



A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE PERFUME INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMER PERCEPTION IN INDIA AND DUBAI: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Fariyah Banu Jamaluddin Saiyad

Dr. Shobha Dedhia

Department of Commerce,

S.N.D.T Women's University, Churchgate, Mumbai, India

Abstract:

The decision which is made to purchase perfume products is a complicated process that consumers have to experience. Different factors affect the consumer choice for perfumes. These factors include social factors, demographic factors and psychological factors. For example, some consumers choose their perfumes depending on the recommendation they get from a family member who used the brand or know someone who is using it. In addition, consumers' age, income level, personality, self-concept, routine and values may affect their decision in choosing perfume products. This study aims to compare the perfume industry in India and Dubai and at the same time, studies to understand the consumer preference in terms of the factors influencing buying different fragrances. For the study, a total of 150 consumers from each country, thus 300 in all are considered. The survey was conducted in the digital mode and the responses were analyzed using statistical tools. It was seen that the Indian perfume market is overloaded with the consumer demand, however, performance of the perfume industry is better with the Dubai perfume market. The factors of perfume buying have a major impact on ratings of perfume.

Keywords: Consumer, Marketing, Perfume, Consumer Behavior, Purchase Decision

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Introduction:

Nowadays perfume is not considered a luxury product, it is widely used by people from all over the world, from different ages, genders and cultures. The development of perfume from a luxurious item to a fashionable one, in addition to different brands that are launched to the market made it harder for customers to select the perfume to purchase. Moreover, the high cost of companies to enter the market, studying and identifying target groups and their preferences have an important role in positioning and decreasing the cost of perfume failure (Sadegi, Tabrizi and Norozi, 2011).

Studying consumer behavior helps firms and organizations improve their marketing strategies by understanding various aspects about consumers such as the psychology of how consumers feel or think towards a product or a brand, how they choose between them, and how they are affected by the environment surrounding them (Perner, 2015). Many studies are done in the field of consumer behavior, trying to understand how consumers make their buying decisions, why they buy a specific product and not another. However, understanding consumer behavior completely is impossible, because of how closely it is



related to the human mind, but forecasting how a human behaves in purchasing situations can be projected through previous purchasing decisions (**Lautiainen, 2015**).

There exist studies regarding the buying behavior of consumers in purchasing cosmetic products, but there are very few studies that investigate the buying behavior when purchasing perfume products. Therefore, the results of the study will help us understand more about our consumers and the factors that affect their decision in choosing perfume products. According to **Dudovskiy (2013)** consumer buying behavior is complex, dynamic and cannot be defined easily and universally. That is why the concept has been defined in different ways by different researchers. Dudovskiy used Michael Solomon's definition regarding the consumer buying process as a process of consumers choosing, buying, using and disposing of products or services to satisfy their needs and wants. While Kumar in his 2010 study "Marketing of hospitality and tourism services" mentioned that consumer buying behavior refers to the behavior of final consumers, both individuals and groups, who buy goods and services for personal consumption (**Kumar, 2010**).

Review of Literature:

Pezoldt and Michaelis (2012) argued that the perfume industry needs to study how men and women make their perfume decisions to be able to customize perfume, to attract the attention of both genders and to develop an exceptional brand position in the future.

However, the price effect differs from one consumer to another according to which social class the consumer belongs to. A consumer from the lower class will focus more on price, whereas a consumer from the upper class will be more attracted to other elements, such as quality, novelty, features, or even the "social benefit" that could be obtained from the product (**Perreau, 2013**).

Eventually a brand works as a signal. It allows

consumers to quickly recognize a product as one they are familiar with or one they like. It is a memory cue that allows consumers to retrieve relevant information from memory. This information may include past experience of the brand, brand awareness or brand associations. The information that is stored about brands in consumers' minds is essential to guiding their purchasing decisions. Brands that are recognized more quickly and easily are favored more and are more likely chosen (**Leighton and Bird, 2012**).

