

An Analytical Study of Pre-Purchase Behaviour of Consumers Towards Men's Grooming & Personal Care Products with Special Reference to Nagpur City

Poonam Sondagar¹, Dr. Hariom J. Puniyani²

¹*Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Hislop College, RTM Nagpur University, Nagpur, India*

²*Professor & Head, Department of Commerce, Hislop College, Nagpur, India*

The present study aims to measure consumers' pre-purchase behaviour regarding buying Men's Grooming and Personal Care Products (MG & PCPs) and gain insight into the likely thoughts, ideas, actions, and activities that consumers often consider during the pre-purchase period and before arriving at the final purchase decision.

The study tries to find the answers to questions like how the need of the consumer to buy a product arises, what are the sources that make customers aware of the products available in the market, what are the reasons behind purchasing products, and further how the consumer tries to find different ways, and then chooses the best alternatives that suit his needs and requirements. The whole research tells us how the consumer behaves to find the most suitable way to fulfill his needs.

The study will share recommendations and suggestions with product companies that help them connect their products positively with existing or prospective consumers.

Keywords: Men's Grooming & Personal Care Products (MG & PCPs), Pre-purchase behaviour.

1. Introduction

The USA organization National Science Foundation (NSF) specified the meaning of the term "Personal Care Product" as a non-medicinal consumable product that is intended to be used in the topical care and grooming of the body and hair and that is rubbed, poured, sprinkled, or sprayed on, introduced into, or otherwise applied to a body, human or animal, for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering the appearance without affecting the body's structure or functions.

A personal care product is a more comprehensive term, it includes the goods that are used for grooming, personal hygiene & care, look & style, and also for beautification. These products

are specifically meant for use in such activities as cleansing, toning, moisturizing, hydrating, exfoliating, conditioning, massaging, coloring, decorating, soothing, deodorizing, perfuming, and styling.

According to Euromonitor, the following are the various categories of the segment:

- Infant care
- Bath and shower products
- Colour cosmetics
- Depilatories (hair removers/ bleaches, women's pre-shave, razors, and blades)
- Fragrances
- Hair care
- Men's grooming
- Oral care
- skincare
- Suncare

The researcher has taken the following Men's grooming product categories for the study and referred to these as Men's Grooming & Personal Care Products (MG & PCPs):

- Hair Care
- Shaving & Beard care
- Body & Skincare
- Colour Cosmetics
- Fragrances

The Consumer buying decision process is the collection and sequence of all the preferred actions or activities performed by the consumers while making decisions regarding the purchase of the products. Following are the three stages that every consumer generally goes through to buy any product. (1) Pre-purchase Behaviour, (2) Behaviour while making final Purchase decisions, and (3) Post-purchase behaviour. Each stage consists of different steps formed by various actions probably taken by the consumers of MG & PCPs.

These steps of the decision-making process differ from person to person. Certain factors certainly affect the length of the decision-making process. The length may sometimes be shortened or extended depending upon various factors like the purchasing habits, an urgency to fulfill wants or desires, whether the product is already known to the consumers, promotional strategies, whether the consumer is brand loyal or not, convenience or availability of the products, etc.

The study of the pre-purchase behaviour of the consumers helps the product companies to know what consumers want, why they want it, how they collect information to know about the

products, what factors they consider in choosing the best-suited option out of the various alternatives, and what all the actions taken by the consumers before making the final purchase decisions.

Pre-purchase behaviour of any consumer starts with how the consumers aware about the newly introduced product or already existing product in the market. Various sources like internet search engines, social media advertisements, print media, word-of-mouth publicity, etc., are used by the product companies to disseminate information about the products among consumers. once the consumer becomes aware of his or her needs/ wants/ desires, the consumer gets into the process of a detailed information search about finding the best product that can satisfy their needs in the best possible way.

