

**DETERMINANTS OF PURCHASE INTENTION OF MEN'S FAIRNESS CREAM:
THE ROLE OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH (E-WOM) COMMUNICATION
IN FORMATION OF PRODUCT SPECIFIC ATTITUDES OF SRI LANKAN
MILLENNIALS**

G.D. Samarasinghe

Department of Industrial Management

University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

[*dineshs@uom.lk*](mailto:dineshs@uom.lk)

W.S. Jayawardhana

Department of Management of Technology

University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

Abstract

At present male-niche cosmetic market is making radical growth signifying opportunities for all marketers in the industry worldwide. Major cosmetic companies have created dedicated products going beyond “only sanitation”. However, there is a lack of research on this type of product category in a male market, especially in the South-Asian context. Thus, the objective of the present study was to investigate the phenomenon with special emphasis on male Millennials in Sri Lanka as they are very much exposed to and engaged in social media platforms and this significantly influences the formation of their attitudes and perceptions towards products. The key purpose of the study was to explain how purchasing determinants together with electronic Word-Of-Mouth (e-WOM) communication affect the male Millennials' attitudes towards the purchase intention of fairness cream. Based on prior literature, a conceptual model was hypothesized. To achieve the objective of the study, data was collected from a sample of 105 males consisting of current users and potential users or non-users of men's fairness cream. They are executives or above in their professional status aged between 18 to 35. Non-probability convenience sampling methods were adopted in this. The study was quantitative in nature where data collection was carried out based on structured self-administrated questionnaires. The conceptual model and hypotheses were tested using simple Linear Regression models along with descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that both personal factors and product attributes have a significant impact on purchase intention whilst attitude towards consumption of the product category partially mediates the relationship between personal factors and purchase intention. Further, it is found that the presence of e-Word-of-Mouth (eWoM) communication negatively moderates the relationship between attitudes towards purchase intention of men's fairness cream. The study has implications for both theory and practice.

Keywords: e- Word of Mouth, Purchase Determinants, Purchase Intention, Men's Fairness Cream, Sri Lanka Millennial

Introduction

Despite the fact that the cosmetic industry is traditionally associated with women; there is an increasing demand for cosmetics for men (Souiden and Diagne, 2009). The development in technology has created wider room for information sharing and this in turn has enhanced the awareness of people, leading to a rapid growth in the beauty-care market. The earlier information sources which were limited to newspapers, magazines, television, and radio now have spread with new advancements in online communication where consumers can share information directly with manufactures, distributors and other consumers as well. Because of this advancement in information and communication technology, Western lifestyles have created a significant influence on Asian consumers. According to Elsey and Sukato (2009), Asian consumers are adapting to Western lifestyles and this has created a new trend, i.e. male grooming. Due to this westernized adaption, cosmetics market which was traditionally associated with women (Souiden and Diagne, 2009) has broadened where men have become key consumers of some major cosmetics companies worldwide. Men using their wives or partner's cosmetic products specifically designed for women are now demanding products specially created for men's skin which is very much different from the opinion of older generation about cosmetic, i.e. "only sanitation"(Junaid and Nasreen, 2012).

Earlier male grooming products beyond deodorant and body wash were looked down upon and consumers of those products might have felt socially uncomfortable (Ersoy et al 2015). But today, men's grooming industry has been broadening beyond deodorant and body wash to toners, cleansers, sunscreens, anti-wrinkle creams, dark circle removing creams, astringents, facial creams, moisturizers, fairness creams, day and night creams, conditioner treatments, bronzing products, hair coloring and toning gels (Junaid and Nasreen, 2012). Moreover, Souiden and Diagne (2009) explained this trend beyond sanitation by emphasizing that companies are no longer opting to produce the stereotypical male toiletries products such as shaving foam and razors, but are now increasingly focusing on developing niche products. Indeed, major cosmetic companies have created dedicated products for men and among these categories skin care product sales are significantly increasing, these products flying out the shelves in large numbers daily. Earlier the male niche cosmetic market was making a radical growth signifying opportunity for all marketers in the industry worldwide (Souiden and Diagne, 2009). In 2016, the male grooming market, globally, was worth 21.4 billion dollars, and this is expected to increase by 5 billion in the next 4 years (SGK, 2016). However, Souiden and Diagne (2009) pointed out that, despite the increasing importance of the male cosmetic segment, little attention is given to research on the attitude of males towards the consumption of grooming products.

Until recent past, Sri Lankan male grooming market was limited to products ranging from shaving foam, razors, deodorants and perfumes. Print media, digital media and outdoor advertising were also focusing on the product categories that were competing to penetrate into each other's market share within the same category. The authors have observed that domestic companies as well as multinational companies started targeting this skin care market after a major company related to Fast Moving Consumer Good (FMCG) industry had initiated their

production with dedicated products for men in early 2000's. Moreover, the influence from western lifestyles also brought significant impact on men's cosmetic industry, creating a rapid growth. According to Weerasiri and Hennayake (2016), this is backed by product innovation, expanding middle-class Sri Lankan consumer base, and evolving consumer trends.

Sri Lanka's new generation has been increasingly adopting western cultural aspects, paying more attention towards their outer appearance and health. Samarasinghe et al. (2014) revealed that the new generation is considering their groomed body as a signifier of their consumption status where a groomed body is used to express their uniqueness, success, and achievements in life. However, according to Bandara (2017), the majority of the local male population falls under the category who believes that grooming is only for women. By increasing awareness among this group of consumers, companies can capture the opportunity to gear up their production lines as well as penetrate into the market.

