

**Czech University of Life Sciences Prague**

**Faculty of Economics and Management**

**Department of Management**



**Diploma Thesis**

**Consumer Behavior**

**Hiren Rathod**

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# CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Faculty of Economics and Management

## DIPLOMA THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Bc. Hiren Poonamchand Rathod, BBA

Economics Policy and Administration  
Business Administration

Thesis title

Consumer Behavior

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### Objectives of thesis

The diploma thesis aims to analyze relevant secondary data on Marketing Strategy, Consumer Behavior and Positioning. This analysis will be combined with original primary reconnaissance aiming to plan vital and concrete marketing strategy for a concrete company.

### Methodology

"Literature Review" part will be elaborated based on relevant secondary data analysis and synthesis.

"Analysis" part will result from relevant secondary data and original primary reconnaissance combination.

Recommended structure:

1. Introduction
2. Goals and Methodology
3. Literature Review
4. Analysis
5. Results and Discussion
6. Conclusions
7. References
8. Appendices

The proposed extent of the thesis

60 – 80 pages

Keywords

marketing strategy, consumer behavior, positioning, market research

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Recommended information sources

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## **Declaration**

I declare that I have worked on my diploma thesis titled “Consumer Behavior” by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the diploma thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 31.03.2021

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**Hiren Rathod**

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# Consumer Behavior

## Abstract

Consumer behavior is defined as the activity of an individual buyer who responds to various marketing stimuli and makes a choice of buying a product or service. While it may be incumbent on the consumer to act or react in a certain way, there are varying social, psychological and cultural factors that can affect the behavior of a consumer. Nonetheless, the consumer will have to make a choice that follows through upon the recognition of a need that has to be resolved, and it is in this decision-making process that different consumer behavior models have been forged.

Consumer behavior is not a standalone concept; it is usually studied in association with specific elements like product/service quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness, pricing and so on. However, as this study is concerned, the research aims to evaluate consumer behavior towards cosmetic products manufactured by L'Oréal India, and also examine the impact of the marketing strategies utilized by the brand.

In order to suitably address the objectives of this study, the researcher adopts a quantitative methodology, giving out the survey and then running analyses using a sample of 148 respondents who are regular users of the L'Oréal products.

**Keywords:** Consumer behavior, L'Oréal, Brand loyalty, brand knowledge, Price, Quality, Marketing strategies

# Chování spotřebitele

## Abstrakt

Chování spotřebitele je definováno jako aktivita jednotlivého kupujícího, který reaguje na různé marketingové podněty a rozhoduje se o koupi produktu nebo služby. I když může být povinností spotřebitele jednat nebo reagovat určitým způsobem, existují různé sociální, psychologické a kulturní faktory, které mohou ovlivnit chování spotřebitele. Spotřebitel však bude muset učinit volbu, která bude následovat po uznání potřeby, kterou je třeba vyřešit, a právě v tomto rozhodovacím procesu byly vytvořeny různé modely chování spotřebitele.

Chování spotřebitele není samostatný koncept; obvykle se studuje ve spojení s konkrétními prvky, jako je kvalita produktu / služby, loajalita ke značce, povědomí o značce, cena atd. Pokud jde o tuto studii, výzkum si klade za cíl vyhodnotit chování spotřebitelů vůči kosmetickým výrobkům vyráběným společností L'Oréal India a také zkoumat dopad marketingových strategií využívaných značkou.

Aby výzkumný pracovník vhodně reagoval na cíle této studie, přijal kvantitativní metodologii, rozděl průzkum a poté provedl analýzy pomocí vzorku 148 respondentů, kteří pravidelně používají produkty L'Oréal.

**Klíčová slova:** chování spotřebitelů, L'Oréal, loajalita ke značce, znalost značky, cena, kvalita, marketingových strategií

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## List of abbreviations

USA- United States of America

FMCG-Fast Moving Consumer Goods

# 1.Introduction

Business organizations that are into the production of goods or service delivery tailor their activities with the prospect of generating revenues. To this end, it becomes expedient that they factor in the end-user along with other strategic measures that are considered during the course of product design. Though some degree of superficiality may be associated with consumers' perception and subsequent acceptance of a product, it goes a long in determining the sustainability of a business especially where the range of products is not so diverse – it is in this within this scope that the concept of consumer behaviour has been extensively studied. (Perner, 2010) defined consumer behaviour as encompassing the feelings, beliefs and intentions of consumers towards certain objects within marketing context. Consumer behaviour is defined as “the activity of an individual buyer who responds to various marketing stimuli and make a choice on buying of a product or service (Poranki, 2014). According to Schiffman & Kanuk (2008), consumer behaviour is “the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products, services and ideas which they expect will satisfy their needs”.