The next step taken by the researcher was to know deeply the behaviour of the consumers, the study tried to find the answers to various questions like reasons behind rising expenditure on MG & PCPs, reasons behind using any MG & PCPs, most influential promotional strategies for the consumers, whether the consumers agree with the idea of comparative evaluation of brands, which factors considered as most important for comparative evaluation of brands, etc. All the findings of the above questions make the product companies understand more clearly the pre-purchase behaviour of the consumers.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

- Y. Deshmukh, A. Kulkarni, V. Ingawale (2022), in their study, a detailed analysis has been conducted to get an understanding of consumer behaviour towards the various factors considered as important for them like quality, price, promotional strategies, etc. while buying skin care products.
- Mohd Farid, Mohamed Bilal Basha, Kausar Saida Kadir Baharudin (2020), the study aimed at finding the common influencing store-related factors that affect the purchase behaviour of consumers.
- Seikh Qazzafi (2019), this study deals with the theoretical aspects of the consumer buying decision-making process.
- R. Meena (2018), investigates the buying behaviour of cosmetic consumers considering their habits, preferences, tastes, likes, dislikes, etc.

3. LIMITATIONS:

- The present study is confined only to the first stage i.e. Pre-purchase behaviour which includes the following steps:
 1. Need Recognition
 2. Searching for the data
 3. Evaluation of alternatives

- The other two stages of the consumer buying decision process i.e. The behaviour while making final purchase decisions and post-purchase behaviour are beyond the scope of this research paper.

4. OBJECTIVE:

To study the pre-purchase behaviour of male consumers towards Men's Grooming & Personal Care Products.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

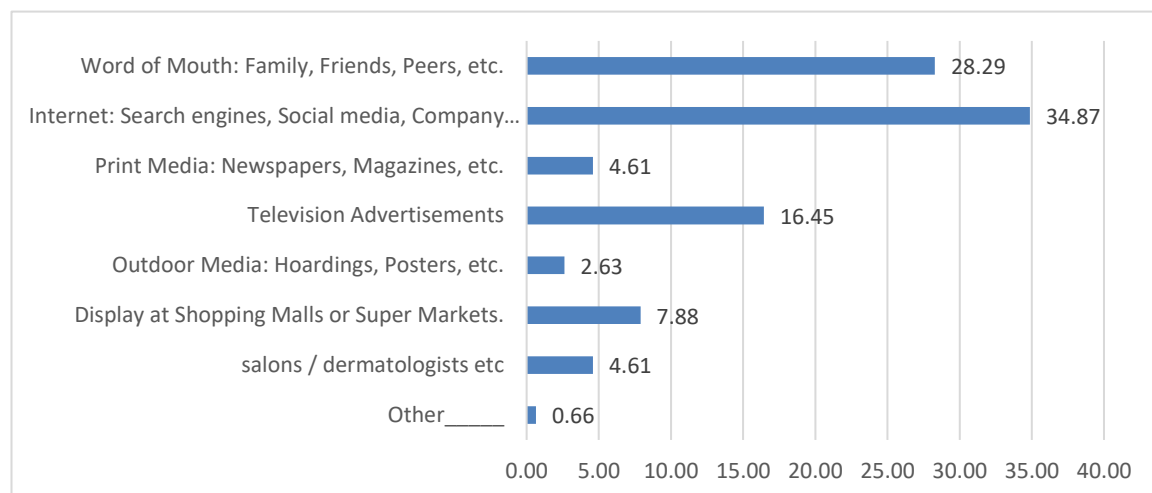
The researcher uses both methods of data collection. Secondary data was used to deeply understand the consumer buying decision process theory by reviewing various research papers and articles from renowned sources. The researcher with the help of using a well-structured and comprehensive questionnaire, collected primary data from 100 male respondents from Nagpur city through a convenience random sampling technique.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The study achieved its objectives by finding answers to a few relevant questions mentioned in the questionnaire related to the first stage of Pre-purchase behaviour. The following bases have been taken into consideration with the motive of getting a complete understanding of all the probable actions taken by the consumers or thoughts that arise in the minds of the consumers before making a final purchase decision.

The data collected from male consumers of MG & PCPs were analyzed and the results are hereunder interpreted.

