

## **Brand Choice as a Function of Consumer Decision Making: A Study of Factors Underlying Saudi Women's Selection of Facial Makeup Brands**

**Hind Nasir Al-Shudukhi and Raad Abdul Kareem Habib**

*Faculty of Economic and Administration, Department of Business Administration,  
King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia*

(Received 23-1-1415; accepted for publication 15-1-1416 A.H.)

**Abstract.** This research is concerned with clarifying how brand is involved in consumer decision making.

In an attempt to limit stress caused by the information processing task, consumers tend to employ two types of information: a listing of brands and a listing of criteria for each brand. Consumers rely upon brands as a "chunk" of information that enables them to recall product attributes regarding functionality and representationality. It would appear that brand name characteristics facilitate the consumer's processing of information since memory is associated with the psychological and linguistic aspects of brand names.

### **Introduction**

Selecting facial makeup is never simple. In Saudi Arabia women are often faced with problems emanating from the availability of a large variety of cosmetic brands, the social barrier between the buyer (Saudi women) and the seller (male), and the difficulty of processing product brand information.

This research focuses on brand choice as a function of consumer decision-making with regard to Saudi women in their selection of facial makeup brands. It was hypothesized and proven that Saudi women are more likely to rely on brand name characteristics in choosing their makeup brands because of the difficulty in assimilating product attributes caused by some complex informational problems. Nonetheless, some attributes relative to the representationality dimension of the product were proven to be significant.

With the object of determining the product and brand name attributes associated

with the consumer's information processing, the study is considered significant to both marketers and consumers.

The research methodology was carried out through interviews and exploratory discussions with some Saudi women and salesmen, and through consumer survey questionnaires. Quota sampling with a sample size of 446 was used for statistical data analysis. The sample studied was comprised of Saudi women over 16 years of age, some of whom work, are married or single, have different levels of monthly income and education, and were living in the city of Jeddah in the spring of 1991. Research findings showed that there are differences according to the above specified demographic segment.

## **1. Review of Literature**

### **1.1 Brand definition and importance**

A synthesis of marketing literature indicates the importance of brand to both customers and marketers. As defined by the AMA, brand is a term, symbol or design, or a combination of all three that is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors [1]. Brand name has also been defined as an extrinsic cue, that is, as an attribute related to the product but not part of the physical product itself [2].

In fact, it is more than a label employed to differentiate among the manufacturers of a product. It is a complex symbol that represents a variety of ideas and attributes. The net result is a public image, a character of personality that may be more important for the overall status of the brand than many technical facts about the product [3]. Designing a name or a symbol is an important aspect of branding. However, for brand to succeed, it is considered essential for brand to communicate benefits effectively, satisfy consumers' needs and be backed by innovative high quality product development [1].

Brand serves a variety of purposes for both marketers and consumers. For the marketers, brand provides labels by which firms identify and promote their products, show market positioning, communicate quality and guarantee, build a company's desired image and promote customer loyalty. While brand names provide the consumers with immediate recognition of the product, and a means of projecting self-image, its key function is to facilitate choice when intrinsic cues or attributes are difficult to employ.

While brand development is instigated by the marketers, its final form is consumer based. Branding, therefore, is a result of both the marketers' input and the consumers' perception (output). This study is focused on the consumers' perception of brand as an aid to their decision-making process.

### **1.2 Brand choice and consumer decision making**

A decision is made by the selection from two or more alternatives. In other words, the consumer's choice is not limited to whether or not he/she will purchase a given

product but he/she also has the choice between Brand X, Brand Y or Brand Z. In fact, the choice becomes difficult in our modern world economy because of the diversity of brands.

During the decision making process the consumer acts as a problem solver, seeking and evaluating information about brands and retail stores to fulfill his/her needs. According to the cognitive model, the steps involved in decision making are: needs arousal, consumer information processing, brand evaluation, purchase and post purchase evaluation [4, pp. 22-45]. Each of these steps is related to the decision of choosing a specific brand.

### **1.2.1 Need arousal**

When a consumer is faced with a problem that he/she wants to solve, the recognition of a need is likely to occur. However, the consumer's needs at a given point in time are a function of various input variables: consumer's characteristics, motivations, past experiences with brands, the social and cultural environment and the firm's marketing effort. Given needs arousal, a state of tension might occur that may drive the consumer to search for information relevant to his/her decision.

### **1.2.2 Consumer information processing**

Generally, when receiving new information, the human neural network behaves in a complex pattern. The new information may either erase old knowledge to establish a new equilibrium, or may modify large parts of the entire neural network or may be blended with different pieces of stored information [5].

In the context of information processing, the consumer is directed to product-brand evaluation. This process involves the consumer's selective exposure, attention and reception of incoming marketing and non-marketing information. Research evidence indicates that the consumer has limited tolerance for the cognitive strain induced by the information processing task [6]. Behavior tends to be confused and dysfunctional in a state of information overload which is typical nowadays for a product line. The issue of "how much?" and "just which?" information should be provided to minimize confusion has been a subject of academic problems of non-use of information disclosure and is affected by the individual differences between consumers, problems of information measurement and the stimulus characteristics of disclosure [14]. Meanwhile the problem of missing information limits the consumer's ability to process purchase evaluation and make decisions. The consumer, in practice, tends to employ two types of information when evaluating products: a listing of brands and a listing of criteria to evaluate each brand [15, p. 640]. In an attempt to limit stress caused by information evaluation, the marketer's role is to present only the most highly favorable information about products, ignoring their least positive features [16]. Jacoby *et al.* [7, p. 41] found that the consumer bases his/her purchase decision on the most important three to five product attribute

dimensions rather than on all the available information. Moreover, Henry [6], pointed out that accuracy of information processing is reduced if more than eleven brands are presented i.e., consumers may restrict the number of brands and the number of attributes per brand that they may actively process. In some cases, consumer depends mainly on product attributes. In other cases, he/she may consider brand name and brand name image while making their selection [17]. For example, a woman's choice of facial makeup might be based on only color, style and "make-in" attributes of a product since she may find it difficult to assimilate the contents and dermatological values of the products as well as she may depend on brand design and its meaningful association with social class.

