"The influence of culture on cosmetics consumer behavior"

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Abstract:*Culture is a pervasive influence which underlies all facets of social behavior and interaction. It is embodied in the objects used in everyday life and in modes of communication in society. Cosmetics are ubiquitous elements of women's consumer culture one of the imperatives of contemporary life, and represent one of the most important ways women present and transform their public persona. In today's society, beauty and physical attractiveness are constantly emphasized as desirable and admirable characteristics. This research focuses on the influence of culture on consumers' cosmetics buying decision making process.*
Key words:*Consumer behavior, Cosmetics, Culture, Factor analysis.*

I. Introduction

Culture and consumption have an unprecedented relationship in the modern world. The rapidly increasing importance of international marketing has led marketers, practitioners and academicians alike, to seek a deeper understanding of how consumers and markets differ around the globe. The world economy is becoming increasingly cross-cultural. During the next decades, as marketers enter new international markets, an understanding of how culture influences consumer behavior will be crucial. Culture is a powerful force in regulating human behavior.

Consumption decisions made in the market cannot be viewed as an independent event – these are closely related with values and social relationship and cultural allegiance. According to past research, national culture has considerable influence on consumer behavior (Jaishankar, 1998). National culture of any country, as outer stimuli, influence on the diffusion of products across countries (Kumar et al., 1998). With globalization, culture becomes predominantly important strategic issue in market that has to be faced and properly managed. People of each country possess a distinct ''national character''. Countries are a source of a considerable amount of common mental programming of their citizens (Hofstede, 1991). Core values of any country shape its national culture. Culture can be conceptualized as dynamic production and reproduction of meaning by concrete individuals' activities in particular contexts (Kashima, 2000). It ensures a set of behavior patterns transmitted symbolically through language and other means to the member of a particular society (Wallendorf and Reilly, 1983).

Culture generally refers to those aspects of human activities that are symbolic and meaningful and identifiable. Bartlett (1923) defined culture as a part of two components: firstly, cultural elements which denote material behavior and objects and secondly, cultural materials that cover forms of cultural practices, artifacts, social and religious rituals, customs. This article presents a framework that integrates and reinterprets current research in culture, sub culture and cross-cultural consumer behavior. The framework also serves to identify areas that need further research and can be used as a template for thosecosmetics marketers who seek to understand their consumers.

II. Literature review

2.1 Cosmetics

Women use cosmetics to audition various selves (Bolch P.H&SherrellRichins, M.L 1992) and cosmetics matter because they are a means of self-investigation (Beausolil N 1994).A number of studies have addressed the impact of the representation of attractive women on female consumers. The desire to improve one's physical attractiveness seems to be an inherent characteristic of most individuals (Adams, 1977; Etcoff, 1999; Winston, 2003). Cosmetics are traditionally been confined to female consumers, cosmetics have been traditionally used by women to control their physical appearance and, presumably, their physical attractiveness. Although, the literature is by no means voluminous, several researchers have examined the psychological correlates and consequences of cosmetic use (Cash and Cash, 1982; Miller and Cox, 1982; Graham and Kligman, 1985; Cash et al., 1985; Cox and Glick, 1986; Etcoff, 1999). Cash (1980) reviewed some of the available research evidence and, from a self-presentational perspective, argued that cosmetics use specifically and grooming behaviors in general function to manage and control not only social impressions but also self-image (for example, body image, self-perceptions, and mood states).

Since grooming products are considered as a pervasive element of women's. As a general result, the exposure to pictures of good-looking and even slightly above-average-looking females lowered the self-image of exposed women and increased dissatisfaction with their own appearance (Pollay, 1986; Myers and Biocca, 1992; Martin and Gentry, 1997; Hawkins et al., 2004).

The body image is an important component of the self-concept and has stimulated the demand of certain products and services, such as dietary, slimming, exercise and cosmetic items (Sturrock and Pioch, 1998). Featherstone (1991) also noticed that the self-preservation of the body pushes individuals to adopt instrumental strategies to combat its deterioration and combine them with the notion that the body is a vehicle of pleasure and self-expression.

In western cultures, one of the commonly recognized reasons women uses cosmetics is to improve their physical attractiveness. For example, Cash and Cash (1982) found women to express a more positive body image and self-image when wearing makeup compared to when not wearing makeup (Cash and Cash, 1982).