Graph 6.1 Distribution of the preferred medium through which consumers generally come to know about new brands or products. (Respondents were asked to select maximum 2 options)



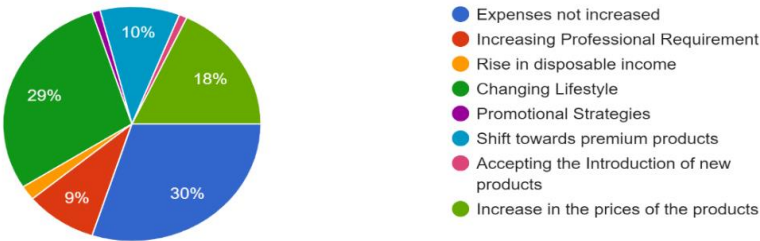
• Observations, Interpretation & Suggestions:

- It can be inferred from the above graph that the “Internet: search engines, social media, company websites” has been chosen by around 35% of the respondents from where they usually come to know about new brands or products. Search engines, social media, company websites, etc. play a dominant role in disseminating information about the existing or newly introduced products or brands among the consumers of MG & PCPs. It is followed by word of mouth (28%), and TV advertisements (16%). These are the major sources that marketers can employ to increase the buyer’s awareness and consciousness about the brands or products.

Options	%	f
Others	0.66	1
Salons/dermatologists etc	4.61	7
Display at Shopping Malls or Super Markets.	7.88	12
Outdoor Media: Hoardings, Posters, etc.	2.63	4
Television Advertisements	16.45	25
Print Media: Newspapers, Magazines, etc.	4.61	7
Internet: Search engines, Social media, Company websites	34.87	53
Word of Mouth: Family, Friends, Peers, etc.	28.29	43
Total	100	152

Table 6.1

Graph 6.2 Distribution of various reasons behind rising expenses of Consumers of MG & PCPs.

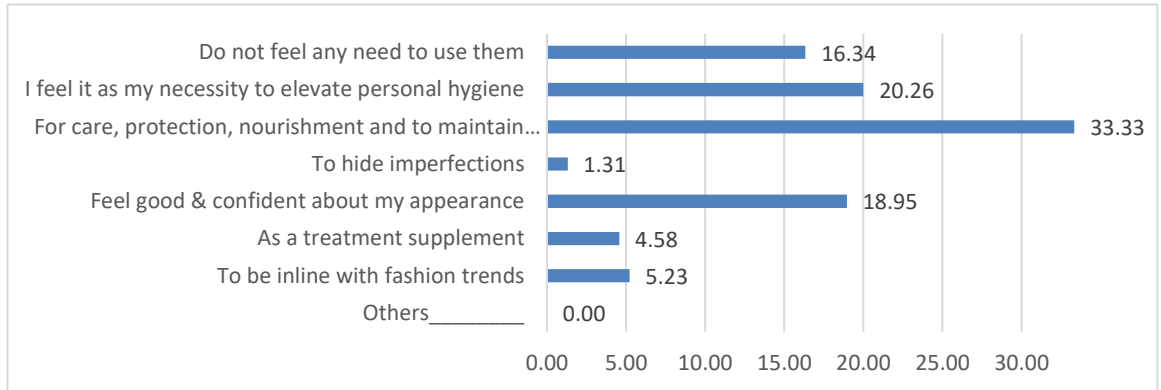


• Observations, Interpretation & Suggestions:

- From the above graph, it is understood that 30% of the consumers don’t agree that their expenses on MGPs are increasing. We can judge this category of respondents as the users of basic men’s grooming products.

- The major reason behind the rising expenses of 29% of the respondents is the changes in lifestyle. Another 18% of the respondents think that their expenses are rising because of an increase in the prices of the products and we can say that these types of consumers are not influenced by the various newly invented categories of the products, they are the users of minimal products only.

Graph 6.3 Distribution of the various reasons considered by male consumers behind using MG & PCPs. (Respondents were asked to select maximum 2 options)



• Observations, Interpretation & Suggestions:

- It shows that more than 50% of the consumers purchase MG & PCPs because of fulfilling the basic needs of care, protection, and maintenance (33.33%), followed by personal hygiene (20.26%) and around (18.95%) of the respondents are using MG & PCPs because their good appearance makes them feel good and confident from inside.