### 1.2.3 Brand evaluation

In the process of brand evaluation, the extent to which consumer perceives brand is the final form in the consumers' mind. The consumer relies upon brand as a "chunk" of information that would enable him/her to recall product attributes [18]. Park *et al.* [19], found that the consumer perceives brands as satisfying three needs: functional (externally generated needs), experiential (internally generated needs) and symbolic (self enhancement, role position or group membership). However, some literature focused only on the two-dimensional perspective of brands; representationality and functionality in the belief that Park's functional and experiential dimensions can be compressed [1, pp. 164-165]. The first dimension (representationality) describes the consumer as one who chooses brands as an expression of his/her particular self-image. The brands the person uses are selected on the basis of how closely these brands fit in with the person's self image. Consequently, users and purchasers share a set of beliefs that brand is a non-verbal communication to their reference group [20]. The second dimension that satisfies consumer's needs is functionality which primarily refers to usage (e.g. quality, reliability, durability, etc.). In this context, the consumer views brand as a device to enable recognition of a company's product and associate this with a specific quality level and guarantee. To assess properly the type of brand, consumer evaluates particular brands by their functionality and representationality since brand preference is not only due to quality and certitudes, but also to the extent that social self concept is represented.

Since the consumer is an active participant in brand evaluation he/she would be the best equipped to communicate to marketers what characteristics he/she perceives a particular brand to possess. In the brand development process, the consumer's point of view in conjunction with their personal and functional needs affects branding objectives, strategy and brand name attributes [21]. For effective branding, setting brand objectives is the first requirement to define goals and achievements. It was found that the establishment of a particular image is the top-ranked brand name objective followed by promotion of customer brand loyalty. When deciding branding strategy, the marketer's first decision is to employ a manufacturer's name, a distributor's name, a combination of these or a generic label. Studies show that the number of people who agree that a nationally advertised brand is a better buy than a generic is considerably higher now than

it was in 1980 and 1981. In fact, compared to store brands and unbranded products, our belief in brand names is stronger now than it was 10 years ago [22].

The second key to brand strategy decision is whether to use a family name, individual name or combination branding. Finally, to achieve most of the expected benefits, good judgement is called for in defining brand name criteria. The assumption often made is that a successful product must have a "good" name which has relevance to the psychological, linguistic and marketing aspects [23]. Since the consumer has a limited attention span, brand name requires a simple, distinct, meaningful, emotional and memorable word. Nonetheless, brand name also requires a verbal image or sound associated with product class and the ability to elicit a mental image. Memory search via brand name attributes facilitates the consumer's processing of information since brand name is synonymous with an informational "chunk." Relative to consumer decision making, consumer awareness and recognition of brand requires a strong brand node or trace in memory to identify the brand under different conditions and to confirm prior exposure to the brand when given the brand as a cue [24].

#### **1.2.4 Purchase and post purchase evaluation**

The final sequence in consumer decision making involves purchasing the intended brand and post purchase evaluation. As the consumer uses a product, he/she evaluates its performance in light of his/her expectations. If the product does not meet with the consumer's basic approval or if the consumer gets bored with a product, brand switching occurs. Sometimes, brand switching can result from advertising building brand awareness or altering beliefs about brands [25]. On the contrary, if a consumer is satisfied with the product he/she is likely to repeat the purchase. With repeat purchase behavior, the consumer is merely buying the product without any particular feeling for it. As a consequence of positive feelings towards a particular brand as well as on his/her purchase behavior, the consumer exhibits brand loyalty [4, pp. 65-68].

## **2. Research Design**

### **2.1 Research significance**

The way women approach makeup is almost a direct reflection of the way they use their time [26, p. 186]. This study focuses on brand choice as a function of consumer decision-making with reference to Saudi women in their selection of facial makeup brands. The study is considered important since the cosmetics industry constitutes a considerable portion of the Saudi import market. In 1991, the value of facial cosmetics imported from Europe amounted to SR 203.6 millions, SR 12.1 millions from Taiwan, SR 3.5 millions from Thailand and SR 28.3 millions from the U.S. (Foreign Trade Statistics, 1991). The researchers feel that this study should be applied to Saudi Arabia since there has not been much research done here, it being a developing country. Moreover, the main researcher, as a woman, was able to gain access to Saudi women. The social barrier may pose constraints on male researchers.

Furthermore, the importance of this study is derived from the fact that it aids the marketers in:

1. identifying the role of brand strategy as part of their marketing strategy,
2. concentrating on the most important product-brand attributes to ease the difficulty of consumer's information processing,
3. determining which brand route to follow; either the manufacturers' brand or a combination of manufacturers' and distributors' names, and
4. helping to build the company's desired image and promoting customer loyalty.

Indirectly, Saudi women benefit from this research since the marketers' understanding of different consumers' evaluative attitudes should enable them to utilize the most appropriate branding method for the ease of customer decision making.

Since not much research has been done on Saudi women, this study is expected to shed some theoretical light on their consumer behavior.

## **2.2 Research problems**

The research problems, which stem from the difficulties encountered by Saudi women in their selection of facial makeups are as follows:

1. the availability of several brands makes it difficult to choose,
2. social barriers between the buyers (Saudi women) and the seller (salesman)\*, in view of which the buyer faces time constraints and is unable to discuss fully product information with the seller and encounters difficulty in testing colors and textures of facial make-up, and
3. the difficulty of processing printed information which may be due to individual factors or the language barrier; even when the information provided is in Arabic direct translation is sometimes difficult to understand.

## **2.3 Research objectives**

This paper is concerned with fulfilling the following objectives:

1. to determine the main product attributes that Saudi woman as a consumer considers in her choice of facial makeup brands,
2. to understand the effect of brand name attributes as a device in consumer decision making as applied to Saudi woman's choice of facial makeup brands, and
3. to determine the effect of the availability of information with respect to the consumer's decision making process as applied to Saudi woman's choice of facial makeup brands.

---

\* This terminology was used because the majority of salespeople in this country are men.

## 2.4 Research hypotheses

The above literature suggests that brand has an effect on consumer decision making. On the basis of the analysis offered earlier, the consumer faces stress due to information overload or missing information. In this context, brand is considered as a "chunk" of information which enables the consumer to recall product attributes. Also decisions by the consumer are influenced by brand name characteristics.