By paying heed to the buying behaviour of consumers, organizations are able to gain insight into the elements that guide consumers in selecting and buying a particular product, service, idea or experience as they look to satisfy emergent needs and wants (Kotler & Keller, 2006). It is therefore important to have a good understanding of the activities and influences that occur before, during and after a purchase is made (Strydom, 2004). In essence, organizations should not only be concerned about selling their products and services alone, but also establish a framework through they can obtain feedbacks from the consumers.

This thesis focuses on the consumer behaviour combined with original primary reconnaissance aiming to plan vital and concrete marketing strategy for the concrete company. The key factor of success for any organization is understanding the behaviour of the consumers to forecast the future development. Marketing tools and marketing employees are continuously examining the behaviour of the consumer and their pattern of decision. The research intends to analyse the factors influencing the consumer behaviour, as well as shedding light on some of the models of consumer behaviour and the stages involved in the decision-making process.

The research extensively focuses on the Indian consumer and the cosmetic industry i.e., L'Oréal to carried out the research topic. Also shed light on the questionnaire design and the data collection technique employed in actualizing the objectives of the study with the sample size of 148 respondents.

## **2. Goals and Methodology**

### **2.1 Goals**

The main aim of the diploma thesis is to investigate the Consumer Behaviour of Indian consumers towards L'Oréal products. The research objectives of the thesis are as follows,

- To determine the factor(s) that has or have the most significant influence on consumer behaviour towards L'Oréal products.
- To determine the perception of consumers on L'Oréal products in India.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of L'Oréal marketing strategies.

#### **Research Question:**

- What factors have the most significant influence on consumer behaviour towards L'Oréal's products?
- How do customers perceive L'Oréal's products in India?
- To what extent do L'Oréal's marketing strategies affect consumer behaviour in India?

### **2.2 Methodology**

A quantitative research method was employed in this study. This methodology enables the researcher to measure consumer behaviour towards L'Oréal's products using multiple variables. Quantitative methodology addresses questions centring on 'how much' and 'how many' thus allowing researchers to obtain generalizable results (Saunders et al., 2012). Hence, quantitative methodology is suitable for this study as it provides the avenue, with the aid of statistical analysis, to help the researcher evaluate how much impact the marketing communication of L'Oréal is having on consumer behaviour. Likewise, it is also possible to quantify the consumers' perception through this method. The methodology will, therefore, guide the researcher into answering the research questions, providing a better understanding on the concept being

measured. That said, owing to the selection of this methodology, structured questionnaire with close-end items to evaluate each of the independent variables shall be developed and the data from this, shall be eventually gathered. The data for this study were gathered using online surveys. For this study, survey was provided online for the participants and a total of 187 questionnaires were collected after a period of 10 days. However, only 148 of the questionnaires were completed answered, and these made up the sample size. According to (Sekaran, 2003), a sample size that exceeds 30 and less than 500, is considered appropriate by most researchers. Demographic characteristics are taken into consideration to study population of the consumer which includes the attributes like age, gender, marital status, work status and monthly income. To understand deeply that how the consumers perceive the L'Oréal products and for this some brief questions are prepared for the respondents to know the attachment to the cosmetic brand.

## **Limitations:**

The limitations of the research are as follows:

- All the primary data in the study are carried out by the online surveys in the form of questionnaires and due to the lack of time interaction with the respondent could not be possible.
- At the time of collecting the answers from the respondent some answers are not accurate
- The topic is not a standalone concept and due to this it become very difficult to select the variables to justify the objectives.
- Due to the wide geographical area or selecting the location become very difficult for conducting the survey.
- Sampling technique is used as some of the respondents are not showing their time and interest in filling out the questionnaire.