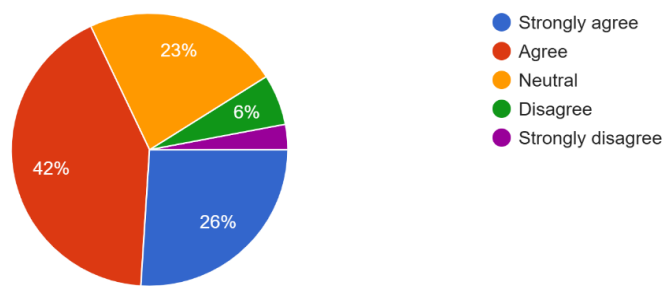
- (16.34%) of the respondents don't feel any need to use MGPs. The suppliers should emphasize these categories of respondents to capture the target audiences. They should introduce such a product line that creates a need in the minds of the consumers to buy it. External stimuli will probably work on such a category of consumers.

- "To hide imperfection" is a major concern usually seen in female categories while it is lowest (1.31%) recorded in the men's category.

Options	%	f
Others_____	0.00	0
To be in line with fashion trends	5.23	8
As a treatment supplement	4.58	7
Feel good & confident about my appearance	18.95	29
To hide imperfections	1.31	2
For care, protection, nourishment and to maintain myself	33.33	51
I feel it as my necessity to elevate personal hygiene	20.26	31
Do not feel any need to use them	16.34	25
Total	100	153

Table 6.3

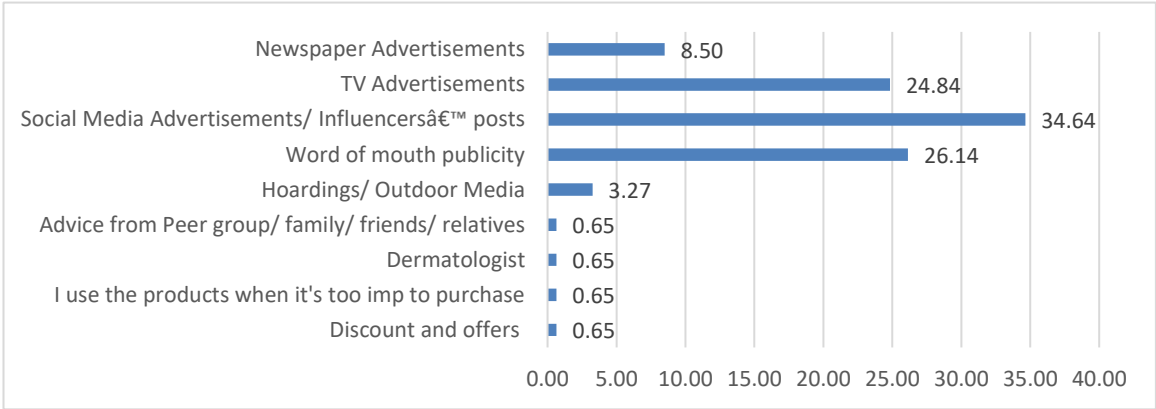
Graph 6.4 Distribution of agreement or disagreement by the consumers regarding the significant impact of promotional strategies on the buying decisions of MG & PCPs.



• Observations, Interpretation & Suggestions:

- A total of 65% of the consumers are in favor of the statement that the promotional strategies have a significant impact on the buying decisions of MG & PCPs while very few consumers i.e. only 9% are against it.
- So it can be inferred that most of the consumers' buying decisions are positively or negatively affected by various promotional strategies employed by different product companies. Therefore there should be consistent and aggressive promotion by the producers.