Among male consumers of fairness creams, Millennials are much more tech-savvy, having been exposed to rapid advancement in information and communication technology (Sweeney, 2006). This group of individuals is active on social media platforms and their consuming behavior is heavily influenced by friends and peers. Social media platforms like Facebook and blogs have become the trendy way of advertising among most of the industries such as fashion, food, etc. The young customers active on these social media platforms are keen to follow the trends and their brand preferences which are heavily influenced by these advertisements as well as peer groups (Pate and Adams, 2013). For them word of mouth can be a highly influencing factor in their decision-making process as well as the attitude towards usage of certain products and brands. For personal care products, product reviews are a highly influential factor in marketing. Most of the consumers are interested in reading product reviews from previous consumers before purchasing personal care products for self. Prospective customers visit Web sites and read reviews from other customers to learn more about a product before making a purchase (Doh and Hwang, 2009). Therefore, it was identified that electronic word of mouth could influence the attitude towards certain products as well as the purchase intention of customers. Traditional marketing is almost dead and web 2.0 has become a powerful tool in marketing. Cosmetic companies are adapting their strategies to be in line with these new technologies. Therefore, just going beyond identifying the factors influencing the purchase decision, the problem statement was worded as to investigate whether electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) on a social media platform influences the traditional link between purchasing determinants and men's purchase intention of fairness cream in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the objectives were developed, first as to explain the effect of personal factors and product attributes as purchase determinants on men's purchase intention of fairness cream in Sri Lanka, second to examine the influence of attitudes towards consumption of fairness cream on the relationship between purchase determinants and men's purchase intention of fairness cream in Sri Lanka. Third is to understand the impact of e-WOM on the relationship between attitudes towards consumption of fairness cream and men's purchase intention on a social media platform.

The section two of this paper presents the review of key literature, whilst the section three briefly discusses the conceptualization and hypothesis development of the study. Section four explains the methods adopted for the study and the section five elaborates the key results and discusses the findings. Finally, the section six provides the conclusion, implications and further research opportunities of the study.

Literature Review

This literature review discusses the theoretical and conceptual aspects related to purchase decision making of consumers. It discusses personal factors related to consumers, product attributes and e-word of mouth as key influences of the purchase decision making for grooming products. It also recognizes some changes in the male consumption patterns that have taken place over time.

Personal Factors – Self Image

A buyer's decisions are significantly influenced by personal characteristics such as the buyer's age and life-cycle stage, occupation, economic situation, lifestyle, and personality and self-concept (Kotler et al. 2005). Components of the self-concept include physical, psychological, and social attributes, which can be influenced by the individual's attitudes, habits, beliefs and ideas (Souiden and Diagne, 2009). As Junaid and Nasreen (2012) observed, people have the perception that, after using skin care products they can improve their self-image. Featherstone (1991) also supported this opinion providing that one of the main stimuli for the consumption of male grooming products is the creation, development and maintenance of a self-image. Samarasinghe et al. (2014) also highlighted that groomed body is used to express their uniqueness, success and achievements in life. Confirming this idea, Pioch and Sturrock (1998) stipulated that male consumption of grooming products contribute to the production of a desired identity and self-image.

Personal Factors – Aging Effects

Naturally aging process results in several changes in our body especially in the skin where it loses tonicity, increase in wrinkles in number and depth; large variations occur in the level of hydration as well. Coupland (2007) mentioned that the advertisers of certain cosmetic products claim age-delaying, age-miracle or even age reversing features in their products that aim at exploiting the dislike people have towards aging.

Thus, the ageing concern has a propensity on men's purchasing decision of skin care product (Pioch and Sturrock, 1998; Bakewell, Mitchell and Rothwell, 2006). Effects of ageing and the maintenance of a youthful appearance (Cheng, Ooi, and Ting, 2010) are major factors that motive men to use grooming products. In contrast to women, men view age related changes in their appearance as less threatening to their self-esteem (Dittmar and Halliwell, 2003, cited in Souiden and Diagne, 2009). Conversely, Pioch and Sturrock (1998) emphasized that men prefer to stay young in order to have certain desired situations.

Personal Factors – Physical Attraction

Physical appearance is important in building social relationships since people get attracted to someone's appearance first. According to Pioch and Sturrock (1998) this importance of maintaining attractive appearance to opposite sex has been identified as another reason for consumption of personal care products. Changes are again evident in this respect and evidence suggests that male concern towards their own physical attractiveness has risen due to socio-cultural pressures and widespread use of idealized body images in advertising. Confirming this idea, Pioch and Sturrock (1998), also highlighted the importance of maintaining an appearance that attracts the opposite sex. This has been identified as another reason for the consumption of personal care products. Groomed attractiveness of the body is now rewarded with occupational success, social acceptance, upgrading of the current social status and identity; in other words, with better social outcomes in different social situations (Dion, Berscheid and Walster, 1972; Feingold, 1992; Franzoi, 2001, cited in Samarasinghe et al., 2014).

Personal Factors – Health Status

Using beauty products means psychologically that customers are aware of their conditions and take care of their health, hygiene as well as beauty. Health consciousness is closely related with the awareness on health information. It will make people to engage in healthy behaviours, for example consumption of healthy food, visiting fitness centers, managing stress (Souiden and Diagne, 2009) using personal care products and cosmetics as solutions to improve the conditions of their hair or skin and many more. Health-conscious consumers care about the desired state of well-being and put forth an effort to maintain a healthy life (Kim and Chung, 2011). Men as they grow older are likely to become more health-conscious (Aoun et al. 2002). Hence, a general feeling of ill health (e.g. a poor skin condition) stimulates men to purchase cosmetic products (Pioch and Sturrock, 1998) that may help them counteract and prevent certain types of health problems. Therefore, a general sense of health (for example, poor skin texture) stimulates men to purchase cosmetic products (Pioch and Sturrock, 1998) that can help them counteract and prevent certain types of health problems.

Product Attributes

The main categories in decision elements in the marketing process: price, place, promotion, quality and brand are combined to acquire the desired results from the company or organization. As mentioned by Arslan and Altuna (2010), price can also be defined as a monetary expression of value the consumer agrees to pay. Moreover, price is one of the factors affecting the consumer, because it helps him to understand the value of the product. Zeithaml (1998) also mentioned that buyers of private labeled brand are price seekers: they seek a low price.