### **3. Literature Review**

There has been a plethora of literature prepared by various scholars to contribute to the knowledge base of studies on consumer behaviour. Discourse has range from the fundamentals to making attempts to understand the relationship between marketing strategies and attitudes connected to consumer buying decision. These contributions have been made in the never-ending demands for unique products intended to satisfy human needs. (Duff, 2007) made reference to the dynamic and/or evolving trend of women becoming more fashion conscious even as they keep looking out for attractively or uniquely designed products.

In a critical manner, (Stankevich, 2017) provided an explanation of the decision-making process for consumers in his study. Illustrated in the research, is the manner with which the decision-making procedure of the consumers has undergone some forms of evolution, and now finds itself ingrained as a significant subject matter in the marketing milieu. The author laid out a critical review of the research conducted on the subject of decision-making process for purchases in marketing, and its status quo in the market, in this paper. Also, the paper brought to light the most recent patterns and trends to have emerged from within the decision-making space. Paradigms and lemmas were studied, analysed and assessed, from the study of handpicked, interwoven materials. Additionally, the study expounded upon the decision-making process of the consumer, together with a number of role-playing factors, in an attempt to ascertain what possibilities, exist, of holding sway over consumer behaviour; in such a manner that the company's variations of promotions. On a conclusive note, marketers were advised to obtain more in-depth knowledge concerning consumer behaviour and their buying patterns, so as to create and spur marketing campaigns for the purpose of augmenting success in marketing of products.

A study conducted by (Jha, 2014) pointed out that the key indications for purchase decision making with the proponents or models of consumers' purchase behaviours are quite analogous in their end points. It is however worthy of mention that this would vary based on the urgency and how keen their interest for a particular product is. That said, in the process of a consumer's buying behaviour, products are in themselves, germane and appropriate. This is dependent upon what utilities they serve, urgency to the customer and the customer; there are,

indeed other elements to weigh up, such as price, and quality, or attitudes, perceptions and self-concepts.

In a research conducted by Anute, Deshmukh and Khandagale, certain elements pertaining to the respondents were looked into; these facets included the factors that influenced their choices, demographic profiles, their customary manner of purchase, cosmetic product with the widest scope of use, and personal brand preferences. As purported by the results, it was inferred that the quality of products churned out by the brands was considered the most by consumers whilst making purchases. This also implies that it is probably at the very top, in terms of preponderance, to consumers making purchases.

In another research that was designed to evaluate the influence of marketing on consumer buying behaviour, and also determine the motivation of consumers to stick with a particular brand, (Anandrajan & Sivagami, 2016) discovered that attractive promotional offers and price reduction were major factors that attracted more customers to certain brands. The researchers thus recommended that producers of these goods make concerted efforts to identify customers' needs before marketing their products. The researchers also noted that consumers exhibited a substantial amount of knowledge on cosmetic products, and that their attention is now drifting towards organic/ayurvedic cosmetic products.

Shahina (2004) conducted a cross cultural comparative study on the subject of female consumer behaviour, with particular reference to the purchases of cosmetics in the UK and Bangladesh. With each day that passes, as the world tends towards being consumer-centric, the whole process of grasping proper understanding of consumer behaviour within a cross-cultural setting gradually becomes an integral, indispensable aspect of marketing activities. In this study, an endeavour was made to shed light on how consumer behaviour is impacted by cultural elements in Bangladesh. In being characteristically conceptual, it looks to lift the veil on the pivotal components of culture that have some hold over the buying decisions made by female consumers on cosmetics in the cross-cultural Bangladeshi milieu.

In a study conducted in 2006, Ali, Tirmizi and Saif empirically researched the impulse buying behavioural pattern of consumers in local markets. The key outcomes of the study hinted heavily at a frail affiliation of the collection of independent variables with dependent variables. Be that as it may, delving deeper with a more scrutinous intent, it is shown that the

preceding stages of decision making for consumer purchase behaviour is the sole variable that exhibited a strong connection to the impulse buying behaviour. It is not quite distant from what could be obtained factoring that young individuals show keener interests in products openly showcased on store shelves, and are quite easily attracted. For this reason, there is greater propensity of the consumers to exhibit impulse buying behaviour. The findings made in this study, indicated that there was no true connection between buying on impulse and young people who fall under the higher income category, in spite of the fact that young people show forth these tendencies of impulse buying to a greater degree. Also, new proof as it pertains to the impulse buying behaviour of consumers in the local markets of the twin cities, was reported in the study.