Graph 6.5 Distribution of various promotional strategy that influences consumers while making decisions in purchasing MG & PCPs. (respondents were asked to select maximum 2 options)



• Observations, Interpretation & Suggestions:

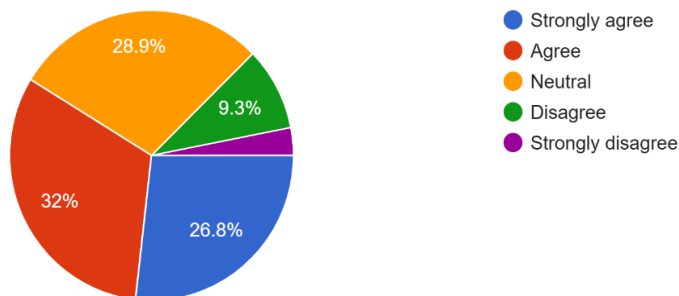
- From the above graph, it is very clearly seen that the most influential promotional strategies are social media advertisements/influencer posts, etc. (35%), word-of-mouth publicity (26%), and TV advertisement (25%).
- The other less influential external stimuli are Newspaper advertisements and Hoardings/ outdoor media opted for by 8% and 3% of the respondents respectively.

- The product companies should target their market segmentation by choosing the right promotional mix strategy, and by applying it to the right target consumers, through the right medium so that they can reach and capture a large market share.

Options	%	f
Discount and offers	0.65	1
I use the products when it's too important to purchase	0.65	1
Dermatologist	0.65	1
Advice from Peer group/ family/ friends/ relatives	0.65	1
Hoardings/ Outdoor Media	3.27	5
Word-of-mouth publicity	26.14	40
Social Media Advertisements/ Influencers posts	34.64	53
TV Advertisements	24.84	38
Newspaper Advertisements	8.50	13
Total	100.00	153

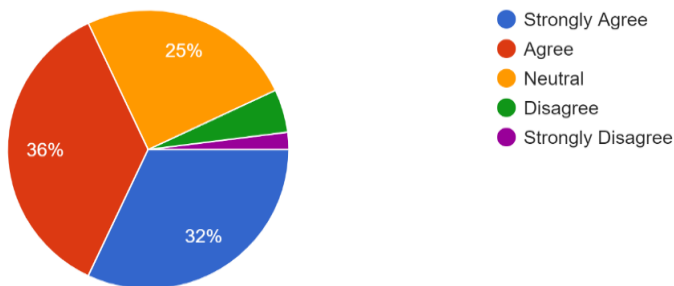
Table 6.5

Graph 6.6 Distribution of agreement and disagreement of the consumers regarding taking reviews from social media on any MG & PCPs.



- Observations, Interpretation & Suggestions:
 - About 59% of the consumers agree that they should take reviews from social media before buying any MG & PCPs while around 12% of the respondents disagree with the above pre-purchase activity.
 - Based on the above results, companies are advised that targeting consumers through social media platforms will make it easy to attract a sizeable consumer base. It is also necessary for them to monitor reviews given by users of the products to see whether or not customers are satisfied with the product.

Graph 6.7 Distribution of the degree of agreement or disagreement of the consumers with regards to the evaluation of brands before buying any MG & PCPs.

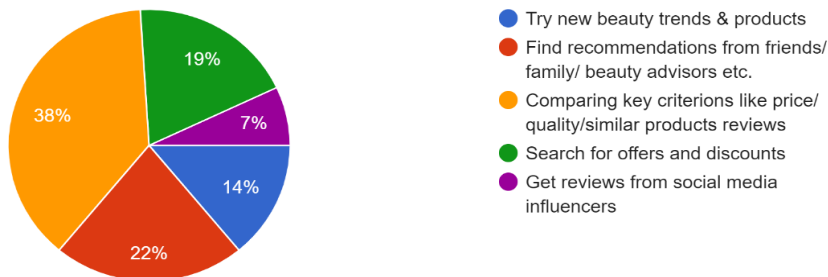


- Observations, Interpretation & Suggestions:

- It can be inferred from the above graph that the maximum number of the respondents i.e. 68% are positive towards the comparative evaluation of brands before buying them. On the other hand, a total of 7% of the respondents have given negative responses and thus they do not agree to do a comparative evaluation of brands before buying them.