Place of distribution is very much important since it is the ultimate point where consumers can access the product and get a real feeling that can motivate persons to make purchase decision. From marketer's point of view, place of distribution is where they can reach

the exact target market. According to Weerasiri and Hennayake (2016), attitude and behavior intention of men towards purchase and consumption of Fairness cream suggest that men by nature take the distribution channel of the products into consideration. Generally male consumers do not like to get tired in looking for products, and more than women, men prefer to have convenient access to the products, for example availability of parking facilities. Confirming this idea, Gupta and Arora (2013), mentioned that most of men's skin care products become successful when distribution channels are located in reachable areas such as super stores, drug stores, or when sales are carried out directly or through internet.

Promotion is an important aspect, which helps to increase consumer awareness in terms of products and the same leads to higher sales and helps to build brand loyalty. Package design is an important factor in men's cosmetic products where form, texture, the smell and colors of packaging are vital points to take into consideration when designing men's products (Blanchin et al. 2007). Relatively small, clear, soft, pink packages are considered to be rather female than male. Similar to what Blanchin et al. (2007) mentioned, Weerasiri and Hennayake (2016) also agreed that, men's grooming products packaging is very much important since shape is preferred as pumps and tubes and colours are often required to originate with gray, black, dark blue and brown. Men are demanding products which highlight reason to buy and need labels to emphasize ingredient branding with attractive graphics and logo (Blanchin et al., 2007; Weerasiri and Hennayake, 2016). In contrast, Rose and Wood (2005) have mentioned that the premium brands for men's products are designed more plainly with less description on their product package believing that they are saturated with loyal customers knowing well what they are purchasing.

Blanchin et al.(2007) found that product quality was considered the most important, followed by distribution service and price. Khraim (2011) argued that product quality plays a significant role in influencing consumers to be brand loyal customers. A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol or design (or combination) proposed to identify a seller's goods or services, and to differentiate them from competitors (Zeithaml, 1988). Results of Zeithaml (1998) also suggest that attitude towards brand has a significant impact on their purchase intention. Blanchin et al. (2007) showed that brand name has a significant impact on the purchase decision of customers.

Electronic Word of Mouth

It is a universal truth that consumers are review-crazy. They are keen on other consumers' experiences with a product or a service before pulling their trigger to make a purchase decision. Forbes Welcome (2018) outlined that 92% of customers read online reviews on regular basis while personal reviews have become essential factor in product research process. Exclusively when it comes to personal care products and cosmetics, consumers do not want to risk themselves by involving in new product category or brand. Putri and Wandebori (2016) explained that availability of a broad range of cosmetic products and brands has led towards a complex evaluation process before the final purchase of the product. According to Wu and Wang (2011) consumers seek for other people's opinion when they assess products to make up their mind whether they purchase the right product, which they exactly want.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) refers to the knowledge exchange carried out in online media by consumers and prospective customers (Wu and Wang, 2011). When it comes to personal care products and cosmetics, this eWOM communication can impact the purchase decision of potential consumers (Doh and Hwang, 2009).

Changes in Male Consumption

According to Samarasinghe et al. (2014) new generation is considering their groomed body as a signifier of their consumption status where groomed body is used to express their uniqueness, success, and achievements in life. People live in a postmodern culture where social and technological changes create postmodern conditions that are reflected in consumer behavior as well. Change in male consumer behavior is a result of postmodernism in societal context. Metro-sexual men living in big cities(i.e. metropolitan cities) are again a part of this postmodernism, attribute high importance to their aesthetic appearance and spend a considerable amount of money and efforts to boost their self-images and lifestyles (Souiden and Diagne, 2009). These people are neither homosexual nor androgynous, but consider themselves as masculine who challenge the traditional masculine values (e.g. machismo) by having a new and trendy lifestyle.

Conceptualization and Hypothesis Development

Today consumers are provided with a broad range of cosmetics products and brands, which leads to an evaluation process before final purchase of the product. Generally, people seek information or are being influenced by friends, family members, salesperson, advertisements, internet surfing and other sources (Wu and Wang, 2011). Word of Mouth (WOM) has significantly affected the attitudes and purchase decisions of consumers in the past and certain literature has discussed the same. Consumers tend to rely on reviews made by other users who have already tried the product, trying to eliminate risk of making unfavorable decisions regarding cosmetic products (Karjaluoto, Munnukka and Kiuru, 2016). Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has evolved with the development of the Internet and increase in social media usage. eWOM is slightly preferable by consumers since it is an unbiased review of a product or a service and not involved with companies that lure people to purchase products with positive product or brand reviews. As Souiden and Diagne (2009) pointed out, men's self-image, ageing effects, state of health and physical attractiveness can be grouped as personal variables, which can have a positive impact on the attitude of men when making decisions to purchase fairness cream products. The second category consists of attributes related to product itself and can be identified as external factors for the consumer. Product quality, price, promotion, place of distribution, brand have been considered in measuring product attributes in this study. Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream was identified as a potential mediator variable in the relationship between personal factors and purchase intention. Moreover, the moderator effect of eWOM communication was proposed in this study as it was identified as a potential moderator on the relationship between attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream and purchase intention in previous literature (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012; Akyuz, 2013; Bataineh, 2015; Xiao, Zhang , Li and Samutachak, 2016). Based on the

literature review, the following conceptual model (Figure 01) and the hypotheses were derived for the present study.

