can serve our purpose. If it have efficiency, flexibility and reliability (Sharma, 2012). Therefore the sample size of the survey is set at 200 as this number is believed to be managed and collected within the time constrain of the study. Researcher has collected data from primary source such designed questionnaires were processed. Quantitative Data were analyzed through both inferential and descriptive statistics. As an inferential statistical tool, the researcher used regression analysis technique in order to test the hypothesis and identifying the impact of factors on brand choice of hair dye, addressing the significance of each independent variable. Qualitative data will be analyzed using Content Analysis method.

Validity and reliability were tested and Cronbach's Alpha value for Brand Image, Price, Quality, Product Features, Promotion and Friend & Family Influence are 0.889, 0.736, 0.909, 0.725, 0.884 and 0.996 respectively.

For dependent variable of Brand Choice value is 0.747 and it reveled all the variables were satisfied the standard and also emphasizes the reliability of the questions are high. KMO value of all the variables greater than 0.5, Sig value of the respected variables were less than 0.05, AVE values were greater than 0.5 and CR values were greater than 0.7. Therefore convergent validity of respective dimensions was satisfied.

4. Results and Findings

A regression model approach is required to investigate the impact from independent variables on the dependent variable, brand choice. According to the analysis the adjusted R square value indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable, Brand Choice can be explained by the independent variables of Quality, Product features, Price, Friends and family influence, Promotion and Brand Image. In this case (Table 1) Independent variable, Brand Choice explained 90.8% variation in the dependent variable which is very large. This tells us that all these independent variables are responsible for affecting the brand choice of hair dye.

The table 02 indicates that the regression model predicts the dependent variable, Brand Choice significantly well. Here, $P < 0.000$, which is less than 0.05, and indicates that, overall, the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable. It is clear that all factors namely: price, quality, family and friend's recommendation, Product features, promotion, and brand image are related to brand choice and the relationship between them is significant (0.000) as compared to alpha value of 0.05.

Table 1 : Adjusted R Square

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.954[a]	.910	.908	.20751	1.625

Table 2: Anova Test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	84.534	6	14.089	327.202	.000[a]
	Residual	8.310	193	.043		
	Total	92.845	199			

Thus the regression model for the analysis is defined as;

$$BC = \alpha + \beta 1Q + \beta 2F + \beta 3PM + \beta 4PF + \beta 5BI + \beta 6P + \varepsilon$$

Where BC=Brand Choice, Q = Quality, F = Friends and family influence, PM =Promotion, PF = Product Features, BI = Brand Image and P = Price.

4.1 Hypothesis Testing

In hypothesis testing, will be analyzed with the outcomes of the regression analysis. According to table 2 it can be observed that the P – Value for Price, brand image, promotion, Product features and quality amounts to 0.000,

which is lower than 0.05. There for researcher reject H0, indicating Price, brand image, promotion, Product features and quality have a significant impact on brand choice of hair dye brands while the P – Value for "Friends and family" amounts to 0.250, which is higher than 0.05. There for researcher do not reject H0 indicating "Friends and family" does not have a significant impact on brand choice of hair dye brands. Additionally even promotion has significant impact on brand choice that impact was negative. The regression model is evaluated to identify the impact from independent variables on brand choice, and to identify the most significant variables affecting brand choice. In cooperating the coefficient values of the model, the regression model could be stated as;

$$BC = \alpha + \beta_1 Q - \beta_2 PM + \beta_3 PF + \beta_4 BI + \beta_5 P + \varepsilon$$

$$BC = -0.463 + 0.797Q - 0.137PM + 0.122PF + 0.143BI + 0.190P + \varepsilon$$

Table 3 : Coefficient Table for independent variable

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	-.463	.123		-3.753	.000
BI_ Mean	.143	.027	.149	5.254	.000
Q_ Mean	.797	.039	.771	20.359	.000
PM_ Mean	-.137	.027	-.160	-5.097	.000
PF_ Mean	.122	.022	.139	5.506	.000
F2_Mean	.023	.020	.026	1.154	.250
P_ Mean	.190	.024	.203	8.017	.000

It is obvious from the values of standardized coefficients (Table 03) that quality is the most important and influential factor in brand choice with standardized coefficient of 0.771. According to the qualitative finding, in order to measure quality perception of consumer towards hair dye four variables were taken in to consideration namely, package quality, long lasting and free from allergy and specially focu on ingredient when comes to hair dye. Today consumers more concern on environmentally friendly products and they like to use natural products over chemical used products (Malkanthie, 2008).