- The product companies must thoroughly understand the competitive landscape in which they are performing. As it has been observed that a mass percentage of the respondents are interested in the comparative evaluation of brands and products, ignorance about it may hinder them from gaining a competitive advantage.

Graph 6.8 Distribution of the actions or activities that the consumers perform before making the final purchase decisions to buy a MG & PCPs.



- Observations, Interpretation & Suggestions:

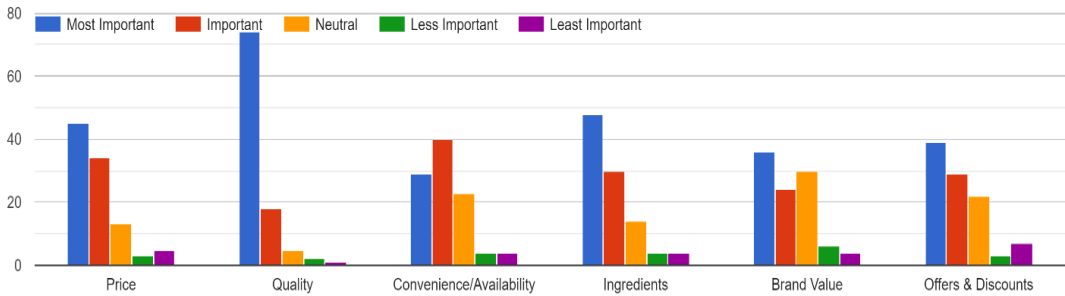
- From the above graph, it is understood that the most preferred action of 38% of the respondents is to compare key criteria like price/ quality/ similar product reviews, etc. and 22% of the respondents find recommendations from friends/ family/ beauty advisors, etc. before making a final purchase decision of MG & PCPs.

- The product companies can create a positive image of their product in the minds of the consumers by taking into consideration the above actions or activities of the consumers so

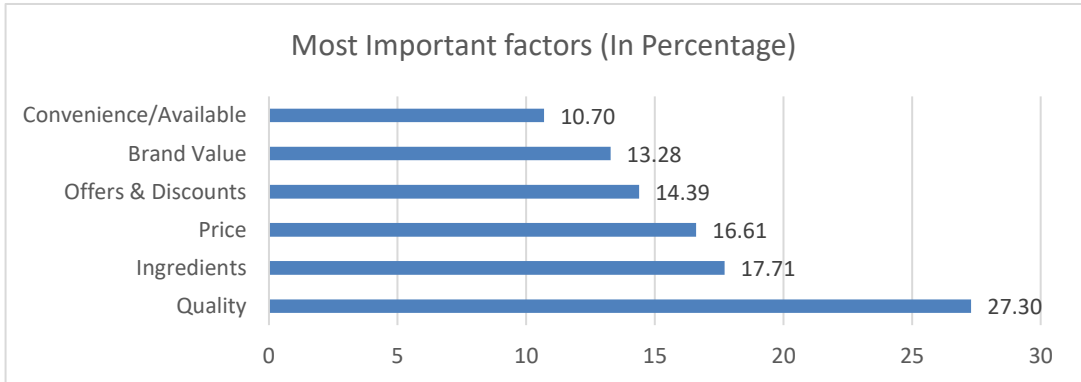
Nanotechnology Perceptions Vol. 20 No. S14 (2024)

that the companies can consolidate touchpoints across the consumer's buying decision journey and have positive interaction with them directly or indirectly.

Graph 6.9. Distribution of various factors that the consumers consider according to their level of importance while comparing different brands or products and making decisions of buying MG & PCPs accordingly.



Graph 6.9.1 Distribution of the various factors that the consumers of MG & PCPs consider as the most important while making purchase decisions. (Respondents were asked to select the options as per their priority of ranking)



- Observations, Interpretation & Suggestions

- The above graph shows that the majority of the respondents are giving prime importance to quality (27%), and ingredients (18%), closely followed by price (16%). Convenience and availability of the products have been the most important factors for only 24% of the respondents.