2.2 Consumer Behavior

The term consumer behavior is defined as the behavior that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs (Shiffman and Kanuk, 2010). Consumer behavior focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, effort) on consumption related items, That includes what they buy, why they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it, how often they use it, how they evaluate it after the purchase and the impact of such evaluations on future purchases, and how they dispose it. Research in consumer behavior is a top priority for marketers both in the third world (Albaum and Peterson, 1984; Kanwar, 1993) and in Eastern Europe (Kaynak and Samli, 1986). Once a company has ensured both economic and physical access to its products it needs to evaluate the buying behavior of consumers in the country that it is seeking to enter. However, little is known about consumer attitudes, buying habits, purchase motives, lifestyles, etc. in Eastern Europe and Third World countries (Kaynak and Samli, 1986). Marketers who seek to enter these markets might therefore find it necessary to engage in some priority marketing research relating to such issues (Peterson, 1985).Consumers and their behavior represent an important arena for inquiry, which hasattracted researchers from several disciplines (Ferber, 1974). Consumer behavior is 'the active interplay of competing theories (Feyerabend's 1975).

2.3Culture

Culture has a profound influence on all aspects of human behavior. Its impact may besubtle or pronounced, direct or oblique, enduring or ephemeral. It is so entwined withall facets of human existence that it is often difficult to determine how and in what ways its impact is manifested. Adding to the complexity of understanding the impactof culture is its inherently dynamic nature. Cultural influences change and culture evolves as political, social, economic and technological forces reshape the cultural landscape. Culture is a pervasive influence which underlies all facets of social behavior and interaction. It is evident in the values and norms that govern society. It is embodied in the objects used in everyday life and in modes of communication in society. The complexity of culture is reflected in the multitude of definitions of culture. According to Herskovits (1955) culture is the "manmade" part of the environment – i.e. what distinguishes humans from other species. Studies have shown that different cultures react differently to new product and technological innovations (e.g. Mahajan and Muller, 1994; Maitland and Bauer, 2001; Takada and Jain, 1991; Tellefsen and Takada, 1999; Tellis et al., 2003; Van Everdingen and Waarts, 2003).

Meanings, values, ideas and beliefs of a social group are articulated through variouscultural artifacts, such as products, (Hasan and Ditsa, 1999). Douglas and Isherwood (1979) posit that people from different cultures use products as a means of communication. According to McCracken (1989), in a consumer society, cultural meaning moves from the culturally constituted world (the original location of cultural meaning) to consumer goods (carrying and communicating cultural meaning) and then from these goods to the individual consumer. The nature of cultural influence can be seen as a circular process from which meaning is created, maintained and transmitted within a society (McCort and Malhotra, 1993).

There are over 160 definitions of the culture alone.Basically the characteristics of culture are identical in almost all the instances. Hofstede (1991), Trompenaars (1993), and Czinkota, M.R. and Johnston, W.J. (1981) all agreed that culture is based on languages, economy, religion, policies, social institutions, class, values, status, attitudes, manners, customs, material items, aesthetics and education, which subsequently influences managerial values.

Cross-verging across culture has different aspects such as attitude, communication, conflict and negotiation, performance and compensation, which explain the ethical issues and how to appraise them. India, as a country, is so heterogeneous in nature that it is complex for a marketer toidentify common threads of Indian culture and core values. There are many differentsub-cultures coexist in Indian society with their own

distinctive values, norms, beliefsand behaviors. So, In India, people are socialized by getting input from their culturesand core values.

III.   Need of the study

The better understanding of consumers' needs brings growth to the company,along with needs it is important to study culture of the country because, needs are judged within the purview of culture. Therefore it is most important to understand the culture of the country, for the better understanding of consumer behavior which brings success to any of the company.

IV.   Objectives
1. To understand the cultural reasons for the selection of cosmetics.
2. To understand the sub-cultural reasons for the selection of cosmetics.
3. To understand the cross-cultural reasons for the selection of cosmetics

V.   Research methodology

The study uses both exploratory and descriptive research design to get clarity of research problem. The research tool used is Likert Scale and the statistical tool used is Factor Analysis. The sample size was finalized using the formula $n = \frac{z^2\sigma^2}{H^2}$with 95% confidence level and 0.05 level of significance. The sample size finally obtained was 1024 and area is Davangere, Karnataka (state), and India. The sampling technique used was *probabilistic Cluster Sampling (two stage cluster sampling) using systematic random sampling method.* The primary data was collected with the help of a questionnaire from the woman ofDavangere. A total of 1200 women from different areas were contacted and aptly filled questionnaires were obtained. The respondents were given a list of statements that measured their extent of agreement towards the variables. The items were measured on a 5 point Likert scale with 1 representing low score (Strongly dis agree) and 5 representing a high score (strongly agree). These statements were selected after three rounds of pilot testing with the factor loadings above 0.70. For the reliability of the research tool *Crown Basch alpha test* was performed, and obtained the alpha value of 0.78, this shows the tool is reliable.