The hypotheses tested by this research are:

H1: Saudi woman faces difficulties in assimilating product information provided by marketers.

H2: The consumer's ability to perceive product attributes increases with product branding.

H3: Because choice is difficult, Saudi woman depends more on brand name attributes than the evaluation of product attributes.

H4: Saudi woman's brand choices vary according to demography.

## 2.5 Research methodology

This involves interviews and exploratory discussions with some Saudi women in order to provide an insight into the factors they considered in their choice of facial makeup brands. Analytical study was also conducted through questionnaire distributed to Saudi women.

### 2.5.1 Data collection

Data were collected through a consumer survey and interviews done with cosmetics salesmen. The purpose of the interview was to determine the effect of verbal or written information provided by salesmen on the Saudi woman's choice of makeup products.

The consumer survey was conducted through questionnaires distributed to Saudi women in the city of Jeddah. Since the consumer survey is primarily concerned with the assessment of Saudi woman's perception of product attributes and brand name attributes, the Likert Scale was used.

The statistical test used was the Chi-Square Test. All questions were cross tabulated with respect to the respondents' educational level, income, age, occupational and marital status. The interviews done with the salesmen were included in the data analysis.

### 2.5.2 Survey sample

Probability sampling in the consumer survey was not used for the following reasons: [27, p. 22]

1. There is no officially recognized census of population or any other sampling frame.

2. Accurate maps of population centers are not available.

3. Privacy in the Saudi society is a very serious matter which affects the distribution of questionnaires [28].

In view of these difficulties, quota sampling was used. Quota sampling is a non-probability sampling which includes a minimum number from specified demographic groups of the population.

Demographic data on education, income, age, marital and occupational status were used as the bases for subdividing the target population. Owing to the absence of statistical data, the bases considered in subdividing the demographic segments were discretionary.

In order to ensure that the population is accurately represented, Baily [29, p. 84], suggested that a sample size of thirty cases should be the minimum base for studies in which statistical data analysis is to be done. In this research, it was ensured that a minimum of thirty sample cases was obtained from each demographic segment. Moreover, due to the possibility that not all questions were likely to be answered, a minimum of thirty replies per question was obtained. Accordingly, the sample size was 446 Saudi women covering all demographic segments.

The sample studied was comprised of women over 16 years of age, some of whom work, are married or single, have different levels of monthly income and education, and were living in the city of Jeddah at the time of the fieldwork.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the questionnaire within the demographic groups represented in the sample.

### 3. Analysis of Findings

#### 3.1 Makeup use

The respondents were asked to select the makeup items they use from a list, in order to determine the most commonly preferred makeup items and to evaluate the relationship between each respondents's approach to makeup use and their demographic status.

Generally, the most commonly used makeup items were, in order of preference, lipstick, blush, lipliner and eyeliner. Though all of the respondents wear makeup, with the exemption of their income levels there were differences between all other demographic status and the makeup article they use.

Housewives, women with low education, the married and the eldest use traditional makeup the most, such as powder, foundation, blush, and the eyebrow pencil. Non-traditional makeup such as moisturizer, cleanser and freshener are mostly used by the employed women and those at university level, while lipliner is mostly worn by the unmarried and the youngest group (Table 2).



**Table 1. Distribution of the consumer sample**

	Count	%
<i>Educational levels</i>		
Elementary or less	63	14.12
Secondary	166	37.22
University	182	40.81
Missing	35	7.85
<i>Age levels</i>		
16 - 20 years	66	14.80
21 - 30 years	256	57.80
31 - 40 years	90	20.18
over 40 years	33	7.40
Missing	1	0.22
<i>Income</i>		
Below SR 4,000	82	18.39
From SR 4,000 - 7,000	163	36.55
From SR 7,001 - 10,000	103	23.09
Over SR 10,000	86	19.28
Missing	12	2.69
<i>Occupational status</i>		
Employed	150	33.63
Students	198	44.39
Housewives	96	21.53
Missing	2	0.45
<i>Marital status</i>		
Married	249	55.83
Unmarried	196	43.95
Missing	1	0.22

### 3.2 Factors considered in the choice of makeup

Respondents were further asked to state the product characteristics they look for when selecting their makeup. The purpose was to establish consumer perception of the product relative to the marketing efforts. Makeup brands followed by their dermatological benefits to the skin were the prime factors considered. Makeup color and texture came next, while package size was the least important consideration (Table 3). The findings showing that respondents choose makeup primarily according to brands rather than color, may have something to do with the respondents' perception that some specific brands represent the latest fashion in color.

Other factors tested were the country of origin, price, and smell or taste of makeup.

### 3.3 Sources of information

Evaluated according to their demographic segment, the Chi-square test shows a significant relationship between women's income levels, educational levels and their preference of makeup brands (Table 3).

**Table 2. Respondent's use of makeup items**

Q1	Count	%
Cleanser	186	41.89
Freshener <sup>a</sup>	59	13.29
Moisturizer <sup>b</sup>	162	36.04
Foundation <sup>c</sup>	159	35.81
Blush <sup>d</sup>	341	76.35
Powder <sup>e</sup>	164	36.94
Eyeliners	252	56.76
Eyeshadow <sup>f</sup>	142	31.98
Eyebrow pencil <sup>g</sup>	165	36.71
Mascara	206	46.40
Lipstick	422	94.59
Lipliner <sup>h</sup>	284	63.96

a- Employed women and those aged over 30 use more ( $s = 0.004$ ,  $s = 0.006$ )

b- Employed women and those aged over 20 use more ( $s = 0.044$ ,  $s = 0.05$ )

c- Housewives and employed women use more ( $s = 0.012$ )

d- Housewives and employed women use more ( $s = 0.043$ )

e- Housewives, women at elementary level, married and those over 40 years old use more ( $s = 0.001$ ,  $s = 0.002$ ,  $s = 0.006$ ,  $s = 0.004$ )

f- Married women use more ( $s = 0.003$ )

g- The married and those aged over 40 use more ( $s = 0.051$ ,  $s = 0.03$ )

h- The unmarried use more ( $s = 0.050$ ) while the use is lessened as women get older ( $s = 0.050$ )

**Table 3. Factors considered in the choice of makeup**

Q2	Count	%
Texture	138	30.65
Smell or taste	80	17.51
Color	174	38.94
Package size	9	2.07
Price	89	19.82
Dermatological values	243	54.61
Brand <sup>a</sup>	253	57.60
Country of origin	87	20.05
Others	19	4.38

a- The higher the income and the higher the educational level, the more women care about brand ( $s = 0.035$ ,  $s = 0.05$ ).

