

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents an overview of the study and a summary of the major research findings as well as its implications for marketing strategy. The limitations of study and recommendations for future research are also discussed.

Overview of the Study

This study examines the unaided brand awareness of hair shampoo; the usage and purchase patterns of hair shampoo; product performance evaluation and to see if differences exist among the different ethnic groups. It also investigates 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.

This study was confined to the female users and buyers of hair shampoo respondents; aged 15 to 39 years old in Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. The data collection technique adopted for this study was the self-administered method. The research instrument used was a five-page questionnaire. The sample consisted of 308 respondents.

Interpretations of Major Findings

The study finds that most of respondents have normal with straight and medium length of hair. Most of them did not perm and color their hair. Pantene, followed by Rejoice is the respondents' most mentioned unaided brand

awareness. Pantene is also the brand that majority of respondents used currently and the most often used brand.

In terms of usage patterns, 2 in 1 are their favorable 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 was the brand that most of respondents used currently. In line with their current used brand, Pantene also stands out as most of respondents' most often used brand.

Majority of respondents have been using their most often used brand for 1 - 2 years. Refreshes after shampooing is evaluated as the best attribute for their most often used brand. Hair problems are not a major issue for most respondents.

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

Product quality is the most importance factor in influencing purchasing decision-making. Natural ingredients, value for money, distribution coverage, reasonable price, nice fragrance and brand trust worthiness are also important in influencing consumers' choice of hair shampoo. In a low-involvement product, respondents will identify the most important attribute and select the brand that rates highest on this attribute.

Marketing Implications

This study provides a preliminary step towards explaining consumer behavior. It also enhances our understanding of the hair shampoo respondents' hair characteristics, unaided brand awareness, usage, purchasing patterns and respondents' selection criteria among hair shampoo users and purchasers for which there was a lack of local research. It brings a number of benefits, among them the ability to assist managers in their decision-making, provide marketing researchers with a knowledge base from which to analyze consumer, helps regulators create laws and regulations concerning the purchase and sale of goods, and assist the average consumer in making better purchase decision.

In addition, manufacturers and retailers can use findings of this study to benchmark themselves against their competitors and to analyze its brands' strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats.

This study should be the foundation of marketing management. It assists managers to design the marketing mix. In particular, it influences a company's marketing research, advertising and promotion, product development, pricing and distribution strategies. Furthermore, this study helps to develop competitive strategy by segmenting the marketplace, position and differentiate products, perform an environment analysis and develop market research studies.

The study also provides an in-depth understanding of what drive movement in brand performance. Hair shampoo is a low-involvement decision process. This means that respondents engage in very little external search process before they make a purchase. In these circumstances it is crucial that

respondents immediately think of the company's brand when they recognize a problem. To create such unaided brand awareness, the company needs to do mass advertising so that its brand is quickly recalled from respondents' long-term memory. Mass advertising strategy has been applied to both Pantene and Rejoice. Result shows that both Pantene and Rejoice have achieved the highest unaided brand awareness. Products bought under low-involvement conditions have less risk attached to them. Likewise, hair shampoo is low-cost goods that are distributed extensively, and therefore require mass advertising to support them.

In the mass advertising strategy, marketer should use heavy amounts of message repetition, utilize likable/attractive endorsers and keep arguments in advertising simple. It will be critical to employ high levels of advertising to get the brand into consumers' consideration sets.

In addition, the product development strategy must be designed so that it performs well on the dominant attributes. Similarly, promotional strategy should emphasize product competence on the dominant attribute.

Reasonable price will also influence pricing strategy as well. For products purchased via a limited decision making process, price is the single most important consideration. Low-cost producer may be the key to success in the marketplace. Coupons and other price incentives would be the tactical strategy to reach more price-conscious groups.

Finally, marketers need to utilize an extensive distribution strategy to have more coverage so that consumers can obtain products easily without much effort

to search for the product. Here, large investments are required to distribute hair shampoo widely. It will be important to develop ongoing relationships with retail channel buyers and to use persuasive communications and incentives to prominently display the brand.

Limitations of the Study

Time and cost constraints have caused the sample to confine to only one segment, which are only the female residents in the Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. Thus the findings of the study may only be applicable for designing marketing strategy for this segment only and leaves the other female market outside of Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya untapped for marketing action. It cannot be denied that the female market in other areas is equally important but this study does not include them.

The sample size is urban in nature and therefore the generalizability of the research results is questionable as the hair shampoo buyers from urban area may have different lifestyle from those in other areas.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study could be extended to the whole country to increase the sample size in order to enhance the reliability of findings as well as its generalizability and if any significant differences between the region.

As Malaysia is a multiracial country, it would be interesting to conduct a cross ethnic comparison to reveal difference across racial. It will definitely provide new insight for marketing strategy.

Moreover, consumers have different hair type; i.e., normal, dry and oily hair. It would be important to conduct a cross tabulation to view difference across hair condition. It would then be used to develop better product offering, product positioning and differentiation to further enhance marketing strategy.

Future research should look into hair coloring product to identify who are the core users, why do they colored their hair, what types of hair coloring product attracts them most, where is the key channel to distribute hair coloring product and how often do they color their hair. This would be then to develop marketing mix to further enhance marketing strategy.