VI.   Analysis and interpretation

Consumer behavior is studied from two dimensions i.e., the behavior of consumer as an individual and the behavior of consumer in the social setup. Amongst the social setup culture has got considerable influence. To know the influence of culture on consumer behavior, cosmetics factor analysis was performed for the elements of culture, sub-culture and cross culture

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		Culture	Sub Culture	Cross Culture
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.586	.669	.592
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	101.041	209.597	79.907
	Df	3	3	3
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000

The above table shows the KMO and Bartlett's Test in which the suitability of data can be checked. The KMO measure for sampling adequacy should not be less than 0.5. If it is less than 0.5, it indicates that results from factor analysis are not useful. In the above table for all variables *culture, sub culture and cross culture* KMO measure for sampling adequacy are above 0.5.

Table 2: Communalities

SlNo	Consumer Behaviour Elements	Initial	Extraction
Culture			
1	One's own personal culture guides the selection of cosmetics.	1.000	.496
2	The language and the symbols used on the package influences the selection of cosmetics.	1.000	.645
3	The ritual which we perform has an effect on the use of cosmetics.	1.000	.442

SlNo	Consumer Behaviour Elements	Initial	Extraction
Subculture			
4	Our subculture influences the selection of cosmetics.	1.000	.630
5	The different states of our country have emerged as sub culture which influences my selection of cosmetics.	1.000	.658
6	The religion to which we belong has a subculture which influences my cosmetics selection.	1.000	.587
Cross Culture			
7	As global teenage category cosmetics tastes converge, the influences of other country teenagers are more on our country teenagers.	1.000	.602
8	I Would like to buy cosmetics of most favoured world brand.	1.000	.498
9	We like such global brand which study the needs of their customers and fulfils through quality product.	1.000	.427

The proportion of variance in any one of the original variables, which is being captured by the extracted factor, is known as communality (Nargundkar 2002). From the above table it can be understood that after three factors are extracted from marketing mixvariables; the communality is 0.496for Item 1, 0.645for Item 2, 0.442for Item 3 and so on for other factors also. Large communalities indicate that a large number of variance has been accounted for by the factor solution.

Table 3: Total Variance Explained(Culture)						
Component	**Initial Eigenvalues**			**Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings**		
	Total	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
1	1.583	52.768	52.768	1.583	52.768	52.768
Total Variance Explained(Sub Culture)						
Component	**Initial Eigenvalues**			**Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings**		
	Total	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
2	1.875	62.492	62.492	1.875	62.492	62.492
Total Variance Explained(Cross Culture)						
Component	**Initial Eigenvalues**			**Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings**		
	Total	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
3	1.527	50.904	50.904	1.527	50.904	50.904

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The above table explains the total variance explained for consumer behavior elements *culture, sub culture* and *cross culture.* From the table it can be found that all the three factors have Eigen values more than1 for the influence of reference group. The Eigen values for three factors were 1.027, 1.875, and 1.527 for the factor 1, factor 2, factor 3 of the total variance, what the variables together presents can be understood form the total variance. The index for the present solution accounts 52% of total variance for choosing the influence of *culture*, 52% of total variance for choosing the influence of *sub-culture*, 51% of total variance for choosing the influence of *cross culture.* It is pretty good extraction as it can economize on a number of factors while we have lost48%, 38%, 49% of information content for factors in choosing the variable from *culture, sub culture and cross culture*respectively. The factor of *culture* explains 52.768 percentage of variance, the factor of *subculture* explains 62.492 percentage of variance, the factor of *cross culture* explains 50.905 percentage of variance.