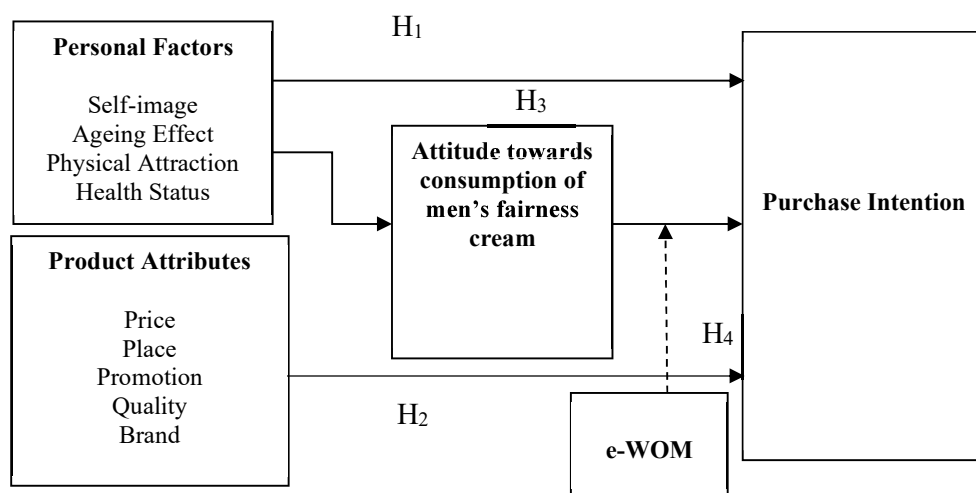


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework (Source: Developed based on literature review)

Self-image, ageing effect, physical attraction and health status (Souiden and Diagne, 2009) were adopted in constructing the variables of personal factors since consumption is not exclusively and purely concerned with the act of consuming itself. Personal factors can have a positive impact towards purchase intention as well as attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream, thus the following hypothesis is suggested.

H₁: Personal Factors have a positive impact on Purchase Intention of men's fairness cream.

Product attributes such as quality, price, promotion, place of distribution and brand are prominent factors when purchasing personal care products. Siu and Wong (2002) (as reported in Elsey and Sukato, 2009) have investigated the influence of price, packaging, promotion, place of distribution, and brand when selecting cosmetic and personal care products. Similarly, Weerasiri and Hennayake (2016), revealed that product quality, brand, place of distribution have a strong effect on men's purchase intention, whereas price and promotion moderately influence purchase intention of fairness cream. Consequently, there is a need to investigate how these attributes influence the purchase intention of Sri Lankan millennial executives' towards buying skin care products. Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested.

H₂: Product Attributes has a positive relationship with Purchase Intention of men's fairness cream.

Elsey and Sukato (2009) employed Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) model to identify consumer behavior in buying skin care products in Thailand. Then the mediating effect of attitude was analyzed with purchase intention and beliefs in product related attributes. Further, Kim and Chung (2011) examined the mediating effect of attitude towards consumption and

consumer purchase intention of organic personal care products. When considering men's purchase behavior of grooming products, attitude towards consumption has been identified as an important determinant that intervenes and positively contributes to the link between personal factors and purchase intention of the customer (Son, Jin and George, 2013). Hence the following hypothesis is suggested in order to explain the mediating effect of attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream on the relationship between personal factors and purchase intention

H₃: Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream mediates the relationship between Personal Factors and Purchase Intention.

The availability of a broad range of cosmetic products and brands has led towards a complex evaluation process before the final purchase of the product (Putri and Wandebori, 2016). In order to make the best decision without getting disappointed with unsuitable products, consumers tend to seek opinion of other consumers of the same product category to make up their mind that they purchase the right product. When consumers are having positive influence through eWOM communication, their attitudes are enhanced accordingly. Conversely, comments that are more negative can discount the effect from eWOM communication and this leads to negative feelings in consumers' mind.

It was identified that eWOM can influence the attitude towards certain products as well as the purchase intention of customers (Doh and Hwang, 2009; Akyuz, 2013, Bataineh, 2015). Even though, a male consumer has a favorable attitude in using fairness cream, he may not be intending to buy the product for himself. However, recommendation from someone who has already used a men's fairness cream product or reading post purchase product reviews will drive the intention of buying the product. Weerasiri and Hennayake (2016) also suggested that there can be various contextual factors other than product attributes which can have interaction impact on purchase intention of men's fairness cream, hence following hypothesis is proposed.

H₄: e- WOM will moderate the relationship between Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream and Purchase Intention.

Research Methodology

Operationalization of Variables

As guided by positivistic research tradition, the study adopted a correlational research design as it has priori-based hypotheses to be tested and employed the survey research strategy (Baker et al., 2019). Independent constructs were identified as personal factors and product attributes comprising of four and five variables respectively. Personal factors were comprised of self-image, ageing effect, physical attraction and health status (Gould, 1988; Pioch and Sturrock, 1998; Coulter et al., 2002; Bakewell et al., 2006; Coupland, 2007; Elsey and Sukato, 2009; Souiden and Diagne, 2009; Cheng et al., 2010; Samarasinghe et al., 2014). Quality, price, place, promotion and brand were identified as the factors under product attributes (Zeithaml, 1998; Blanchin et al., 2007; Elsey and Sukato, 2009; Goi, 2009; Khraim, 2011; Gupta and

Arora, 2013; Isoraite, 2016; Weerasiri and Hennayake, 2016). Attitudes towards consumption of men's fairness cream was measured using exclusivity for ladies, loss of masculinity / metro-sexual and preference to apply skin care products (Elsey and Sukato, 2009; Souiden and Diagne, 2009; Cheng et al., 2010). Further, purchase intention was measured using two measures, namely, positive buying emotions and future buying potential while eWOM was constructed from eWOM credibility (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012) and eWOM quality (Akyuz, 2013). Indicators for each variable identified through literature on priori-basis have been employed to design items in the structured questionnaire. Five Point Likert scale was used as measurement scales for those variables, ranging from "1" (strongly disagree) to "5" (strongly agree). With the purpose of identifying the demographic profile of Sri Lankan Millennial executives, this study also captured demographic variables such as age, education, monthly personal income, marital status and usage of personal care products or cosmetic and usage of social media network of respondents.

Research Strategy, Population and Sample

This study mainly adopted quantitative approach to collect information. First, observations were made at some specialized shops for beauty care products/ fancy goods stores, leading supermarkets and pharmacies to collect information on men's fairness products. Secondly, quantitative data collection was carried out based on structured self-administrated questionnaire. Thus, the research instrument is questionnaires in English language designed through Google forms.