In moving toward a purchase, consumer gathers, processes and evaluates information. Respondents were asked several questions on how they choose makeup brands and how they evaluate the clarity and completeness of information obtained from leaflets, salesmen, product packaging and advertising (Tables 4-10).

**Table 4. Source of information about makeup products**

Q4	Count	%
Leaflets	199	44.72
Salesmen	279	63.12
Package labels	274	66.99
Advertisement	354	84.28
Others	9	2.14

**Table 5. Clarity and completeness of information about makeup products from leaflets, salesmen, package labels and advertisement**

Q5, 7, 9 & 11 Count % Row %	Clear & complete	Clear but incomplete	Unclear	Total
Leaflets	23	126	50	199
	11.55	63.31	25.13	100
Salesmen	56	209	14	279
	20.07	74.91	05.02	100
Package labels	38	148	88	274
	13.86	54.02	32.12	100
Advertisements	36	299	19	354
	10.17	84.46	05.37	100

**Table 6. Reasons for unclarity of information from leaflets, package labels and advertisements**

Q6, Q8 & 10 Count % Row %	Written in foreign language	Translation is not clear	Non- disclosure of information required	Other	Total
Leaflets	17	25	6	2	50
	34.00	50.00	12.00	4.0	100
Package labels	49	26	7	3	85
	57.65	30.59	8.23	3.53	100
Advertisement	1	3	14	0	18
	5.56	16.67	77.77	0	100

**Table 7. Reasons for unclarity of information obtained from salesmen**

Q12	Count	%
Salesman does not possess enough experience	3	21.43
Idea that there is no full disclosure of the product information	4	28.57
Difficulty of communication	7	50.00
Other	0	0.00
Total	14	100.00

**Table 8. Respondents believing in salesmen suggestions**

Q13	Count	%
Yes	221	58.31
No	158	41.69
Total	379	100.00

**Table 9. Reasons for believing the salesmen suggestions**

Q14	Count	%
Believe in experience	166	75.11
Don't know the available brand	47	21.27
Others	8	3.62
Total	221	100.00

**Table 10. Reasons why women don't listen to salesmen suggestions**

Q15	Count	%
Promote unsaleable brand	52	33.99
Promote brands with higher margin of profit	38	24.84
Promote brand with higher prices to increase sales	42	27.45
Others	21	13.73
Total	158	100.00

Makeup advertisements seemed to be the most popular source of information, according to about 85% of the respondents. Product packaging and salesmen's

recommendations were equally ranked as the second source of information, while less than half of the respondents depended on leaflets for information (Table 4).

With respect to the degree of quality and completeness of information available, it seems that the information obtained from all sources was clear but incomplete (Table 5).

Reasons given by those who stated that information was unclear are as follows: the labels are written in a foreign language, or if they are in Arabic, the translation is not clear and technical terms are difficult to understand. Unclear translation into Arabic is the primary reason given by respondents who considered leaflets unclear. During the interviews, some respondents blamed the lack of clarity in leaflet information on the use of generally non-factual information designed for propaganda purposes. While advertisements are generally considered clear, the problem of non-disclosure of the information required is the primary reason for the lack of clarity (Table 6).

The interviews with salesmen revealed that translation of information into Arabic is limited to general information only. In depth-translation to Arabic could not keep up with innovations in cosmetic contents and fashion. This could be the reason why more respondents depend on salesmen rather than on leaflets in collecting information. However, the main constraint for lack of clarity is the difficulty in communicating with salesmen due to social barriers (Table 7).

To determine the role of salesmen in the respondents' choice of makeup brands, respondents were asked whether or not they benefit from the salesmen's suggestions and were asked to give their opinions about these suggestions (Tables 8-10). 68% of the respondents admitted to having followed the salesmen's advice on brands. The main reason mentioned is the respondents' belief in the salesmen's experience and their belief that salesmen are more knowledgeable because they attend seminars and have access to the latest information. However, respondents who denied benefitting from salesmen's suggestions believe that salesmen are either promoting only unsalable brands of cosmetics or promoting brands with higher prices in order to increase sales and profit. Other reasons stated most often for not listening to salesmen are the respondents' belief that they know what is best for their skin type and color, and their impression that salesmen's patter is just for show or to pass the time.

The above analysis clearly indicates that a gap exists between the information needed and the information actually provided.

### **3.4 Brand name attributes evaluation**

Using the five point scale, the respondents were asked to rate the importance of the criteria used when choosing a makeup brand name. The criteria given were characteristics of brands with respect to creating brand image, satisfying customer needs, arousing customer awareness and describing product benefits. These groups emphasized

the key role that brand names are given in helping to achieve marketing objectives [21, pp. 260-261].

Indeed, from Table 11 the criterion ranked first was the attractiveness of the brand name to the customers. This strategic desirability relative to brand name presentation (e.g. color, design, lettering, symbol, etc.) enables the brand name to be easily encoded

**Table 11. Brand name attributes evaluation**

Q21 Count Row %	Very important	Important	Uncertain	Not important	Not important at all	Total	Mean
Easy to pronounce <sup>a</sup>	60 14.32	79 18.85	28 6.68	165 39.37	87 20.76	419	3.33
Distinct from other brands	114 27.53	146 35.26	28 6.76	98 23.67	28 6.76	414	2.25
Brand design indicates product quality	101 24.40	182 44.00	68 16.43	48 11.59	15 3.62	414	2.26
Has positive connotations <sup>b</sup>	159 38.78	174 42.44	40 9.75	29 7.07	8 1.95	410	1.91
Attractive	184 43.63	168 39.62	16 3.77	45 10.61	11 2.59	424	1.89
Easy to remember	100 23.92	137 32.78	30 7.17	122 29.18	29 6.93	418	2.62
Used by famous personalities	23 5.45	47 11.13	53 12.56	179 42.41	120 28.44	422	3.77
Implies social class <sup>c</sup>	50 11.96	133 31.81	62 14.83	118 28.22	55 13.15	418	2.99
Reflects confident feeling	98 23.33	151 35.95	47 11.19	93 22.14	31 7.38	420	2.54
Evidence of country of origin	56 13.36	104 24.82	62 14.80	136 32.45	61 14.56	419	3.10
Implies modernity	118 27.89	202 47.76	26 6.15	55 13.00	22 5.20	423	2.20
						Overall Mean =	2.62

a- The lower the educational level and the older the age level, the more they consider it important ( $s = 0.003$ ,  $s = 0.006$ ).