Table 4: Rotated component matrix[a]

Items loaded	Components
Culture	1
One's own personal culture guides the selection of cosmetics.	.705
The language and the symbols used on the package influences the selection of cosmetics.	.803
The ritual which we perform has an effect on the use of cosmetics.	.665
Sub Culture	2
Our subculture influences the selection of cosmetics.	.793
The different states of our country have emerged as sub culture which influences my selection of cosmetics.	.811
The religion to which we belong has a subculture which influences my cosmetics selection.	.766
Cross Culture	3
As global teenage category cosmetics tastes converge, the influences of other country teenagers are more on our country teenagers.	.776
I Would like to buy cosmetics of most favoured world brand.	.706
We like such global brand which study the needs of their customers and fulfils through quality product.	.653

From the above table the loading of the factors can be observed. The loading on factors can be positive or negative. The inverse relationship of variable with the rest of the factors is explained by negative loading. The Higher the loading the more important is the factor. According to the suggestions of statistician, anything above 0.44 could be considered salient; the increased loading becomes more vital in determining factor. All the higher loadings in the table are positive. The summary of the factor analysis can be seen in the below table.

Table 5: Consolidated factor analysis for consume behavior

Factor	Factor interpretation (%of variance explained)	Loading	Variables included in the factors
		.705	One's own personal culture guides the selection of cosmetics.
		.803	The language and the symbols used on the package influences the selection of cosmetics.
Culture	This factor explains 53% of variance	.665	The ritual which we perform has an effect on the use of cosmetics.
State and religion as cosmetics Sub-Culture		.793	Our subculture influences the selection of cosmetics.
		.811	The different states of our country have emerged as sub culture which influences my selection of cosmetics.
	This factor explains 62% of variance	.766	The religion to which we belong has a subculture which influences my cosmetics selection.
Global brands as cross culture		.776	As global teenage category cosmetics tastes converge the influences of other country teenagers are more on our country teenagers.
		.706	I Would like to buy cosmetics of most favored world brand.
	This factor explains 50% of variance	.653	We like such global brand which study the needs of their customers and fulfills through quality product.

The above table is the summarized table of the factor analysis, which explains the number of factors loaded, the percentage of variance, and the factor loading to the variables.

VII. Findings

- The factor '*Culture*' is explained by three items: *"One's own personal culture guides the selection of cosmetics," "the language and the symbols used on the package influences the selection of cosmetics,"* and *"the ritual which we perform has an effect on the use of cosmetics"* with a cumulative variance of 53%. It means that according to consumers '*one's own personal culture guides the selection of cosmetics', 'The*

language and the symbols used on the package influences the selection of cosmetics', 'the ritual which they perform has an effect on the use of cosmetics'.

- *"Our subculture influences the selection of cosmetics," "the different states of our country have emerged as sub culture which influences my selection of cosmetics," "the religion to which we belong has a subculture which influences my cosmetics selection,"are the key items obtained through factor analysis of state and religion as cosmetics sub - culture. The three items explains a cumulative variance of 62% of the total variance of state and religion as cosmetics sub - culture. It means that the consumers are of the opinion that their 'subculture influences the selection of cosmetics' and 'the different states of their country have emerged as sub culture which influences their selection of cosmetics', and the 'religion to which they belong is also another type of a subculture which influences their cosmetics selection'.*

- This research has identified three items reasoning *global brands as cross culture*. The first item is *"as global teenage category cosmetics tastes converge the influences of other country teenagers are more on our country teenagers"*, the second item is *"i would like to buy cosmetics of most favored world brand"*, the third item *is "we like such global brand which study the needs of their customers and fulfills through quality product". Global brands as cross culture is explained by these three items together explaining with a cumulative variance of 51%. It can be understood that as 'global teenage category cosmetics tastes converge the influences of other country teenagers are more on our country teenagers', 'they would like to buy cosmetics of most favored world brand', 'they like such global brand which studies the needs of their customer's and fulfills through quality product'.*

VIII. Conclusion

According to consumers while selecting cosmetics, culture influences their selection. Cosmetics are selected in the framework of personal culture and rituals performed. Along with that the language and symbol on the package influences their selection.Consumers are of the opinion that their subculture influences the cosmetics selection and they have derived subculture from the culture of the state and religion to which they belong.

Consumers are also getting influenced from cross-culture of different countries. Today's globalization has converged the global teenage category tastes and preferences, as a reasonglobal teenagers influence is on our country's teenagers. As a result of that consumers would like to buy cosmetics of most favored brand because they know thatglobal brands fulfill the needs of their customers through quality products.For the inclusive growth of the country'seconomy understanding sectorial growth is important. This research brings the possibility of good growth of cosmetics sector with the study of culture.

This research is carried out to study the general perspective of cosmetics consumers understanding of culture. The study would have been more interesting if it was conducted on some specific cosmetics brands.The same study would have been made still more interesting by comparing herbal and chemical cosmetics emphasize on culture.

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