Most consumers would perceive a bottle of a well-known perfume brand such as Dior as a high-quality, expensive product. But the same perfume in an unmarked bottle would probably be viewed as lower in quality, even if the fragrances were the same. Strong brand names form an image that support each perfume's positioning. These names (brands) suggest that the perfume will do something more than just make you smell better. For example, Oscar de la Renta's Ruffles perfume started as a name chosen because it created images of whimsy, youth, charm and femininity; all those characteristics are well-matched to the target market of young, fashionable women. After putting the name, a scent was selected to go with the product's name and positioning (**Sadeghi, Tabrizi and Noroozi, 2011**).

Brand has a very important role in creating loyal customers and keeping companies' market share. Loyal customers always repurchase and recommend the brand to others, and they pay more money for the brand they prefer even if there are alternative products that are cheaper. Brand awareness increases the customer decision to buy a specific brand. Moreover, brand has a significant impact on the customer's purchase decision. Brand name has a major impact on the purchase decision of customers (**Mirabi, Akbariyeh and Tahmasebifard, 2015**).

Packaging is used to promote and sell the product by defining the product's identity, getting consumer



attention, providing information about the product and the producer, and ensuring safe use (Adofo, 2014). Studies show that consumers make decisions about the product based on its overall appearance before looking at the ingredients or the price tag. Aidnik (2013), in her study titled “The Effect of Cosmetic Packaging on Consumer Perceptions”, stated that consumers expect stunning packaging from an expensive and high quality product. However, packaging should be fitting with the environment in which the product will be sold. Products may be disregarded by a consumer because of the “too fancy” packaging look, which leads to the perception that the product is too expensive or that the consumer will be paying for the packaging itself. They might also be disregarded because of the “too cheap” packaging look, which leads consumers to view the product as low quality.

Raza, Nas and Answer (2013) in their study “Factors considered by consumers for purchase of perfumes / fragrances: a case study of consumers in the twin cities of Islamabad & Rawalpindi”, found that sales expertise and techniques do not have an important influence on consumers while they are purchasing perfumes. Sujana (2010) mentioned that consumers prefer dealing with an expert salesperson, who understands their wants and unstated needs.

Consumers from different regions stated that they like to test the product before purchasing, and they prefer to smell the perfume, soaps, shower products and deodorants before they buy them. Woitalla, 2014 mentioned that 34% of American men and 59% of German men said that they like to smell scented products before they purchase them. Stores should offer free samples for consumers to try the product, especially for perfume products, to encourage them to try it and to increase the potential to purchase it (Angela, 2008).

Objectives of the Study:

With the aim of understanding the Perfume Industry in

India and Dubai, the main objectives of the present study are –

- i) To study the purchasing behavior of the perfumes by the consumers in India and Dubai
- ii) To analyze the factors influencing the buying behavior of the consumers in India and Dubai.
- iii) To highlight the pattern of the purchases by the consumers of India and Dubai in terms of perfumes.

Hypothesis of the Study:

Hypothesis 1

H0 - There is no significant impact of the factors influencing the buying behavior of the perfumes on the ratings of the perfume in the Indian and Dubai Perfume Market

H1 - There is an significant impact of the factors influencing the buying behavior of the perfumes on the ratings of the perfume in the Indian and Dubai Perfume Market

Hypothesis 2

H0 - There is no difference in the performance of India and Dubai Perfume Markets

H1 - Dubai Perfume Markets are better performing in comparison with the Indian perfume markets

Scope of the Study:

The choice of perfumes is a difficult decision making process that the consumer has to experience. Many different factors affect the consumer choice for perfumes. Some consumers choose their perfumes depending on the recommendation they get from someone in their family who used this brand or knows someone who is using it. Moreover, a consumer’s age, job, economic situation, personality, self-concept, routine and values, affect his/her choice of perfume products. However, probably the most important factor that affects the consumer’s choice of perfume is the personality of the consumer. Personality refers to an individual’s way of living as expressed in activities, interests and opinions that often reveal unconscious motives underlying purchasing decisions (Pamelalinber,



2011). The area of study is limited to India and Dubai as an entire nation.