b- The high income groups consider it more important ( $s = 0.033$ ).

c- The higher the educational level, the more they consider it not important ( $s = 0.050$ ), while the unmarried consider it important ( $s = 0.032$ ).

into, retained in and retrieved from the memory. This seems to be the most important criterion for customer awareness. The findings on the other related criteria of memorability and pronunciation were consistent with the findings from the interviews done with the salesmen. Salesmen attested to the fact that easy to recall brand names

were not important factors for a customer when choosing makeup brand name. They noted that customers tend to describe and elaborate their chosen brands with respect to brand symbol, logo, color and design when they were not easy to pronounce provided a positive impression and purchase motivation. This seems to contradict the importance of simplicity for desirable brand names frequently cited in marketing literature [e.g. Ref. 23].

The Chi Square Test showed significant relationships between the educational and age levels of respondents and the pronouncibility of the brand name. The lower the educational level and the older the age level the more they consider it important for the brand name to be easily pronounceable.

The second key group of criteria describes product benefits. Brand name connotation was ranked second. This is probably because of the positive connotative meaning of brand name imparting basic psychological recognition of the product.

The Chi Square Test of this criterion showed with 99% confidence that there is a relationship with the respondents' income levels. The high income groups believe in the importance of the brand names they need in order to indicate their high income and differentiate themselves from the other income levels. Brand design as a reflection of the quality level of the product was also considered important. This means that respondents tend to perceive the quality of the product through the quality of the brand design.

The third group of criteria relative to brand image such as modernity, distinctiveness and evidence of country of origin was considered essential. Modernity which reflects adaptation to the latest craze was considered important. This is because in order for a woman to be fashionable she needs to wear the latest cosmetic fashion. Distinctiveness is a desirable characteristic as it aids the memory and brand positioning, as well as being useful for legal reasons.

Customer satisfaction, the last group of criteria was associated with the brand name's reflection of a feeling of confidence, social class and identification with famous personalities. Although respondents consider these attributes less important, studies confirm the association of product brands with the consumers' social class [30]. These criteria seem to be unimportant to the highly educated respondents but very important to the unmarried. Indeed the possession of university certificates is enough to show where a person belongs.

### **3.5 Product attribute evaluation**

In the process of product evaluation also using the Likert Scale customers perceived product-brand attributes with respect to the dimensions of representationality and functionality (Table 12). The findings showed that with respect to the functionality of the product, respondents were primarily concerned with caring for their skin by using makeup made from natural extracts. Clearly this was a manifestation of their concern about their skin care. Respondents tended to select makeup brands made from herbs,

Table 12. Product attributes evaluation

Q20 Count % Row %	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Mean
Brand I use reflects my personality <sup>a</sup>	64 14.85	129 29.93	72 16.71	98 22.74	68 15.78	431 100	2.95
I do care about the country of origin	90 20.88	150 34.80	25 5.80	101 23.43	65 15.08	431 100	2.77
Brand I use is used by famous personalities <sup>b</sup>	41 9.47	68 15.70	158 36.49	83 19.17	84 19.17	433 100	3.23
I care about color/fashion more than the hypoallergenic attributes	216 49.43	149 34.10	15 3.43	23 5.26	34 7.78	437 100	1.88
The higher the price the better the quality <sup>c</sup>	74 16.82	101 22.95	78 17.73	117 26.59	70 15.91	440 100	3.02
I use different brand on special occasions	56 12.93	149 34.41	26 6.00	139 32.10	63 14.55	433 100	3.01
I feel confident when I put on makeup	63 14.82	111 26.12	39 9.18	128 30.12	84 19.76	425 100	3.14
The brand I use does not reflect my social status <sup>d</sup>	66 15.49	138 32.39	33 7.75	108 25.35	81 19.01	426 100	3.00
I prefer makeup made from natural extracts	283 64.17	105 23.81	26 5.90	19 4.31	8 1.81	441 100	1.56
Packaging is not imp. in choosing my makeup	53 12.21	119 27.42	53 12.21	126 29.03	83 19.12	434 100	3.15
If I do not find lipstick I go without it <sup>e</sup>	72 16.25	106 23.93	28 6.32	157 35.44	80 18.06	443 100	3.15
The brand gives all the information I need <sup>f</sup>	62 14.16	127 29.00	56 12.79	148 33.79	55 10.27	438 100	2.97
I buy my makeup on sale	48 10.91	129 29.32	65 14.77	146 33.18	52 11.82	440 100	3.06
Overall mean							2.84

a- The higher the educational level, the more they agree ( $s = 0.030$ ).

b- The higher the income, the more they agree ( $s = 0.012$ ), while the students are more uncertain, housewives disagree more ( $s = 0.033$ ).

c- Employed women disagree more ( $s = 0.001$ ), while the lower the educational level the more they agree ( $s = 0.004$ ).

d- The highest income group agree more ( $s = 0.029$ ).

e- The lower the educational level, the more they disagree ( $s = 0.030$ ).

f- The lower the educational level, the more they agree ( $s = 0.003$ ), while women above 40 years old disagree more ( $s = 0.050$ ).



probably because they find it more difficult to understand the chemical components of makeup. Regarding the product representationality, respondents rated as the foremost consideration those attributes related to product color and fashion. More than 80% of the women respondents agreed that the second most important feature was color and fashion of the makeup, more so than the hypoallergenic qualities.

As might be expected, women put on makeup mainly to make themselves more fashionable and presentable but no less cautious about their skin. This does not contradict the primary preference of women surveyed for makeup to be made from natural extracts, whether or not they were hypoallergenic.