Target group of respondents were Sri Lankan men both users and non-users of fairness cream products. Further, the selection of the study sample was further drilled down to generation of people born during the period from 1982 to approximately 2002. This generation cohort is referred to as Millennials (Howe and Strauss, 2003 as reported in Junaid and Nasreen, 2012). Also, the questionnaire was distributed among Millennial men currently working as executives or above in their profession in government or private sector, assuming that they had the buying potential of grooming products since target sample consists of both current users and potential users or non-users of men's fairness cream.

Elsey and Sukato (2009); Souiden and Diagne (2009); Junaid & Nasreen (2012); Gupta and Aurora (2013); Ersoy et al. (2015); Bataineh (2015) used convenience sampling techniques because of the accessibility, fast inputs and limited research budget. Dependably, the study employed the non-probability convenience sampling methodology for sample selection where respondents were selected from offices located in Colombo metropolitan area. It is the city with highest population (Census of Population and Housing, 2017) and Colombo city is an urban metropolis where residents are highly competitive and involved in career development. The questionnaire was distributed to 120 respondents out of which 105 had returned the completed questionnaires with a response rate of 87.5%. The sample size was sufficiently large to make statistical inferences as per the guidelines of Roscoe (1975) supporting that a sample size between 30 and 500 would be sufficient to make inferences about a population.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The reliability of the questionnaire items was checked using Cronbach's alpha and factor analysis was carried out to assess the convergence validity of the constructs. The descriptive statistical analysis was carried out to describe the samples and the variable averages. The hypotheses depicted in the conceptual framework were tested by using Linear Regression analysis. The study deployed SPSS (version 17.0) software package for data analysis. The researchers evaluated the convergence validity using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha score values. A benchmark of 0.70 was used as the minimum acceptable Cronbach's alpha value (Nunnally, 1978) and 0.5 was used as the minimum allowable AVE value (Hair et al, 2014). A few items with poor factor loadings and cross loading were deleted to refine the final scales. The three main constructs fulfilled the requirements for construct validity and reliability. Table.1 shows the construct reliability and validity of the study.

Reliability and Validity

In order to ensure the internal consistency of the questionnaire, reliability test of Cronbach's alpha coefficient was utilized. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each variable tested was greater than 0.7 which indicates a higher level of internal consistency for the Likert-scale with this specific sample (Nunnally, 1978). Further, a validity of the constructs were assessed by carrying out factor analysis process, which guided to remove some items with poor factor loadings (typically less than 0.5) and cross-loadings (Hair et al., 1995). A few items were removed through factor analysis process due to their cross-loadings in factor analysis. Finally, all the scales were refined to be eligible for the final analysis.

Descriptive Analysis

The selected sample comprised of executives aged 18-35 years; 42% working in government sector 58% in private sector where a majority of 62% was single and others were married. It was revealed that 83 % of the respondents used at least one grooming product. Higher percentage (81%) of respondents is using products specially designed for men. This is coherent with the idea that Men using their wives or partner's cosmetic products specifically designed for women were now demanding products specially created for men's skin and this is far different from the opinion of older generation, i.e. "only sanitation" (Junaid and Nasreen, 2012).

Most men preferred supermarkets and pharmacies for their purchasing of grooming products with average monthly expenditure of 2000 LKR for cosmetics. Gupta and Aurora (2013) also mentioned that most of the men's skin care products were getting successful when distribution channels were located in reachable areas such as super stores, drug stores and when using direct sales and internet. Confirming this idea, Weerasiri and Hennayake (2016) also mentioned that men always consider convenience in shopping and prefer distribution channels, which are easy to access with adequate parking facility. The respondents were screened for usage of social media network and almost all respondents except only three were having

Facebook profiles and comparatively a higher proportion was also using YouTube (85%) and Instagram (59%).

Average values of indicators were used to measure each variable in the conceptual framework, leading to five variables for the analysis, namely Personal Factors (NPF), Product Attributes (NPA), and Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream (NATT), eWOM (NEWOM) and Purchase Intention (NPI). Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of these variables.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of Data

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
NPF	93	1.52	4.11	2.95	0.66
NPA	93	1.00	4.44	3.45	0.69
NATT	93	1.83	4.67	3.29	0.67
NEWOM	93	1.00	4.44	2.72	0.94
NPI	93	1.00	5.00	2.62	0.95

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Variable	NPF	NPA	NATT	NEWOM	NPI
NPF		.654**	.685**	.372**	.701**
NPA			.448**	.490**	.539**
NATT				.304**	.726**
NEWOM					.252*
NPI					

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Results of Pearson correlation analysis are tabulated in Table 2. Personal Factors (NPF) have a moderate positive association of 0.701 whilst Product Attributes (NPA) and Purchase Intention of men's fairness cream (NPI) have a moderate positive association of 0.539. Personal Factors (NPF) indicate a moderate positive association of 0.685 with Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream (NATT) while Product Attributes (NPA) have a weak positive association of 0.448 with Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream (NATT). When considering the association between Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream (NATT) and Purchase Intention (NPI), they have a moderate positive association of 0.726. Further, there is a weak positive association of 0.252 between eWOM (NEWOM) and Purchase Intention (NPI).

Tests of Hypotheses

The four hypotheses of the study were tested using regression analysis.

H₁: Personal Factors have a positive impact on Purchase Intention of men's fairness cream

The R² value of simple linear regression analysis output suggests that Personal Factors explain 49% of the variance in Purchase Intention of men's fairness cream (Table 3). Table 4 shows that the Standardized Beta coefficient of personal factors is 0.701 which is significant at 0.01. Therefore, the null hypothesis has to be rejected and it can be claimed that there is a moderate positive impact of Personal Factors on Purchase Intention.