Harris (2009) conducted a study on the survey of online consumer behaviour: the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual survey of online consumer behaviour, and accentuates how vital and beneficial it is to possess online customer experience. The survey explains the various forces steering the quickened recent shift to centre around online customer experience; it also looks to shed light on the bolstering of consumers' sway as a result of experience sharing, with social media as the avenue/platform. On top of that, the study of the survey performs an assessment of consumer behaviour when carrying out transactions online, call centre demeanour in relation to conundrums witnessed online and electronic commerce. In the findings, a number of verticals were represented, in the mould of retail, insurance, financial services and travel.

Gross (2014) carried out an assessment of the factors that exert control over the virtual, online, consumer decision making archetype, by interpreting apropos decision-making paradigms. It was proposed from the study, that consumers make purchases when mediated by virtual websites; a procedure impacted by interactivity, and overload of information embedded in the all-embracing concept of consumer decision making. On that account, the author provides an outline of numerous decision-making models. The author also suggested a theory that decision making models are either inclined towards and adjusted to suit the consumers' cognition or the flow of information. As was described with no ambiguity whatsoever in the study, the e-tail merchant is capable of moving the flow and large amounts of information, extenuate the risk of purchasing online, and ultimately facilitate interactivity between the online site and the consumer in the millennial service industry.

Khraim (2011) carried out a study on consumer behaviour in the UAE, and found out that service quality, product quality, promotion, price and store environment are vital for the attaining and sustaining brand loyalty. While all these factors were observed to have a significant positive association with brand loyalty, design did not reflect such result. (Khraim, 2011) went on to contend that the quality portrayed on a product stands as the most important factor, and this could determine whether a consumer will remain loyal to a particular brand or not.

Cadogan & Foster (2000) asserted that the most important element for average consumers is price, and that those (consumers) that are remarkably loyal to a brand can go the extra mile to pay premium price just to get their choice product. Hence, for these loyal customers, price may have little or no effect on their purchasing intention.

In a study performed to look into consumer buying behaviour in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, Rameshwari et al. (2016) probed into the elements that influence the choices of consumers with respect to purchases. The outcomes of the study suggested that it is required for the marketers to take cognizance of the buying habits, taste, preferences and likes or dislikes of the consumers, in the process of formulating policies. On a final note, it was observed that the consumers incline toward quality consciousness and loyalty to specific brand even as they were motivated by the desire to look good. The researchers also highlighted that men were also not left out in the purchase of cosmetic goods, and that consumers may not be overly bothered by the price of cosmetics as high-end products were sought after [by them].

Saeed et al. (2013) carried out a study to determine how factors such as brand attachment, brand image and environmental elements affect the buying decision of consumers. They found out that while environmental elements and brand attachment had moderate - but not significant - positive impact on consumers' buying decision, brand image did not show any positive effect.

Baik (2011) emphasized that manufacturers usually aim to attract a target market comprising of upper-class consumers whenever they are designing high-level products with outstanding elements. The author stressed that the reason for this is linked to the fact that this group of consumers are revered for being more conscious about their personal image within the society, and as such, they exercise great care when selecting any product or brand.

Kumar et al (2014) carried out an analysis which founded that there exist slight discrepancies in the level of income which further alludes that the different categories would hold up to their separate opinions as to consumer buying behaviour. From this, germinated certain willingness to know, and find out what group really chooses to be inconsistent with their opinions. With the aid of post hoc, it was found that the dependent deviate from the opinions suggested by other classes. A possibility is that it might be as a consequence of decisions made by youngsters. Every individual has several roles to function in, in everyday life – be it professional, or social.

Vibhuti & Pandey (2014) conducted a case study on the subject of consumer buying behaviour with reference to selected FMCG products. The research was performed with the aim of getting to grips with the underlying concept of FMCG products, in conjunction with their scope, in a quest to bolster marketing. Another reason for which the research was done, was for the identification of the factors by which consumer behaviour is influenced. From the findings, it was indicated that the behaviour of consumers concerning purchase of FMCG products is, to a great degree, affected by price, place, product, promotion and a number of psychological elements. However, the effects tend to differ from product to product.

