

Buying Motives of Herbal Skin Care Products: The Case of Generation Y in Bangladesh

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A growing number of consumers are shifting their purchasing habit from conventional skin care products to herbal skin care products. Responding to this, many conventional skin care manufacturers are now opening a new branch in their skin care product lines, and labeling it as “herbal” to grab this promising market. A number of studies have already been conducted on different aspects of herbal product consumption, in general. This paper focuses on an effort to determine the factors that are likely to influence customers to buy and consume herbal skin care products. This study used a mixed method approach, and hence used focus group and survey techniques. The findings of this study suggest that the marketing mix elements relating to herbal skin care products have an impact on the buying motives of generation Y in Bangladesh and this relationship is mediated by consumer values in herbal skin care products. The findings of this study would be useful for a large scale study and further generalization of the model.

Keywords: Generation Y, herbal, conventional, skin care product, buying motive, consumption, consumer values, marketing mix elements.

Field of Research: Consumer Behavior

JEL Codes: M31

1. Introduction

Understanding consumption decision of consumers is a key to success of any business (Nair & Prakash 2007). Business organizations are spending billions of dollars to know consumers' attitudes, motivations to purchase, and future behavioral intentions of consumers. According to Loudon and Bitta (1986), consumption decision is a process and physical activity that individuals consider in evaluating, acquiring, using, or disposing of goods and services. Consumption decision process can also be illustrated as activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services (Blakwell, Miniard & Engel 2001). Although consumption decision can be interpreted as the analysis of how, when, what, and why people buy, the current study will focus on one of the many aspects of consumer behaviors. The current research is inadequate to explain the relationship between marketing mix elements and consumers' buying motives of herbal skin care products in Bangladesh.

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Since herbal skin care products is a growing business in Bangladesh, it would be worthy to study consumers' value of herbal skin care products in Bangladesh. Thus, this paper aims to study the buying motives of herbal skin care products in Bangladesh and the roles of that consumer value and marketing mix variables have on consumers' buying motives of herbal skin care products in Bangladesh.

The current study is contributing to the current literature in a number of ways. First, the current research used both qualitative and quantitative research methods and thus employs methodological triangulation following the suggestion of current literature (Sultan & Wong 2012). Second, the current study develops a six-item scale for 'marketing mix' construct, a seven-item scale for 'buying motive' construct, and a three-item scale for consumer value construct; and subsequently validate these constructs. This study used multi-item scale following the suggestions of several studies (Hair et al. 2010; Sultan & Wong 2012). Third, the study develops a structural equation model that demonstrates that marketing mix variables, mediated by consumer values in herbal skin care products, would affect the buying motives of herbal skin care products among generation Y (gen Y) in Bangladesh. This paper is arranged in the following way: the next section discusses the current literature, followed by this are hypotheses development section and research method section. The final part of this paper includes results and discussion, conclusion, implications, limitations and future research sections.

2. Literature Review

According to the National Institute of Health's Office of Dietary Supplements, USA, products made from botanicals that are used to maintain or improve health and body care may be called as herbal products or botanical products. In this context, the herbal products that are available in Bangladesh meet the desire and demand of a particular segment of consumers who are health conscious. Research reveals that beauty consciousness among people is an ongoing process and consumers' need for appearances and materialism is increasing (Vigneron & Johnson 1999). Beauty conscious people want to satisfy the need to look and feel good. This has created a growth in the skin and beauty care industry across the world. In 2003, for example, the world market for cosmetics and toiletries (C&T) was valued at US\$201 billion, an increase of 4.8% from 2002 (in fixed exchange rate), in which hair care products maintain its position as the most valuable sub-sector in global cosmetics and toiletries with a global sales amounting to US\$42.4 billion in 2003 (Briney 2004). The advanced promotion and communication for cosmetics products and their ingredients and values have made today's consumers more aware of what they are using on their bodies, and making them more willing to pay.

Ruchi and Chaubey (2010) state that the mature expansion of satellite television and consciousness of the western beauty and fashion world, communications and promotions resulted a growing number of women in the work force, in particular, to become more conscious about their skin and beauty care products. In Bangladesh, the upbringing of rural and urban people along with economic and social developments have also created an increasing consciousness among people about their health and

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beauty, with a particular attention to care for their skin including getting protected from Ultraviolet Rays. The use of skin care products by Bangladeshi consumers has been further intensified by relatively larger disposable incomes, continuously changing life styles, strong influence of satellite television and related media, and greater choice options and availability of products.