The third attribute considered by the respondents was the product's country of origin. More than half of the respondents agreed that the "made in" label of makeup products was actually used in the consumers' product evaluation. This confirms some research findings that the country of origin is a key factor in buyers' evaluation [31].

Though other research has shown that there was no evidence of a product's country of origin providing the primary basis for a general evaluative concept, it may stimulate interest in other information [32].

Other studies show that the "made in" triggers the image (i.e. the reputations or stereotype) commonly attached to products from a specific country [33]. This could be applicable to cosmetic products considering the association between certain countries having a positive image for certain kinds of products. The inconsistent findings of other studies indicating that the country of origin has little impact, are probably due in part to the product category used in the analysis [34]. Peer group pressure can also stigmatize products from countries "unacceptable" [35].

About 50% of the respondents perceive brands as an indication of one's personality and social status. This shows that the respondents' concept of brands is a symbolic device projecting one's self-image and as a non-verbal statement indicating their reference group. This congruence between self-image and the use of a particular brand implies "you are what you wear."

Other related attributes were the respondents' perception of brand as a "chunk" of information and the association between product, price and quality. Respondents considered brand as a "chunk of information" about the product. They believe that brand is a reliable tool in product selection since their consumer cognitive processing strain was reduced. Although respondents believe that there was no strong association between makeup price and quality, they did mind buying make-up on sale. This means that price was not a major consideration in their choice of makeup.

Similar with the findings on brand name evaluation, respondents considered association with famous personalities as the least important factor. This is probably caused by respondents being less aware of the famous personalities used in makeup promotion who are mostly Western women. Similarly, it has been noted by numerous

salesmen interviewed that Saudi buyers are attracted by any picture of beautiful women associated with a makeup brand, not necessarily famous women and use the same brand thinking that their appearance would be similar to the women pictured.

In summary, it could be stated that the respondents are willing to pay the price as long as the product is made from "natural extracts", fashionable, is manufactured in a country considered to produce high quality products and is suggestive of one's personality.

The above findings were analyzed further according to demographic segments. The results vary in relation to the statement quoted earlier "The way women approach makeup is the way they approach life."

Findings showed with 95% confidence that response is directly related to education and income levels. The higher the level of education, the more the brand is seen as portraying personality. Additionally the highest income group perceive more than the other groups that brand is a reflection of their social status and a means of communicating with their reference group. This confirms previous research findings that consumers choose brands in a manner that shows congruence between self-image and the image associated with a particular brand.

For brands to be associated with famous personalities, the Chi-Square Test showed significant differences. With respect to income and occupational status of respondents the higher the income, the more they are strongly influenced by the idea that their chosen brands are used by famous personalities. While employed women disagree more with the concept that price is an indication of quality, respondents from the lowest educational level believe that the price of a given makeup brand indicates quality. The higher the price, the better the quality. This belief could have been a result of their inability to absorb other brand attributes, i.e. contents. They depend more on brand to give them all the information they needed to evaluate the product. These findings are probably due to their lack of education and their difficulty in evaluating product attributes.

### **3.6 Perception of makeup effects on the skin**

While all respondents used makeup to a certain extent, about 80% of the respondents believe that wearing makeup causes harm to their skin. This view is shared by all respondents, thereby there is no significant relationship to the specified demographic segments (Table 13).

### **3.7 Preference for women selling makeup**

In Question 15 the respondents were asked if they would prefer having women as sales representatives of makeup. Over 50% replied positively and less than 10% do not like the idea of having saleswomen. This shows the respondents' enthusiasm for better communication. About 30% of the respondents have no preference for women selling makeup. This confirms the results that women depend more on using samples than listening to salesmen (Table 14).

**Table 13. Respondents' opinion on whether make-up causes HARM to the skin**

Q3	Count	Percent
Yes	343	78.13
No	51	11.62
Don't know	45	10.25
Total	439	100.00

**Table 14. Respondents' opinion if they would care having women as sales representatives of makeup**

Q16	Count	Percent
Yes	259	59.40
No	30	6.88
Don't care	147	33.72
Total	436	100.00

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The basic research design addresses the issue of information processing in view of whether product attributes are reviewed, evaluated and combined to yield an overall evaluation or whether brand name mediates the final judgement and choice in the decision making process. During product attributes processing, a consumer first examines values for several brands on a particular attribute, then selects a given attribute and compares several brands with reference to it, and so on. While in brand processing, a consumer might select one brand, examine several of its attributes, then select another brand and consider its attributes, and so on. In view of the cognitive strain induced by the information processing task, consumers tend to reduce the number of attributes and brands that they actively process in an attempt to limit stress. It was hypothesized that Saudi women are more likely to choose makeup products based on the evaluation of brands.

In order to do so, consumers tend to rely upon brand as a "chunk" of information that enables them to assess product attributes. Since the brand that a person uses is selected on the basis of how closely it fits with the person's self image, memory for brand information is associated with the brand name characteristics. The research supports the hypothesis that Saudi women are more likely to rely on brand name characteristics in choosing their makeup brands because of the difficulty in assimilating other product attributes caused by some complex information problems. Because brand names represent a rich configuration of symbols and meanings that are embodied by products, they can draw product inferences and influence consumer evaluation. The

representationality and functionality dimensions of product attributes and the inherent psychological and linguistic characteristics of brand names were tested. Some product attributes related to the representationality dimensions were proven to be significant.

A comparison of the respondents views of product and brand names attributes shows that women limit the evaluation of product attributes to two particular aspects (i.e., for the product to be made from natural extracts and for it to be fashionable). Next to these two primary product attributes, respondents seemed to favor 7 out of 11 brand name characteristics as important factors in their makeup choice. This does not conflict with the acceptance of the hypothesis since findings in the information analysis reveal that a gap exists between consumer information needs and the information actually available. Though Saudi women admit that the information provided is clear, they do not feel that there is full disclosure of the information needed. Consequently, the researcher is of the opinion that the respondents' dependence on makeup to be made from natural extracts is not an outcome of a careful evaluation of the product attributes but a mere dependence on generic data.

With respect to brand name characteristics, it was found that those psychological perspectives related to the attractiveness, (e.g. color, design, symbol, lettering) positive connotations, fashion, product class which enhance image of the brand in the consumer's mind were rated high while characteristics related to easy encoding, retention, and retrieval from memory were rated low. With respect to product attributes, similarly those attributes related to representationality were rated with more importance.