Deshmukh (2015) conducted a quantitative analysis with regards to facts, and noteworthy details pertaining to consumer behaviour. People who have preference of domestic brands were about 65%, 60% is the figure that applies for people who fancy purchasing organic products. Close to 50% of the people get first knowledge of cosmetic products from Televisions. Moving further, whilst making purchases of cosmetics, customers show an obvious bias toward domestic brands, and organic cosmetic products, and a fair number of customers come to have knowledge of cosmetic products through televisions. The study concluded that customers are very much inclined towards brand loyalty.

With the focal point placed around the region of Coimbatore city, Rekha & Gokila conducted a study on consumer awareness, attitude and preference towards herbal cosmetic products. The study was focused on looking into the awareness of the consumers as regards herbal products, and at the same time, discover what factors hold sway over their purchases of herbal products. From the results, it was shown that a constructive affiliation exists between two of the factors, which were family income (per annum) and money expended on herbal cosmetics on a

monthly basis. Furthermore, a larger chunk of the consumers was observed to be particular about the quality, and brand loyal as well.

BalanagaGurunathan and Krishnakumar (2013) assessed buying behaviour of consumers of fashion in India by focusing on variables such as promotion, consumer characteristics, product attributes, store attributes and promotion. The findings from the study revealed that promotion, store attributes and reference groups, in no particular order, had the most significant influence on consumer buying behaviour. These (variables) were thus considered to be important in promoting positive consumer behaviour.

In a related development, Krishna (2011) also conducted a study aimed at understanding the determinants of consumer behaviour as it regards buying apparels. The results garnered from this study showed that factors such as design, brand image, promotional offers and sales atmosphere considerably influenced the preferences of the consumers. Furthermore, the author reported that all demographic attributes, except the social class and occupation of the consumers, affected their preferences for brands with private labels.

In a 2004 research, Kapoor and Kulshrestha analysed the impacts exerted by perception on the buying behaviour of Indian urban female consumers, with the introduction products give off separate meanings to distinct individuals, with the consumers bonding in their own ways to them. This research was aimed at highlighting the importance of involvement of affluent female consumers in the fashion sphere, as well as their buying behaviour with regards to clothing; here, in this market, the retailers and marketers would precisely be able to focus upon the market segment with greater relative ease. In addition to this, the scope of knowledge we possess on the subject of consumer behaviour would be widened, and extended. Consequentially, it could be a major crucial contributor to other linked studies, which entail the augmentation and consolidation of the domestic market for exotic apparel and accessories.

Sharma et al. (2013) assessed the influence of brand loyalty on consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products. From the findings of this study, it was realized that most of the respondents recognized quality as the factor they regard as the most important while buying beauty products. In addition, it was reported that reference groups registered as the most influential when it comes to consumer buying decision. In conclusion, the researchers stated that the factors, so mentioned, can cause consumers to switch from one brand to another.

Agariya et al. (2012) evaluated the impact of packaging on brand awareness, obtaining primary data from 103 respondents in India, and submitted that packaging serves as a valuable promotional element that shapes the mind of the consumer. In view of this, the researchers pinpointed that it has now become commonplace for manufacturers employ distinctive packaging strategies to attract and acquire new customers to the extent of them loyal ones as time goes by.

Deliya & Parmar (2012) assessed the impact of packaging, which is a vital aspect of marketing communications, among consumers within the Patan district of India. They found out that elements of packaging such as background image, colour, size, style, wrapper design, innovation and imprinted innovation influenced consumers' purchasing decision. The authors then added that packaging could predict a consumer buying decision as it occupies the end of a promotion-chain that triggers or motivates consumers to buy a product.

The behaviour of consumers as regards buying cosmetic products was also assessed by (Khandagale,2015). The study was aimed at investigating the demographic profile of consumers and look to infer what elements have an influence on the decisions consumers make in their purchases. Also, it aims to find patterns and trends in the manner with which purchases are made for cosmetic products. However, the findings of the study showed that a larger portion of people stick to domestic cosmetic brands; and to this effect, the television comes off as the most efficacious media to get vital information pertaining to cosmetics. Furthermore, the quality of product was concluded to be the most important driving force for consumers to consider in making purchase decisions.