Table 3: Model Summary for influence of Personal Factors on Purchase Intention

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error	Durbin-Watson
1	.701 ^a	.492	.486		.68015	1.935

a. Predictors: (Constant), NPF

b. Dependent Variable: NPI

Table 4: Coefficient of Regression for influence of Personal Factors on Purchase Intention

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.342	.324		-1.056	.294
NPF	1.007	.107	.701	9.388	.000

a. Dependent Variable: NPI

H₂: Product Attributes have a positive impact on Purchase Intention of men's fairness cream.

According to Table 5, R^2 of the regression model of two variables explains 29% of the variance of purchase intention. Table 6 indicates a Standardized Beta coefficient of personal factors as 0.539 which is significant at 0.01. Thus, the null hypothesis has to be rejected and it can be claimed that there is moderate positive impact of product attributes on purchase intention. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that there is a moderate positive relationship between product attributes and purchase intention.

Table 5: Model Summary for influence of Product Attributes on Purchase Intention

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.539 ^a	.291	.283		.80366	1.828

a. Predictors: (Constant), NPA

b. Dependent Variable: NPI

Table 6: Coefficient of Regression for influence of Product Attributes on Purchase Intention

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.063	.427		.148	.883
	NPA	.742	.122	.539	6.108	.000

a. Dependent Variable: NPI

H₃: Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream mediates the relationship between Personal Factors, Product Attributes and Purchase Intention

Simple Linear Regression for Personal Factors and Purchase intention is significant with a Beta value of 0.701 (Table 4) whilst simple Linear Regression model for Personal

Factors predicting Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream with an R^2 of 0.469 has also a significant and positive Beta value of 0.685 (Table 7). This satisfies two conditions required for testing the mediation effect of Attitudes towards consumption of men's fairness cream.

Table 7: Coefficient of Regression for influence of Personal Factors on Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.238	.234		5.283	.000
NPF	.697	.078	.685	8.969	.000

a. Dependent Variable: NATT

The multiple Linear Regression model of Personal factors and Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream together predicting the Purchase Intention with an R^2 of 0.606 and this shows a significant and a positive Beta value of 0.385 for Personal factors (Table 8). This Beta value of 0.385 for Personal Factors predicting the purchase intention is comparatively lower than the Beta value (0.701) of personal factors only predicting purchase intention in Table 4. In this model, Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream has also a significant, moderate and positive Beta value of 0.463 (Table 8).

Table 8: Coefficients of Multiple Linear Regression for influence of Personal factors and Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream on the Purchase Intention

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-1.150	.328		-3.508	.001
NPF	.552	.130	.385	4.233	.000
NATT	.653	.128	.463	5.090	.000

a. Dependent Variable: NPI

This fulfills the final condition to test the mediating effect. According to Baron and Kenny's (1986) guidelines for testing meditational effect, there is evidence to reject the null hypothesis and claim for the existence of a partial mediation by Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream on the relationship between Personal factors and purchase intention.

H4: EWOM will moderate the relationship between Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream and Purchase Intention.

According to Table 9, the regression model for attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream and purchase intention (model 1) explains 53% of variance in dependent variable with a Beta value of 0.726 (Table 10). Once the independent variables of eWOM, its interaction terms with Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream are added to the regression model 2 (Table 9), all coefficients are significant at 0.05% level and this explains 59% of the

variance of the purchase intention. The Beta values of the coefficients of Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream, eWOM and interaction term of eWOM are 0.804, 0.348 and -0.428 respectively indicating a negative effect on interaction terms (Table 10).

Table 9: Moderating Effect of eWOM on the relationship between Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream and the Purchase Intention

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.726 ^a	.527	.522		.65627	
2	.767 ^b	.588	.574		.61917	1.476

a. Predictors: (Constant), NATT

b. Predictors: (Constant), NATT, NEWOM, INT_M

Table 10: Coefficients of Multiple Linear Regression for Moderating effect of eWOD

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.748	.342		-2.188	.031
	NATT	1.025	.102	.726	10.070	.000
2	(Constant)	-1.741	.427		-4.080	.000
	NATT	1.135	.107	.804	10.649	.000
	NEWOM	.353	.114	.348	3.094	.003
	INT_M	-.226	.063	-.428	-3.605	.001

a. Dependent Variable: NPI

This discloses that the presence of eWOM communication weakens the relationship between attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream and the intention to purchase the product. Hence, the study has a significant evidence to reject the null hypotheses and claim that eWOM will moderate the relationship between Attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream and Purchase Intention.

Discussion

As confirmed by the results, the key findings show that personal factors are having a moderate positive linear relationship with purchase intention and attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream. This result has been confirmed by previous studies; Souiden and Diagne (2009) observed that self-image, ageing and lifestyle have a strong impact on the male attitude towards the consumption and purchase of cosmetic products in Canada and France while Elsey and Sukato (2009) observed similar results in Thailand. Moreover, Featherstone (1991) reported that the consumption of cosmetic products is partially influenced by consumers' self-image consciousness and lifestyle. Additionally, this result is in line with those of Pioch and Sturrock (1998); Coupland (2007) who argued that the effects of ageing motives the men in the consumption of grooming products. This result is also coherent with Ersoy, et al. (2015).

As discussed in hypothesis testing, there is a partial mediation by attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream towards the relationship between Personal Factors and

Purchase Intention, which is coherent with Elsey and Sukato (2009). As they revealed attitude towards applying skin care and normative influences positively affected the purchase intention of skin care products for Bangkok male consumers. Kim and Chung (2011) also confirmed this result where attitude towards buying organic skin care products have a significant impact on purchase intention of organic personal care products.

The moderator effect of eWOM communication on the relationship between attitude towards consumption of men's fairness cream and purchase intention weakens the relationship in this sample. According to Souiden and Diagne (2009), cultural environment affects how and why people live and behave the way they do. According to Machismo one of these cultural effects has a significant influence on consumer behavior. In societies where men are supposed to be macho, usage of cosmetic products may have been found as a threat for their masculinity. These machismo beliefs in the selected sample for this study can be a reason for negative impact from eWOM communication. When men sharing their product experience on cosmetics through online communication it will create undesirable image in the consumption of cosmetics.