Research Methodology:

Data: Both Primary and Secondary

Variables: Consumers purchase decisions, Factors influencing purchase decisions

Sample: 150 consumers from India and 150 consumers from Dubai

Research Findings:

Sampling Technique: Random Stratified Sampling

Period of the Study: 15th March to 20th April 2023

Tool of Data Collection: Structure Questionnaire circulated using Google form

Tool of Analysis: ANNOVA

Study area: India and Dubai

Table 1.
Age of Respondents

Age (Years)	India		Dubai	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
13-18	28	18.67%	30	20.00%
18-30	99	66.00%	87	58.00%
30-50	23	15.33%	33	22.00%
Total	150	100.00%	150	100.00%

Table 2. Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	India		Dubai	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Service	21	14.00%	30	20.00%
Public Servant	9	6.00%	7	4.67%
Self Employed	19	12.67%	30	20.00%
Student	101	67.33%	83	55.33%
Total	150	100.00%	150	100.00%

Table 3. Gender of Respondents

Gender	India		Dubai	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Male	99	66.00%	102	68.00%
Female	51	34.00%	48	32.00%
Total	150	100.00%	150	100.00%

Table 4. Preferred Features of Perfume

Preference features	India		Dubai	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Fragrance	54	36.00%	49	32.67%
Packaging	39	26.00%	41	27.33%
Quality	42	28.00%	48	32.00%
Price	15	10.00%	12	8.00%
Total	150	100.00%	150	100.00%

Table 5.
Factors of Perfume buying

Factors	India		Dubai	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Brand	48	32.00%	58	38.67%
Price	42	28.00%	29	19.33%
Fragrance	55	36.67%	60	40.00%
None of the above	5	3.33%	3	2.00%
Total	150	100.00%	150	100.00%

Table 6.
Suggested Improvements in Perfume

Suggested Improvements	India		Dubai	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Quality	63	42.00%	82	54.67%
Price	60	40.00%	29	19.33%
Others	27	18.00%	60	40.00%
Total	150	100.00%	171	114.00%

Table 7.
Perfume Ratings and Factors of Perfume Buying

Anova					
Perfume ratings	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean	F	Sig.
Between Groups	15.917	3.00	5.306	4.338	0.009
Within Groups	56.263	46.00	1.223		
Total	72.18	49.00			

Table 8.
T-test for brand personality of Perfumes in India and Dubai

Features	Description	Nation	N	Mean	SD
Longevity	Cheap Short lasting – Costly Long lasting	India	150	1.41	0.493
		Dubai	150	1.22	0.415
Excitement	Trendy – Classic	India	150	1.59	0.493
		Dubai	150	1.41	0.494
Competence	Confident – Shy	India	150	1.18	0.384
		Dubai	150	1.05	0.219
Sophistication	Glamorous – Plain	India	150	1.24	0.431
		Dubai	150	1.20	0.401
Ruggedness	Masculine - Feminine	India	150	1.53	0.501
		Dubai	150	1.46	0.500



Table 9.

T-test for marketing funnel stages and brand personality dimensions for Perfumes as purchased by Customers in India and Dubai