It is worth noting that the attribute of product brands associated with famous personalities was the least important factor considered by the respondents, while the "made in" labels as a product attribute seemed significant. The research further indicates that Saudi women's evaluations and usage of makeup products are reflections of demographic segment. These differences help in redirecting the marketing strategy of the cosmetics industry.

This study is not without its limitation considering the use of non-probability sampling, however, confidence in the result is increased by the use of a larger sample drawn from various demographic segments.

## **5. Recommended Marketing Strategy**

The unavailability of sufficient data about the behavior patterns of Saudi women concerning product purchase makes developing an effective marketing strategy more complex. In this research, the object is to assist firms involved in the cosmetics industry to develop a profitable marketing strategy. This marketing strategy includes the selection of target markets, the choice of a competitive position (market positioning) and the development of an effective marketing mix. The following points may benefit the marketers of cosmetics in general and in Saudi Arabia in particular:

1. The consumer's attention span is usually short, thus it is crucial for marketers to identify one or a few of the determinant attributes and the relative importance of these attributes to consumers in a given purchase. In this research, the determinant factors are for the makeup to be made from natural extracts, for it to be fashionable, for the brand name to be attractive and for it to have positive connotations. This view integrates primary attributes for both products and brand name.

2. Marketers should be aware that attributes can be psychological as well as physical. For this product, even more attention may have to be put on less tangible characteristics i.e. the representationality attributes of creating self-image, inspiring confidence and reflecting social status.

3. Since it was found out that makeup made from natural extracts is the determinant attribute in consumer decision-making, the researchers believe that marketers should not only consider makeup contents but that emphasis should also be directed toward the product name and its design to be reflective of nature in order to offer a feeling of certitude.

4. Marketers should create an overall positive attitude towards brand by considering the sum of the buyers' beliefs about each component or attribute of the brand. In this study, fashion, country of origin and quality are some of the components that may form the buyers' beliefs.

5. Marketers must make decisions with respect to providing information to consumers. The point is that processability is as important as availability. In this context, marketers need to focus not only on information quality and availability but also on the format in which the information is structured and presented.

6. In view of the consumers limited cognitive information processing, marketers need to be aware of the problems of information overload, disclosure and complexity. In this research, literal translation should be avoided and information should be disseminated in Arabic at the same pace as innovations in cosmetics.

7. In an effort to reduce the great uncertainty experienced in buying makeup products, women tend to seek information from others before making a decision. Family members, friends, salesmen, beauty consultants, and self evaluation (through samples and advertisements) can lead to the selection of certain types of products. The marketers must therefore attempt to identify the kind of people who might be the initiator, influencer and decider in the decision-making of a consumer. Knowing the main participants and the roles they play helps an organization fine tune its marketing program. For example, in this research the use of a sample was the prominent factor considered by Saudi women in their purchase of makeup. Therefore, marketers should allocate more funds to promotional samples.

8. Marketers must understand how and where consumers search for information in order to design a more effective communication medium. These days Saudi women do not spend most of their time at home as they did previously. The phenomenon of working women and the fact that women are spending more time in recreational and social activities, means that women cannot be reached at home by traditional media. Outdoor billboard advertising may be more effective.

9. The use of personal selling should bridge the gap between the information required and the available information. However, in view of the social barriers between women and the salesmen, saleswomen should be employed. Moreover, it was found out that the higher the education the more the reliance on beauty experts. It is expected that the level of education will increase in the future, therefore marketers who want to be competitive should begin employing saleswomen and beauty consultants.

10. Housewives and less educated women believe that price is an indication of quality. In managing the price strategy, marketers can set higher prices on traditional makeup to offset the need to lower prices on nontraditional makeup.

11. Since a country with a favorable reputation for making a given product contributes greatly to market positioning, advertising for makeup should emphasize the country of origin. Makeup was proven to be a product which has strong associations with its country of origin.

12. Since women's use of makeup is a reflection of the way they approach life, certain personality, psychological and behavioral characteristics interface with the assumed demographic segments. In this research, the evaluation is in accordance with the major classified group of products i.e. traditional and non-traditional makeup.

13. Older women are more influenced by the recommendation of salespersons. Therefore using salesmen to sell traditional makeup should be augmented since older women are the most frequent users of traditional makeup. While for younger and educated women who use more of the non-traditional makeup, "sample trial" should be carried on and increased since it was found that most of the educated and younger women prefer to try the new brand before they buy it.

14. Working women and educated women are more independent, therefore the advertising message to them should not use the housewife as a role model but rather use a role model that reflects an environment of independence and a self-fulfilling lifestyle not associated with the home. This is recommended more in the promotion of nontraditional makeup.

15. The higher the educational level, the more the respondents cared about brands as a reflection of their personality and reference group. Therefore, it is recommended to make use of the reference group in advertising makeup used by this group, i.e., the nontraditional makeup.

16. Housewives are influenced by famous personalities, so the names of well known women could be used in the promotional effort of traditional makeup. Using famous Arab personalities is recommended because most of the housewives are not aware of Western personalities.

**Acknowledgement.** Special thanks to King Abdulaziz University for the support and to the three anonymous reviewers from the *Journal of King Saud University* for their helpful comments and suggestions.