Natural cosmetic sales are increasing with revenues doubling every few year in Europe (Akhtar et al. 2008). The growth rate of the use of 'Shea' butter, for example, in USA market, alone has been estimated at over 25% annually and continues to increase. In 2006, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) market grew by 17% of its total market (Heino 2007). In this connection, Malhotra (2003) states several reasons for a growth in skin care industry in the context of a small area in India, Chandigarh. This study finds that increased health and fitness, and fashion and beauty consciousness tied with increasing income, scientific developments, products and media hype contributed the fashion industry in making outstanding earnings. This has, in turn, added to the growth of beauty and skin care industry in Chandigarh, India. Thus, the 'life style marketing' has come out as one of the important strategies both for domestic and international marketers to induce consumers to accept their offers.

Beauty and skin care products are no longer only for the women nowadays; men also are increasingly using the skin care products. Traditionally women use cosmetics for health care, but recent studies show that men are also using cosmetics at an increasing rate, which is increasing the future of cosmetic industries (Hall, Gough & Seymour-Smith 2013; Huda, Taufique & Sultan 2011). With rising demand from men and women, the market is getting more expanded and numerous competitors are emerging in this industry, and herbal care products are one of such players in this industry.

Sayma et al.'s (2008) study find that a number of plants are used to develop a herbal skin care product, and they may range from hard items such as seeds, fruits, barks, conch shell, woods, leafs, roots, flowers, rhizome, pollen to soft items such as coconut oil, milk, honey, salt, and water. The significance of herbal ingredients as healing agents and their role in beauty care is now widely recognized, and as a result, interests in the exploitation of medicinal and aromatic plants as pharmaceuticals, herbal remedies, flavorings, perfumes, cosmetics and other natural products has been increasing for the last few years (Rao & Arora 2004).

In a study of consumer adoption of herbal therapies, Ritho, Klepser and Doucette (2002) specified four types of influences that affect consumers' adoption of herbal therapies and these are: consumer characteristics, social systems, communication channels, and characteristics of herbals. The influence consumer characteristics on consumer adoption of herbal therapies include demographic attributes. Friends were found to play a dominant role as a communication mode (word-of-mouth). Use of herb professionals as an information source was also found to have a significant and positive association with adoption of herbal therapies. Although a grocery store was a common source for herb purchase, it was not found to have associated with herb adoption.

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In their study on women's buying behaviour of personal care products, Sundari and Sakthivel (2011) revealed that the factors influencing purchase decision of personal care products are "primary benefit" and "secondary benefit". The primary benefit includes price, quality, and quantity. However, the "secondary benefit" includes ingredients of the product, the purpose of the product, innovative features, manufacturer's reputation, and certification of the product.

Traditional herbal products are practiced in several countries, including, Australia, Africa, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, and India. The World Health Organization estimates that at least 80% of the population globally relies on traditional medicine to meet their primary health care needs (Basha, Anjaneyulul, Sudarsanam 2013). In Bangladesh, for example, the use of plants for beauty-care is being practiced from the ancient time particularly among the aboriginal communities, and in the last few decades, the trend spread among the mainstream people that have now got the momentum (Yusuf et al., 1994). Herbal products are now social obsessions across age, gender, race and religion in Bangladesh. Herbal products have sufficient ingredients used in curing and caring purposes, and aromatic compounds used as sources of flavors and fragrances. People in Bangladesh are using these products for their beauty and skin care in different shapes and patterns, including, for example, hair care products for protecting hair fall, dandruff and baldness; facial treatments such as acne and freckles, removing wrinkles, fresh breath; body care treatments such as body grace etc. Importantly, herbal care products have received much attention from the consumers in regard to fat burning treatment.

Although consumer research in herbal therapy is quite well acknowledged in the current literature, our review did not find the answers of the following two questions in the context of Bangladesh: (a) what factors contribute to form consumers' buying motives of herbal skin care products in Bangladesh? (b) what is the relationship among marketing mix elements, consumers' value in herbal skin care products in Bangladesh and their buying motives? A growing number of consumers are shifting their purchase and consumption habit to herbal products, and thus studying their buying motives, values and the impact of marketing mix variables on buying motives and values could possibly contribute to the current knowledge in the context Bangladesh.