Conclusions

Personal factors of the male Millennial had a greater effect on purchase intention than that of product attributes. personal factors consisting of self-Image, ageing Effects, physical attractiveness and health concerns have significantly influenced purchase intention and attitude towards consumption of the product category.

In contrast to the findings of other empirical studies, the finding of this study shows that eWOM affects negatively on the purchase intention among millennial executives. According to the findings, presence of eWOM communication is weakening the relationship between attitude towards consumption and purchase intention of men's fairness cream. When they are exposed to online communities where consumers and manufacturers share their experience on fairness cream, it will create unfavorable image on consumption of fairness cream. As mentioned before, the existence of Sri Lankan social and cultural pressure on machismo beliefs can have an impact on this behavior. Even though men are demanding cosmetic products, they are not comfortable in sharing the experience in open environment since in societies where men are supposed to be macho, usage of cosmetic products might pose as a threat for their masculinity. On the other hand, this may indicate that millennial male generation are not that concerned on others' recommendations or experience when selecting their grooming products.

In conclusion, this study suggests that factors driving the purchase intention of millennial executives do not fall in line with literature. Product attributes have some influence while personal factors such as self-image, ageing effects, physical attractiveness and health concerns have a bigger influence on purchase intention. Moreover, eWOM communication has a negative impact on purchase intention in contrast to other studies, which found eWOM has substantial impact on attitude towards consumption and purchase intention of men's fairness cream.

Implications

The finding of this study is beneficial for marketers and brand managers of fairness cream category as well as overall grooming product category. Initially, majority of the sample falls between 26 – 37 years and gradually they will be reaching the middle age. As a result, ageing concern will have a significant impact on their grooming product consumption and anti-ageing products may have the opportunity in the market. Even though observations of the authors found variants of the category ranging from day cream, night cream, oil control, anti-marks, pimple clearing and Ayurvedic solutions, it was hard to find anti-ageing face cream products for men. Therefore, a promising opportunity awaits marketers in understanding personal concerns of consumers on ageing effect and physical attractiveness.

Secondly, marketers should discourage eWOM communication when targeting millennials working as executives or above in organizations. Because presence of eWOM communication regarding cosmetics and grooming products creates unfavorable image and hence discourage intention to purchase the product. Instead of eWOM communication on product reviews, there should be other marketing strategies as direct marketing on television, radio; printed media (newspapers, magazines) which will encourage potential buyers of this millennial group. Additionally, it is recommended that marketing managers put further stress on values that are important to self-image, physical attractiveness, health concerns and ageing effects when advertising and selling grooming products for men.

Finally, place of distribution is important when marketing products related to men, since male consumers do not like to get tired in looking for products and they always consider convenience in their shopping trips. Men would not be interested in visiting specialized shops for beauty care or fancy goods stores as women usually do in order to buy only grooming products. On the other hand, they prefer supermarkets, pharmacies where they can purchase multiple needs within a single shopping trip. Therefore, men's grooming products will become successful when utilizing distribution channels such as supermarkets and pharmacies.

Limitations and Future Research

The target sample was limited to a small number of respondents of 105. The researchers have used selective sampling method in Colombo metropolitan area, which is convenient for the researchers to gather data. Convenience sampling technique used in this research would not indicate a fully representative profile of the population while the sample may be biased towards certain types of respondents. Thus, further research can be undertaken with larger samples derived from different geographical regions in order to increase the reliability of the research study

Based on literature, the study identified factors influencing purchase intention of men's fairness cream in Sri Lankan context. Consequently, future researches need to be conducted on consumer behavior in other men's grooming products, toiletries, and health care. This study mainly focused on millennials currently working as executives or above only. With this sample, it is difficult to generalize the results, for example, teenagers. Hence, future research may study

on other career groups and age groups as well since the results of those studies will provide better insights in relation to the said area.

Furthermore, future research should also investigate other variables such as social and cultural beliefs, lifestyles; effect from Advertising with a special emphasis on Sri Lankan cultural dynamics, which may correlate to dependent variables in order to enhance the scope of the present study. Finally, future studies should also be undertaken using qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, or focus groups in order to provide a deeper insight of male consumer behaviour.

References

Akyuz, A., (2013). Determinant Factors Influencing eWOM. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(11), 159-166.

Aoun, S., Donovan, R., Johnson, L., and Egger, G., (2002). Preventive care in the context of men's health. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 7(3), 243-252.

Arslan, F., and Altuna, O., (2010). The effect of brand extensions on product brand image. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 19, 170-180.

Bakewell, C., Mitchell, V.W., and Rothwell, M., (2006). UK Generation Y male fashion consciousness. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 10(2), 169-180.

Baker, H.K., Dewasiri, N.J., Weerakoon Banda, Y.K., and Azeez, A.A. (2019). Determinants of Dividend Policy: *A Triangulation Approach*. *Managerial Finance*, 2019, 45(1), 2-20.

Bandara, S., (2017). *The Business of Enrichment. LMD*. [Online] Available at: <https://lmd.lk/personal-care/> [Accessed 22 August. 2017].

Baron, R. M., and Kenny, D., (1986). The Moderator-Mediator Variable Distinction in Social Psychological Research: Conceptual, Strategic, and Statistical Considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1173-1182.

Bataineh, A. Q., (2015). The Impact of Perceived e-WOM on Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Corporate Image. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 7(1), 126-137.

Blanchin, A., Chareyron, C., and Levert, Q., (2007). *The customer behavior in the men's cosmetics market*. School of Business and Engineering, University of Halmstad.

Census of Population and Housing, (2017). *Department of Census of Statistics*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.statistics.gov.lk/page.asp?page=Population%20and%20Housing> [Accessed 20 September 2018]

Cheng, F. S., Ooi, C. S., and Ting, D. H., (2010). Factors Affecting Consumption Behavior of Metrosexual toward Male Grooming Products. *International Review of Business Research Papers*, 6(1), 574-590.

