

## ABSTRACT

The hair shampoo industry in Malaysia is becoming highly competitive with more products of local and imported brands. The purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding of the behavior of consumers with regards to hair shampoo. The specific objectives of this study are to examine the unaided brand awareness of hair shampoo; the usage and purchase patterns of hair shampoo; the evaluative criteria used in product performance evaluation and if differences exist among the different ethnic groups; to investigate factors and their relative importance that influence consumers' choice of hair shampoo as well as to examine if ethnic differences exist with regards to factors influencing choice of hair shampoo; and to draw marketing implications from the findings and make suggestions to marketers in order to aid them in their marketing strategies and activities.

Data was obtained from questionnaires completed by 308 females in Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. The study found that Pantene leads in the unaided brand awareness followed by Rejoice.

In terms of usage patterns, 2 in 1 is the most popular type of product. Most of the respondents washed their hair 3 - 4 times a week and did not share their brand of hair shampoo. Pantene is the most popular brand that is used by majority of the respondents.

Majority of respondents has been using their most often used brand for 1 - 2 years. Refreshes after shampooing and cleansing ability are evaluated as the best attributes in their most often used brand. The attribute of leaving

hair shiny is of least prominence. The results indicate that the Malays seemed to give a higher score to product attributes compared to the Chinese and Indians. Hair problems are not a major issue for most respondents.

Most respondents are decision-makers for their brand of hair shampoo. Supermarket is the favorite purchasing channel. If the most often used brand is not available at the point of purchase, they will most probably buy the same brand but of different pack size.

The survey also indicates that product quality is the most important factor influencing decision-making. Natural ingredients, value for money, distribution coverage, reasonable price, nice fragrance and trust worthiness of the brand are also important in influencing consumers' choice of hair shampoo.

The findings of this exploratory study should be of interest to those in the hair shampoo industry as they reflect the needs of these females. By understanding these needs, better and more suitable products can be designed to satisfy them.