

# Impact of Advertisements on Demand for Fairness Products Among University Students in Pakistan

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## INTRODUCTION

Pakistani cosmetics industry is flourishing at a rapid pace; which is evidenced by its presence in different markets at a global level. It has more comprehensively been enlightened that the local cosmetic industry of Pakistan makes its mark not only at the domestic level, but also at the global level. Kalsoom (2011) elaborated that the demand for fairness creams exist and is rising in female as well as male consumers. This rise in demand leads to an increase in its supply in different South Asian regions.

The dilemma in Pakistan is standardization. Individuals have a propensity to link beauty with a lighter skin tone. This has driven females to take excessive measures to apply dangerous chemicals to their skin, because they promise mesmerizing fairness. Consequently, there has been an immense demand of skin brightening items in Pakistan.

There are in addition social as well as monetary implications with respect to beauty. It takes a lot of endeavor to embellish as well as modify one's appearance in order to look stylish. The inspiration to be forever young as well as appealing exists in every society. Society imposes the rules of beauty. Today, what is considered as beautiful, might be mocked in the future. The perception regarding beauty changes with the evolution of society (Sunaina, 2016).

Society plays a significant function regarding the concept of attractiveness. For example, youthfulness is the aim of attractiveness in USA, whilst in Europe unblemished skin is considered as being ideal. In most Asian countries, fairness is desirable. As the globalization progressed, individuals started associating beauty by means of contentment as well as affluence. Thus, females from Asia started to crave the Western idyllic of attractiveness, i.e. being fair, slim, and tall (Sunaina, 2016).

In the contemporary era, despite women are more powerful and have a professional success. A new type of social control exists in the form of beauty myth. It is an obsession with physical perfection that traps women in an endless spiral of self-consciousness, hope, and self-hatred as they try to accomplish society's impossible explanation of being a flawless beauty (Wolf, 2013). This chapter focuses on the impact of television advertising on the demand for fairness products among university students in Pakistan.

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## BACKGROUND

Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder. The sensitivity regarding attractiveness is led by social influences as well as a notion of aesthetics decided by elites. Females and sometimes males go as far as possible to achieve that ‘ideal’ look. The quest for perfect looks has been as old as time itself. (Sunaina, 2016).

Moral beauty was considered to be the *telos* (purpose) of human virtues by Aristotle. Displays of moral beauty have been shown to inspire the moral sentiment of elevation and can cause an aspiration to become a better individual. Researches propose that by encouraging individuals to connect with moral beauty can amplify their wish to become more humane. As, moral emotions stimulate ethical behavior (Diessner, Iyer, Smith, & Haidt, 2013).

Different methods are employed to accomplish fairness in Pakistan. One of the most prominent is ‘formula cream’. It is usually made at home and often sold at beauty parlors across Pakistan. Bleaching agents are its main ingredients. Fairness products mostly contain steroids according to dermatologists, and often lead to pigmentation, telangectasias, acne, scarring, early aging, as well as massive facial hair growth. Females use these products and later wax their facial hair, which leads to loss of skin elasticity, thus leaving it old as well as saggy (“Attitude: Obsession with fairness,” 2012).

In the process of lightening the skin tone, layers of melanin are depleted from skin. It is actually a pigment which determines skin color. Darker skin means higher content of melanin. Melanin absorbs the ultraviolet solar radiation, and thus it is transformed into nontoxic heat. Its basic purpose is to protect the skin from DNA damage. Thus, it is a human’s natural defence against the UV. Fighting with nature could have detrimental effects. When the melanin layer is depleted for fairness, it also depletes healthy skin. Skin whitening creams makes the skin thin and deprive the skin of melanin. Because, skin color is strictly genetic and to some extent is influenced by environmental factors (“Attitude: Obsession with fairness,” 2012).

Kapoor (2012) highlights that time and the concept of beauty are related to fair skin complexion. Carreiro (2009) has discussed regarding current fairness trends developed in India and Pakistan revealing that with Indians, Pakistanis are also getting crazy to get fairer complexion. Venkataswamy (2016) stated that the biggest consumer market of skin whitening products fall under the age bracket of 20 to 29 years.

From the review of literature, it is apparent that neither any previous research covers the impact of product claims and frequency of fairness TV advertisements on demand for fairness products in Pakistani context, nor any one of them studied the relationship between them. This was the very inspiration behind this study. Hence, to some extent, this research gap was visible, which was also evidenced by the review of detailed literature.

This research intended to study the impact of two factors, namely, product claim and frequency of fairness TV ads. It also aimed to find out the factors which had a stronger influence regarding the demand for fairness products in Pakistan. On the basis of detailed review of above literature, respective hypotheses and conceptual framework were formulated.

## FOCUS OF THE ARTICLE

This study assesses and analyzes the impact of advertisements on demand for fairness products among university students in Pakistan. The purpose of this research is to assist legislators, marketing executives, academicians, students, as well as other professionals.

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