Kuikel (2006) studied consumer behaviour in relation to decision-making when buying a cosmetic good - lipstick to be precise. The study which was conducted in Latipur, Gujarat, showed that the marketing mix strategies adopted by the producers had significant impact on consumer behaviour. Additionally, the researcher discovered that the respondents bought or selected certain colours of lipstick with the consciousness of how it would match their clothing outfit. Again, it was also reported that advertisement had some degree of impact on the consumers' selection as they were apparently aware of the features these products possess. Against this backdrop, the consumers were said to have been more particular about colour, brand and possible side effects associated with the products.

Anjana (2018) aimed to study the attributes by which the consumer's consumption (of cosmetic products) is impacted. As per the study, it was deduced that the underlisted five factors exert greater influence on customer buying decisions: quality of product, brand name, product packaging, product price, and advertising. Many a time, consumers have to embark on strenuous thought processes to conduct proper assessments prior to making decisions on what to buy; especially seeing as there are alternatives that put up a good rivalry in aspects such as apt proximity, relatively less expensive prices, greater standards in terms of quality.

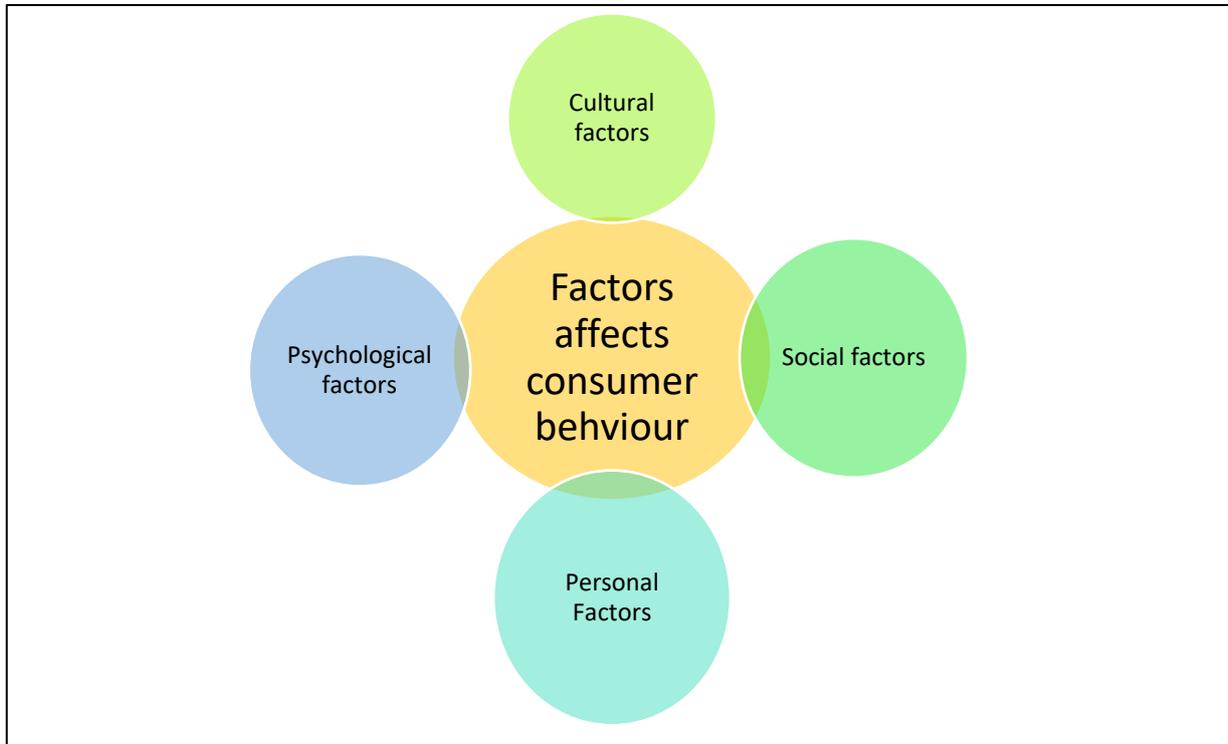
Ananthi (2015) carried out a study in Chennai City to evaluate the attitudes and expectations towards hair care products, and found out that there has been a shift in how beauty is being perceived. The author stressed that women are more about creating their personal styles [when it comes defining beauty] than ascribing to any particular traditional look or vogueish standard - and this even occurs with them being fully aware of emerging (fashion) trends. The research also attempted to understand how brand knowledge influence consumer buying behaviour. This research raises a concern on the need for producers, in collaboration with marketers, to design products that would specifically address the need of their customers.