	Recognition		Consideration		Purchase		Loyalty		WOM	
	No (Other) N= 75	Yes (Emirates) N=75	No (Other) N=72	Yes (Emirates) N=78	No (Other) N=80	Yes (Emirates) N=70	No (Other) N=92	Yes (Emirates) N=58	No (Other) N=95	Yes (Emirates) N=55
Short lasting- Long lasting	Sig. (t) 0.175 (-1364)		Sig. (t) 0.086 (1.726)		Sig. (t) 0.019 (-2.371)		Sig. (t) 0.0 (-3.995)		Sig. (t) 0.027 (-2.227)	
Trendy – Classic	0.984 (-0.020)		0.750 (0.319)		0.214 (1.248)		0.063 (1.870)		0.471 (-0.722)	
Confident – Shy	0.194 (-1.306)		1.000 (0.000)		0.004 (-2.951)		0.494 (0.685)		0.059 (-1.904)	
Glamorous – Plain	0.694 (-0.394)		0.238 (1.184)		0.063 (-1.870)		0.027 (-2.282)		0.081 (-1.757)	
Masculine – Feminine	0.380 (-0.881)		0.875 (0.158)		0.019 (-2.362)		0.007 (-2.841)		0.319 (-1.000)	
	No (Other) N= 75	Yes (Emirates) N=75	No (Other) N=72	Yes (Emirates) N=78	No (Other) N=80	Yes (Emirates) N=70	No (Other) N=92	Yes (Emirates) N=58	No (Other) N=95	Yes (Emirates) N=55
Short lasting – Long lasting	Sig. (t) 0.301(-1.038)		Sig. (t) 0.018(-2.416)		Sig. (t) 0.139(-1.499)		Sig. (t) 0.001(-3.835)		Sig. (t) 0.000 (-5.296)	
Trendy – Classic	0.530(0.630)		0.794 (0.262)		0.087(-1.723)		0.865(0.171)		0.676 (0.419)	
Confident – Shy	0.653(0.451)		0.004 (-2.918)		0.004 (-2.918)		0.000 (-5.471)		0.003 (-3.003)	
Glamorous – Plain	0.311(1.022)		0.056(-1.943)		0.001(-3.336)		0.086 (-1.778)		0.000 (-3.003)	
Masculine – Feminine	0.874(-0.159)		0.215(-1.246)		0.486(-0.698)		0.074 (-1.872)		0.738(- 3.003)	

Discussion:

The factors of perfume buying have a major impact on ratings of perfume. The usage of perfume is more in the age group of 18-30 years. Fragrance is the most important factor as received from the respondent's responses. The significant value $.009 < .05$, so null

hypothesis is rejected and hence *factors have impact on overall ratings of perfumes buying behavior of consumers in the Indian Market*. The age group of 18-30 years is more aware of perfumes. The improvement suggested by the respondent is on the quality aspect of perfume ranges.



The Indian perfume market is overloaded with the consumer demand, however, performance of the perfume industry is better with the Dubai perfume market. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and an alternative hypothesis stating that *Dubai Perfume Markets are better performing in comparison with the Indian perfume markets* is accepted.

Conclusion:

According to the study findings, the effect of price on consumer purchase decisions doesn't vary among different income levels, lower income consumers are affected by the price of perfumes as higher income consumers are. As for the effect of brand it also doesn't vary between genders, both males and females are affected by the perfume brand in the same way. It was also found that there is no difference in the packaging effect on both genders, both males and females are affected by the perfume package. Moreover, the results showed that males and females are affected by the perfume bottle design in the same way, and both genders are affected by the fragrance of perfume when they are making their purchase decision. The study results showed also that the quality of perfume has the same effects on consumers with different income levels. According to the results of the study consumers with different income levels are affected by the perfume advertisements, there are no differences among different levels. As for the results for the effect of promotions on gender, it supported some other results from other studies which argued that if we neglect all the other factors like price and quality, etc. we will find that there is no difference between males and females in terms of promotions effects Ndubisi (2005). The results for the recommendations from the surroundings effect on consumer purchase decisions showed that there is no difference in the effect on consumers with different income levels. However, there is a difference in the effects of recommendations from the internet, blogs, consumer reviews on consumers from different ages,

where it affects the younger consumers more because of their significant use of technology and internet. Finally, as for the impulse buying effect on purchase decision, it was found that there is no difference in terms of the effect on males and females.

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