3. Hypothesis Development

As indicated, perception of buying motives is a focal point for selling any sorts of products irrespective of any industry. Herbal products or this industry is not out of this convention too. With the focus group discussion we elicited a couple of factors which likely have an influence in making inference for buying and consuming herbal skin care products. These factors include natural ingredients, quality of products, friend and family influence, suitability with skin, perception of safety, credibility towards commitment, environmental responsiveness etc. which likely have a direct influence in creating a buying motive for herbal products' consumers. The factors like fragrance, natural fragrance, and good fragrance which indicate the product quality of herbal skin care products have a positive relationship with consumer perceived value. Because it is evident from Chowdhury, Ahmed and Huda (2007) that perceived quality has significant

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impact on customer perceived value, and it is needless to say that consumer perceived value acts as a prerequisite for consumer buying motive. In the same way, some other factors drawn from this study such as Bangladeshi tradition, domestic resources, availability or smooth distribution, advertising, price, and packaging related to marketing mix variables have a direct correlation with consumer perceived value and will lead to have an impact on consumer buying motives. This study has hypothesized that there is a positive and significant relationship between marketing mix variables and customer buying motives mediated through consumer perceived values. Therefore,

H1: Herbal skin care consumers find a positive and significant relationship between marketing mix variables and perceived value.

H2: Herbal skin care consumers find a positive and significant relationship between perceived values and their buying motives.

4. Research Method

The independent variables of this study were developed from focus group interviews and the current literature. This study employed five focus group discussions with 30 undergraduate students-consumers (aged between 17 and 23, Gen Y) who had been studying at five different universities in Dhaka city during March 2011 following the suggestions of current studies (Krueger & Casey 2000; Morgan 1988; Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook 2007). The data collected through these discussions used the content analyses processes for data analysis and item development, and follows the suggestions of several studies (Sultan & Wong 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b; Sultan and Tarafder 2007).

The current study adds value by incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research methods following the suggestions of Sultan and Wong (2012a). The draft questionnaire including the developed items was validated through a peer review process and pre-tested with 40 consumers. Thus, the face and content validity were ensured. The questionnaire served as a data collection instrument. Based on the literature review, pretesting the questionnaire and subsequent amendments, a nineteen-item questionnaire was developed with a 7-point Likert type scale (1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree). The final survey instruments were cross-validated by two marketing academics having knowledge and skills in survey research and consumer behaviour.

The survey was administered in the last week of March, 2011. A total of 1000 questionnaires were randomly distributed among the students of five different universities' students-consumers; this generated a total of 230 usable responses with 23 per cent response rate from Gen Y. The male and female ratio in the survey response was 161:69. The data was analyzed by means of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. The Cronbach's Alpha co-efficient was calculated for each of the constructs in order to determine the internal consistencies of the constructs. Finally, the structural model and hypotheses testing results were performed. For this purpose, this study used SPSS and AMOS (version 19).

5. Results

5.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Reliability Test Results

The EFA factor loadings (Table 1) shows sixteen of the nineteen items. Items with cross loadings, negative loadings, and loadings with less than 0.30 were deleted following the suggestions of the current literature (Hair et al. 2010; Ho 2006). Thus, three items have been excluded due to having a low factor loading (less than 0.30). The sixteen items demonstrate a three factor solution, and these are named as buying motives, marketing mix, and customer values. Table 1 also shows the tests results of Bartlett's test of sphericity, Kaiser–Mayer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, and Cronbach's Alpha co-efficient for a reliability test for each of the emerged factors. All of the factors had an Eigenvalue of greater than 1.0. For a detail description about variables, please see Appendix 1.

Table 1: Exploratory factor analysis and reliability test results

Variables	Factor: Buying Motives	Factor: Marketing Mix	Factor: Values
nat_reso	.459		
quality	.530		
fnf	.463		
go_skin	.806		
safe_ski	.813		
cmmtmnt	.634		
env_frnd	.631		
traditio		.744	
domestic		.680	
availabl		.713	
adv		.362	
price		.826	
package		.678	
frgrance			.765
nat_frag			.500
good_frg			.526
Cronbach's Alpha Reliability	.787	.70	.657
Bartlett's test of sphericity	$\chi^2 = 1042.73, df = 171, sig. <0.001$		
KMO measure	.800		

The results in Table 1 show that the KMO measure is well above 0.50 as suggested by De Vaus (2001). As the KMO statistic is 0.80, it is also in line with the suggestion provided by Pallant (2007). The *p*-value of the Bartlett's test of sphericity is also less than 0.05, meaning that it was suitable for factor analysis. The factor loadings shows that the items were substantially loaded (i.e. >0.30) on respective latent variables. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is greater than 0.70 for buying motives and marketing mix factors, however, it is slightly less than 0.70 for value factor. One of the reasons for a low Cronbach's Alpha for value factor may be due to perceived indifferences among the items of value factor. Overall, the scales suggest good internal reliability (DeVellis, 2003; Pallant, 2007).