The review of literature shows that the concept of consumer behaviour has been widely studied in different dimensions, and across various sectors. However, studies focusing on how consumers behave towards specific brands are not very common. Even more apparent is the fact that research focus on studying consumers' attitude towards L'Oréal products in India has not been fully and/or comprehensively explored. In light of this, this present study is aimed at addressing the research gap that has been noticed. The findings from this study will go a long way in not only quantifying how much the consumers regard L'Oréal India products, but will also give an inkling into the effective of the company's marketing strategies.

### **3.1 Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour**

Consumer behaviour does not just happen; there are certain underlying factors that might affect the disposition of consumers towards a product or service. Four major factors have been identified, and these include cultural factors, psychological factors, personal factors and social factors (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

**Figure 1: Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour**



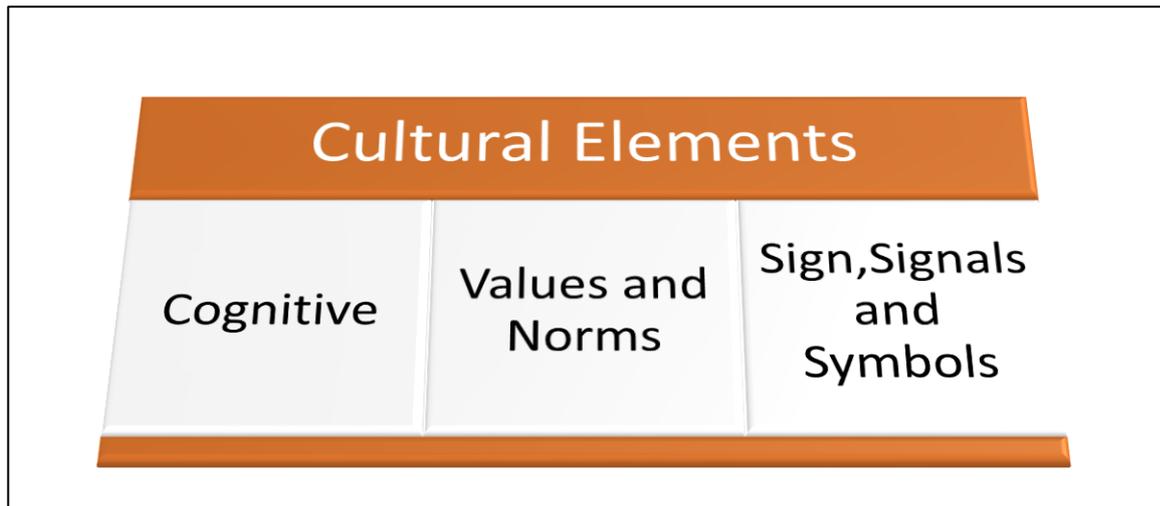
(Source: made by the researcher)

### **3.1.1 Cultural Factors:**

Culture as we have come to know it, is reflected in the dispositions of a group of people, and it serves as some sort of compass in shaping people’s lifestyle (Evans et al., 2006) within the larger society. To this end, it is expected of manufacturers of consumer goods to understand the cultural leanings of their target market in order to make meaning impact. In discussing the cultural factors that may affect consumer behaviour, it would suffice to explore three sets of cultural given by Evans et al. (2006). These elements include: i.) cognitive elements and beliefs; ii.) values and norms; iii.) signs, signals and symbols. These elements can influence consumer behaviour in varying ways. For instance, cognitive elements and beliefs tilt toward what people know about the social world, as well as their religious views. On the other hand, values and norms border on the moral inclinations which could affect how a group of people accept [or reject] certain products which signs, signals and symbols could be traceable to the connection that is formed between the

people and brand image coupled with advertisement campaigns. Basically, signs, signals and symbols can go a long way in giving insight into the meaning that consumers attach to some specific products.