Coulter, R. A., Feick, L., and Price, L., (2002). Changing faces: cosmetics opinion leadership among women in the new Hungary. *European Journal of Marketing*, 36(11/12), 1287-1308.

Coupland, J., (2007). Gendered discourses on the 'problem' of ageing: consumerized solutions. *Discourse & Communication*, 1(1), 37-61.

Doh, S.-J., and Hwang, J.S., (2009). How Consumers Evaluate eWOM (Electronic Word-of-Mouth) Messages. *Cyber Psychology & Behaviour*, 12(2), 193-197.

Else, B. and Sukato, N., (2009). A model of Male Consumer Behaviour in Buying skin care products in Thailand. *ABAC Journal*, 29(1), 39-52.

Ersoy, N., Yolal, M., and Batmaz, B., (2015). Cosmetic Consumption of Metropolitan males in a Developing Country. *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai, Negotia*, 60(3) 5-22.

Featherstone, M., (1991). *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*. London: Sage.

Forbes, (2018). *Thoughts on The Business Of Life*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/quotes/9717/> [Accessed 08 August 2018].

Goi, C. L., (2009). A Review of Marketing Mix: 4Ps or More?. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 1(1), 2-15.

Gould, S., (1988). Consumer Attitudes toward Health and Health Care: A Differential Perspective. *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 22(1), 96-118.

Gupta, S. and Arora, S., (2013). Factors influencing the Consumption Pattern of Male Cosmetics in Delhi by an Urban Male. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 15(2), 29-36.

Hair, J.F., Anderson, R.E., Tatham, R.L. and Black, W. C., (1995). *Multivariate Data Analysis*, Fifth Edition, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Isorait, M., (2016). Marketing Mix Theoretical Aspects. *International Journal of Research – Granthaalayah*, 4(6), 25-37.

Jalilvand, M. R., and Samiei, N., (2012). The effect of electronic word of mouth on brand image and purchase intention: An empirical study in the automobile industry in Iran. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 30(4), 460-476.

Junaid, A. B., and Nasreen, R., (2012). Determination of Consumer Behaviour amongst Millennials in Dermaceuticals (Skin Care Products). *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 4(3), 88-99.

Karjaluoto, H., Munnukka, J. and Kiuru, K., (2016). Brand love and positive word of mouth: the moderating effects of experience and price. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 25(6), 527-537.

- Khraim, H., (2011). The Influence of Brand Loyalty on Cosmetics Buying Behaviour of UAE female consumers. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 3 (2), 123-133.
- Kim, H. Y. and Chung, J. E., (2011). Consumer purchase intention for organic personal care products. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 28(1), 40-47.
- Kotler, P., Wong , R., Saunders, J. and Armstron , G., (2005). *Principles of Marketing* (4th ed.). Essex CM20 2JE : Pearson Education Limited.
- Nunnally, J., (1978). *Psychometric theory* (2nd ed.). New York, NY Oliva: McGraw Hill.
- Pate, S. S. and Adams, M., (2013). The Influence of Social Networking Sites on Buying Behaviors of Millennials. *Atlantic Marketing Journal*, 2(1), 92-109.
- Pioch, E. and Sturrock, F., (1998). Making himself attractive: the growing consumption of grooming products. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 16(5), 337-343.
- Putri, L. and Wandebori, H., (2016). Factors Influencing Cosmetics Purchase Intention in Indonesia based on Online Review. *International Conference on Ethics of Business, Economics, and Social Science Faculty of Economics*, Yogyakarta State University, Indonesia. 255-263.
- Roscoe, J. T., (1975). *Fundamental Research Statistics for the Behavioural Sciences* (2nd ed.). New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston.
- Rose, R.L. and Wood, S.L., (2005). Paradox and the consumption of authenticity through reality television. *Journal of consumer research*, 32(2), 284-296.
- Samarasinghe, P. H., Perera, K. N. and Wijetunga, D., (2014). Grooming and Status Consumption: How the Groomed Body is used as an Object in Projecting Status. *Sri Lankan Journal of Management*, 19 (3/4), 27-52.
- SGK, (2016). *Mens Beauty a Billion Dollar Opportunity for Brands*. [Online] Available at. <http://www.sgkinc.com/insights-marketing/marketing-blog/Mens-Beauty-a-Billion-Dollar-Opportunity-for-Brands>. [Accessed 16 July 2018].
- Son, J., Jin, B. and George, B., (2013). Consumers' purchase intention toward foreign brand goods. *Management Decision*, 51(2), 434-450.
- Souiden, N. and Diagne, M., (2009). Canadian and French men's consumption of cosmetics: a comparison of their attitudes and motivations. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 26(2), 97-109.
- Sweeney R., (2006). *Millennials Behaviors & Demographics*. New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark NJ. URL: <http://library1.njit.edu/staff-folders/sweeney/Millennials/Article-Millennial-Behaviors.doc> [accessed 23 July 2018]
- Weerasiri, S. and Hennayake, Y., (2016). Purchase Intention of Men's Cosmetic Products: with Special Reference to Men's Fairness Cream Products. *Sri Lanka Journal of Marketing*, 2(2), 83-102.

Wu, P. C. and Wang, Y. C., (2011). The influences of electronic word-of-mouth message appeal and message source credibility on brand attitude. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 23(4), 448-472.

Xiao, Z., Zhang, J., Li, D. and Samutachak, B., (2016). The effect of e-WOM on country image and purchase intention: an empirical study on Korean cosmetic products in China. *Int. J. Services Technology and Management*, 22(1/2), 18-30.

Zeithaml, V. A., (1988). Consumer Perceptions of Price, Quality, and Value: A Means-End Model and Synthesis of Evidence. *Journal of Marketing*, 52 (3), 2-22.