5.2 The Structural Equation Model (SEM) Analysis

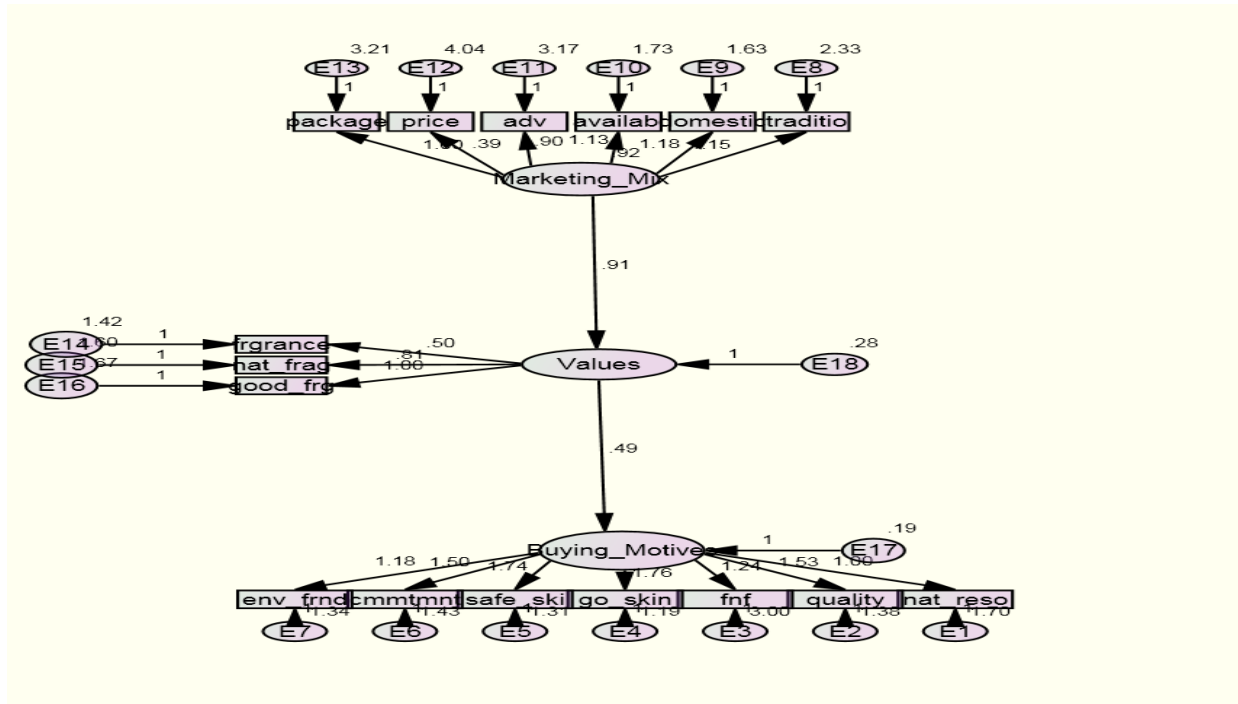
Figure 1 shows that structural model with standardized estimates. The results of the structural equation model (SEM) show that the chi-square statistic, χ^2 (N=212, df=102) is 240.24 and the associated p -value is less than 0.01. As this result is not desirable, the results of alternative measures show that the Normed χ^2 is 2.35 (i.e. $\chi^2/df < 3.0$), the SRMR is 0.023 (i.e. SRMR < 0.1) and Hoelter's critical N is 112 and 122 at the 0.05 and 0.01 level, respectively. These alternative measures against χ^2 are suggested as the associated p -value of the χ^2 is less meaningful when the sample size and number of observed variables are large (Hair et al., 2010; Ho, 2006). The results of these alternative fit measures, considering the large sample size, show that the model fits the sample data set. Overall, the results of absolute fit measures, incremental fit measures and parsimonious fit measures are also satisfactory. These values are all within the cut-off points as suggested by several studies (Hair et al., 2010; Ho, 2006). Table 2 shows the results of all the fit measures.

Table 2: Fit measures of the structural model

Type	Fit Index	The results of the structural model	Accepted (Yes/No)
Absolute fit measures	χ^2	χ^2 (N=212, df=102)=240.24, $p < 0.01$	N/A*
	χ^2/df	2.35	Yes
	GFI	0.880	Yes
	RMSEA	0.080	Yes
	RMR	0.021	Yes
	SRMR	0.023	Yes
Incremental fit measures	TLI	0.804	Yes
	NFI	0.747	Yes
	IFI	0.837	Yes
	RFI	0.702	Yes
	CFI	0.833	Yes
Parsimonious fit measures	AGFI	0.840	Yes
	PNFI	0.635	Yes
	PCFI	0.708	Yes

* Chi-square is not applicable because of large sample size. The alternative measures to Chi-square are χ^2/df , SRMR and Hoelter's critical N statistic.