Furthermore following statement revealed customers focus more on quality than other factors. *"When I buy a hair dye I consider ingredient, because I prefer more natural hair dye" "Before select the brand I search about that product quality rather price or other factors"* The second dominant factor in order of its importance is price with the standardized coefficient value of 0.203. While the third and fourth important variables are brand image and product features with a standardized coefficient of 0.149 and 0.139 respectively. Consumers always pay their attention to Brand Image and it exposed through this common statement of the customers. *"Brand Image always guides me to select best brand of hair dye".* Yet other variable impact on positively as the table 03 display promotion affect negatively on brand choice with a standardized coefficient of -0.160. According to the qualitative analysis there are two major reasons behind that negativity. Such as quality perception and risk perception. Most of participant believe if there are more

promotion there are some issues with the product refer to the quality perception. Similarly they believe most of international hair coloring brand do not implement any promotion which has very high quality level. *"If a product comes with too many free products, then the product might not be good"* When selecting hair dye brand customer pay more attention, because hair dye brand associate with physical risk. By using hair colouring could occur allergy easily. Hence most of participant said *"Most of promotion conduct for the short expire products so it could be very harmful, hence I afraid to use that kind of brand"* According to the analysis it explained more promotion negatively impact on brand choice in specifically hair dye industry.

5. Conclusions, Implications and Significance

This research paper assessed the factors influencing the brand choice under the context of hair dye industry. It can be seen that hair dye Brand choice is driven by a number of factors like price, quality, family and friends' recommendations, brand image, promotion and product features. The finding from the research suggest that, out of all the testable hypotheses, only one hypothesis (H3) reject .Further ,the findings reveal that, promotion has a negative impact on brand choice of hair dye. It was observed that respondents who believed hair dye consumed by them was a quality product and exhibited craftsmanship and a consistent quality consumed more hair dye and it can concluded that quality of hair dye is a directly related to hair dye brand choice. It shows that better quality results in higher brand choice while promotion affect negatively on brand choice.

5.1 Theoretical Implication

The importance of this research can be exemplified as following; the research contributes to existing marketing literature. It provides an understanding of consumer brand choice and its impact on future decision-making. Unlike prior studies focusing on one or two factors, this study concentrates on multiple factors. The results show the importance of the quality, price and brand image in developing brand choice. The research goes beyond the dominant assumption of rationality of traditional models and also tries to highlight unique finding for the hair dye industry. It supplements impact on brand choice. promotion create negative influence on brand choice while friends and family does not has significant The research also provides a balanced perspective to explain consumer preference and future purchasing decisions.

According to research findings, the regression model can be used to further study the impact of brand image, product features, promotion, price, quality and friends and family recommendation on brand choice. The developed model provide a clear direction as to what are the most significant variables which impact on brand choice, and also can be considered as a forecasting model to identify the impact on brand choice ,for further studies.

5.2 Managerial Implication

Hair colour industry is a massively growing industry with no player in the natural hair colour segment so if the organization can promote itself as a natural hair colour it can tap into a huge customer base. As we see in the survey conducted presence of natural ingredients, quality aspect is also a significant factor in purchase decision and researcher notice that most of the available brands cause damage. So promoting the importance of long term damage is equally important and establishing itself as the only brand to not cause any permanent damage to the hair is the unique proposition for new product development.

In the light of the findings of the study, the brand choice of hair dye appears to be influenced largely by the quality, brand image and price. Marketers need to consider and prioritize these three main factors, especially when targeting the consumers. However, product features should be focused on as well since those also have a positive significant relation to brand choice. In addition marketer should pay more consideration when they do promotion activities because of its negative influence on brand choice.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

A recommendation to be made for future studies on this topic would be to expand t sample on terms of age groups. More information could be gained if people in the age group of 40 to 60 and above were considered for this research. It would be more beneficial to conduct this study over a wider time period as the researcher had to gather important information in less than three months.

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