### References

- [1] De Chernatony, L. and McWilliam, G. "The Strategic Implications of Clarifying How Marketers Interpret Brands." *Journal of Marketing Management*, 5, No. 2 (1989), 153-171.
- [2] Selnes, Fred. "An Examination of the Effect of Product Performance on Brand Reputation, Satisfaction and Loyalty." *European Journal of Marketing*, 27, No. 9 (1993), 19-33.
- [3] De Chernatony, L. and McWilliam, G. "The Varying Nature of Brands as Assets." *International Journal of Advertising*, 8 (1989), 339-349.
- [4] Assael, H. *Consumer Behavior and Marketing Action*. New York: New York University Press, 1981.
- [5] Verbeke, W. "Advertisers Do not Persuade Consumers; They Create Societies around Their Brands to Maintain Power in the Market Place." *International Journal of Advertising*, 11 (1992), 1-13.
- [6] Henry, W. "The Effect of Information-Processing Ability on Processing Accuracy." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 7 (June, 1980), 42-47.
- [7] Jacoby, J.; Speller, D. and Berning, C. "Brand Choice Behavior as a Function of Information Load, Replication and Extension." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1 (June, 1974), 33-42.
- [8] Jacoby, J.; Szybillo, G. and Busato-Schach, J. "Information Acquisition Behavior in Brand Choice Situations." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 3 (March, 1977), 209-216.
- [9] Biehal, G. and Chakravarti, D. "Information Accessibility as a Moderator of Consumer Choice." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10 (June, 1983), 1-14.
- [10] Biehal, G. and Chakravarti, D. "Information Presentation Format and Learning Goals as Determinants of Consumers' memory Retrieval and Choice Processes." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 8 (March 1982), 431-441.
- [11] Brucks, M. "The Effects of Product Class Knowledge on Information Search Behavior." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12 (June 1985), 1-16.
- [12] Sujan, M. "Consumer Knowledge: Effects on Evaluation Strategies Mediating Consumer Judgements." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12 (June 1985), 31-46.
- [13] Thorelli, H. and Engledow, J. "Information Seekers and Information System: A Policy Perspective." *Journal of Marketing*, 44 (Spring 1980), 9-23.
- [14] Crosby, L. and Taylor, J. "Effects of Consumer Information Education on Cognition and Choice." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 8 (June 1981), 43-55.
- [15] Schiffman, L. and Kanuk, L. *Consumer Behavior*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1987.
- [16] Johnson, R. and Levin, I. "More than Meets the Eye: The Effects of Missing Information on Purchase Evaluations." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12 (September 1985), 169-177.
- [17] Meyers-Levy, J. "The Influence of a Brand Name's Association Set Size and Word Frequency on Brand Memory." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16 (September 1989), 197-207.
- [18] De Chernatony, L. "Branding in an Era of Retailer Dominance." *International Journal of Advertising*, 8 (1989), 245-260.
- [19] Park, C.W.; Jaworski, B. and J. MacInnis, D.V. "Strategic Brand Concept Management." *Journal of Marketing*, 50 (October 1986), 135-145.
- [20] Belk, R.; Bahn, K. and Mayer, R. "A Developmental Recognition of Consumption Symbolism." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9 (June 1982), 4-17.
- [21] Shipley, D.; Hooley, G., and Wallace, S. "The Brand Name Development Process." *International Journal of Advertising*, 7 (1988), 253-266.

- [22] Crimmins, J.C. "Better Measurement and Management of Brand Value." *Journal of Advertising Research*, (July-August 1992), 11-29.
- [23] Robertson, K. "Strategically Desirable Brand Name Characteristics." *The Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 6 (Fall 1989), 61-71.
- [24] Keller, K.L. "Conceptualizing, Measuring and Managing Customer-based Brand Equity." *Journal of Marketing*, 57 (January 1993), 1-22.
- [25] Deighton, J.; Henderson, C.M. and Neslin, S.A. "The Effects of Advertising on Brand Switching and Repeat Purchasing." *Journal of Marketing Research*, 31 (February 1994), 28-43.
- [26] Bartos, R. *Marketing to Women Around the World*. Boston: Harvard Business School, 1989.
- [27] Kaynak, E. *Marketing in the Third World*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982.
- [28] Lugmani, M.; Yavas, U. and Quraeshi, Z. "Advertising in Saudi Arabia: Content and Regulation." *International Marketing Review*, 6 (1989), 59-72.
- [29] Bailey, Kenneth. *Methods of Social Research*. New York: The Free Press, 1978.
- [30] Granhaug, K. and Trapp, P. "Perceived Social Class Appeals of Branded Goods and Services." *The Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 1 (1989), 13-18.
- [31] Gaedeke, R. "Consumers Attitudes Towards Products Made in Developing Countries." *Journal of Retailing*, 49 (Summer 1973), 13-24.
- [32] Hong, Sung-Tai and Wyer, Robert S. Jr. "Effects of Country of Origin and Product Attribute Information on Product Evaluation: An Information Processing Perspective." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16 (September 1989), 175-187.
- [33] Thorelli, H.; Lim, J. and Ye, J. "Relative Importance of Country of Origin—Warranty and Retail Store Image on Product Evaluations." *International Marketing Review*, 6 (1989), 35-46.
- [34] Eroglu, S. and Machleit, K. "Effects of Individual Product Specific Variables on Utilizing Country of Origin as a Product Quality Cue." *International Marketing Review*, 6 (1989), 27-41.
- [35] Johansson, J.K. "Determinants and Effects of the Use of "Made-In" Labels." *International Marketing Review*, 6 (1989), 47-58.



## اتخاذ القرار بدلالة الاسم المميز للسلعة : دراسة العوامل المحددة لاختيار المرأة السعودية لمستحضرات التجميل الخاصة بالوجه

هند ناصر الشدوخي ورعد عبدالكريم حبيب

أستاذ مساعد، قسم إدارة الأعمال، كلية الاقتصاد والإدارة - جامعة الملك عبدالعزيز، جدة، المملكة  
العربية السعودية.

(قدم للنشر في ٢٣/١/١٤١٥هـ، وقُبل للنشر في ١٥/١/١٤١٦هـ)

**ملخص البحث.** يهدف هذا البحث إلى معرفة دور الاسم المميز للسلعة (الماركة) في اتخاذ قرار الشراء من جانب المستهلك. ويركز على معرفة دور (الماركة) في اتخاذ قرار الشراء من جانب المرأة السعودية لمستحضرات التجميل الخاصة بالوجه. وقد بنيت فرضية البحث الأساسية على أن المرأة السعودية تعتمد على المعلومات التي تستمدّها من الاسم المميز للمنتج (الماركة) أكثر من اعتمادها على المواصفات الخاصة بالمنتج، وذلك بسبب العوائق المتعلقة بصعوبة تحليل المعلومات الخاصة بالمنتج والتي نوقشت في البحث. وقد أجريت الدراسة على عينة حصصية عدد مفرداتها ٤٦٦ مفردة من السيدات السعوديات في مدينة جدة. وتوصلت الدراسة إلى نتائج مهمة وتوصيات عملية للمسوقين المهتمين بتسويق مستحضرات التجميل والمنتجات المشابهة.