Figure 1: The structural model



5.3 Hypotheses Testing Results

The hypotheses developed for this study are the causal relationships between the constructs. This study developed two hypotheses, and Table 3 shows their results.

Table 3: Results for hypotheses

No	Hypotheses	Standardized regression weights	Significance	Supported (Yes/No)
H1	Herbal skin care consumers find a positive and significant relationship between marketing mix variables and perceived values	0.91	$p < 0.01$	Yes
H2	Herbal skin care consumers find a positive and significant relationship between perceived values and their buying motives	0.49	$p < 0.01$	Yes

In summary, the fit indices are satisfactory in terms of their respective cut-off points. The p -value of the χ^2 is significant. This was due to the size of samples considered for this study (N=212). However, alternative fit indices including Hoelter's critical N, SRMR and Normed χ^2 show that the absolute fit measures are satisfactory. The results of incremental fit measures are all close to 1.0 suggesting that the model is a better fit compared to null models. The parsimonious fit measures are also satisfactory in terms of model's acceptability. The hypotheses testing results are positive and significant at the 0.01 level.

6. Discussion and Implications

The results of this study contribute to theoretical and managerial understanding of gen Y's buying motives of herbal skin care products in Bangladesh. Our review of current studies shows that there is a lack of understanding in terms of the factors that contribute to form consumers' buying motives of herbal skin care products in Bangladesh, and the relationships that exist among marketing mix elements, consumers' value in herbal skin care products in Bangladesh and their buying motives.

The samples of this study included students-consumers (referred to as the gen Y) who had been studying in five different universities at Dhaka city in Bangladesh. This exploratory study found that the gen Y in Bangladesh perceives 'buying motives' of herbal skin care products as: made of natural resources, quality herbal ingredients, suggested by friends and families, harmless and safe for skin, trustworthy and environment friendly. In addition, this study also found that the gen Y perceives 'value' as good and natural fragrance; and 'marketing mix elements' as tradition, national and domestic pride, availability, advertising, price and packaging.

In terms of the relationships among marketing mix elements, consumers' value in herbal skin care products in Bangladesh and their buying motives, this study found that buying motives are directly affected by gen Y's perceived values, which is 'good and natural fragrance', and indirectly affected by marketing mix elements through perceived values. The hypotheses test results show that all of the hypothesized relationships are positive and significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, perceived value construct was found as the important mediating variable between marketing mix elements and gen Y's buying motives of herbal skin care products.

The findings of this study are relatively new in the context Bangladesh, and thus produce a greater understanding of the marketing mix elements, consumers' values and their buying motives in the context herbal skin care product in Bangladesh. The practitioners could get useful insights from this study. For example, herbal skin care products should hold the key consumer value of 'good and natural fragrance' along with the critical motives as identified by gen Y. Subsequently, it may probe worthy, in terms of return-on-investment, to use marketing mix elements, as identified by gen Y, holding the motives and values.

7. Conclusion, Limitations and Future Research

This study aimed to explore the factors that contribute to form consumers' buying motives of herbal skin care products in Bangladesh, and to determine the relationships among marketing mix elements, consumers' values and their buying motives in herbal skin care products in Bangladesh. This study used methodological triangulation approach where both qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed. The samples of this study included students-consumers of five different universities located in Dhaka city. The study found 230 valid responses, and subsequently these were statistically analyzed within SPSS and AMOS frameworks. This study found that

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buying motives (seven items) are directly affected by consumer values (three items), and indirectly affected (via consumer values) by marketing mix elements (six items).

Although this study has several theoretical and practical contributions, this study has several limitations, as well. First, this study used a small sample of students and confined the scope of this study within Dhaka city. Second, this study does not attempt to generalize its findings; rather the developed scales and model are the guides for a future study. Future study can also investigate the factors influencing consumption decision using larger sample size, including various consumer demography and across the country. Future research should also investigate the differences in findings especially in age groups, generations, sex, urban-rural and educated and semi/un-educated consumers. Finally, a qualitative study may provide important insights, in this context.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Description of Factors

Constructs	Items	Description
Buying Motives	nat_reso	produced with natural resources
	quality	quality of herbal products
	fnf	friends and family influence
	go_skin	go well with skin
	safe_ski	safe for skin
	cmmtmnt	trustworthy to commitment
	env_frnd	environment friendly
Marketing Mix	traditio	Bangladeshi tradition
	domestic	domestically produced herbal products
	availabl	availability in market
	adv	effect of advertising
	price	effect of price
	package	good packaging
Value	frgrance	fragrance
	nat_frag	natural fragrance
	good_frg	good fragrance