- Product companies should tailor their product offerings, marketing strategies, and policies based on considering various factors that the consumers prefer to be most important while making purchase decisions of MG & PCPs. Companies can decide their market segmentation on the basis of the consumer's preferences for various factors.

Most Important Factors	%	f
Quality	27.30	74
Ingredients	17.71	48
Price	16.61	45
Offers & Discounts	14.39	39
Brand Value	13.28	36
Convenience/Available	10.70	29
Total	100	271

Table 6.9.1

7. CONCLUSIONS:

The researcher identifies the following fundamental aspects in understanding the consumer's pre-purchase behaviour from its core. Based on the above observations and findings the researcher has drawn the following conclusions regarding various actions taken by the consumers before buying any MG & PCPs.

- Sources of Information about the products: Pre-purchase behaviour starts with knowledge or information about the products. “Internet: Search engines, social media, and company websites” and “word of mouth: peer groups, family and friends, etc.” are the two most popular sources from where consumers get information about newly introduced products or already existing products in the market. This will help the product companies in adopting the right medium to reach the large masses of consumers by disseminating information about their product/ products. This is how the need arises in the minds of the consumers to buy a particular product.
- Spending on MG & PCPs: The researcher further determines whether the consumer’s expenses have risen over the period or not. Findings showed that the majority of the consumers agree that their expenses have risen over the period and the main reason behind rising expenses is their “Changing Lifestyle”. Men are now more willing to spend money on personal grooming. MG & PCP segment has a strong potential for future growth, according to the survey. the male population is becoming more conscious about taking care of, protecting, nourishing, and maintaining themselves, personal hygiene, and appearance.
- Comparative evaluation of brands and factors considered for the same: Another most important action that consumer performs before buying any MG & PCPs is the comparative evaluation of brands or products. It has become a necessity for product companies to know about how consumers compare products, and what factors they consider to compare different alternatives available in the market. Consumers are now well informed about various alternatives available and also about the marketing tactics. They compare products considering various factors like quality, ingredients, price, offers & discounts, brand value, and convenience/availability. It is to be found that quality is the preferred factor that the majority of consumers opt for. Thus, the companies can plan their product & pricing strategies

according to the needs & wants of the consumers. If quality is the main factor that consumers take as the most important then the companies can enter the market with premium products that may contain high prices but must have the best quality product. Likewise, if price is the most important factor for the consumers, then the companies can come up in the market with a reasonably priced product or should introduce it with better offers and discounts, etc.

- Promotional strategies: Promotional strategies play a significant role in all the stages of the consumer buying decision process. Social media advertisements, influencers' posts, and word-of-mouth publicity are the most influential promotional strategies for consumers while making decisions. The majority of the respondents are also interested in considering reviews from social media before making the final purchase decision.

The above aspects help the companies to frame their marketing policies and strategies in such a way that exactly hit the target fulfilling the desires of the consumers and solving the problems efficiently and effectively along with the achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

References

1. Ahmed Mahdi Abdulkareem, S. V. (2022, August). Google. Retrieved from ResearchGate: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362788594_CONSUMER_BUYING_BEHAVIOUR
2. Meena Madhavan, K. C. (2015). CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR-AN OVERVIEW. St. Theresa Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences. Retrieved from <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=4fb67ea81d0ef2cd5bba98dffd054214b2fd9df>
3. Mishra, O. (2018, April). Sources of Need Recognition in Online Consumers Decision Making Process . IJEMR. Retrieved from <https://ijemr.in/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Sources-of-Need-Recognition-in-Online-Consumers-Decision-Making-Process.pdf>
4. Sanchayita Banerjee, S. N. (2018, September 25). Factors Influencing Consumer Buying Behaviour of Male Skincare Products: A Study of Mumbai Metropolitan City. Indian Journal of Marketing. Retrieved from <https://www.indianjournalofmarketing.com/index.php/ijom/article/view/137983>
5. Tanvi Bhalala, G. G. (2014, August). Google. Retrieved from ResearchGate: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361102714_A_Factor_Analysis_of_Product_Elements_for_Consumer_buying_pattern_of_male_grooming_products_in_Surat_City