**Figure 2: Three sets of Culture Elements**



(Source: made by the researcher)

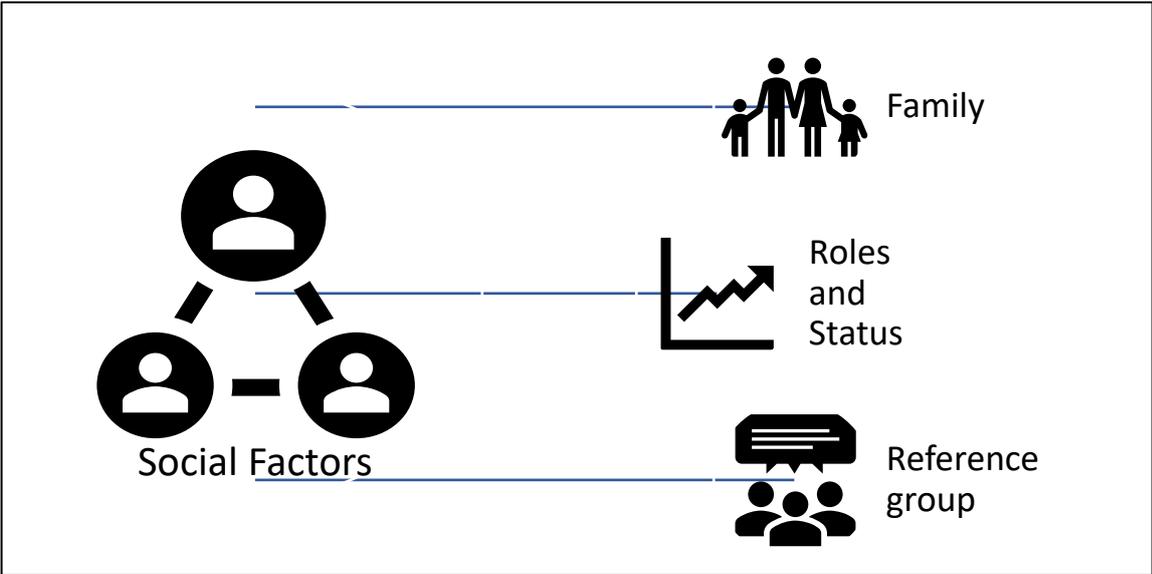
Relatedly, subcultures such as racial groups, nationalities and religions also form a part of culture and could influence the behaviour of consumers, as much as it determines their level of socialization (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Rituals are another aspect of culture that is often considered when discussing cultural influence on consumer behaviour. As Solomon et al. (2006) asserted, the beauty rituals embraced by women sometimes reflect the value their culture places on personal beauty and the need to maintain a youthful appearance.

### **3.1.2 Social Factors:**

Social factors influencing consumer behaviour are traceable to such elements/groups like families, roles, statuses and other social groups (Kotler & Keller, 2009). It follows that the groups that have direct influence on an individual's attitudes are referred to as reference groups, and these are often given utmost attention by marketers when drawing up marketing plans (Noel,

2009). Family’s influence on consumer behaviour can be viewed as being of two types; firstly, we have the Family of orientation that is directly connected to the influence of the buyer’s parents while the second (type) is the Family of procreation which hints on the express influence of relatives such as husband and children on the buyer’s decision (Taloo, 2007). That said, the influence reference groups have on a potential consumer could either be informational or normative (Noel, 2009). On the informational side, information exchanges [regarding a product or service] ultimately affect the (consumer’s) buying decision. Such information has been observed to be more valuable than the recommendations of sales personnel when it comes to gaining new consumers for a particular product or service (Asch & Wolfe, 2001). In the instance of normative influence, the consumer buys a product or service with the intention of adapting to the expectations of another person. In essence, normative influence can be correlated to peer pressure (Kotler & Keller, 2009) which may be more common among young consumers.

**Figure 3: Social Factors Influence**



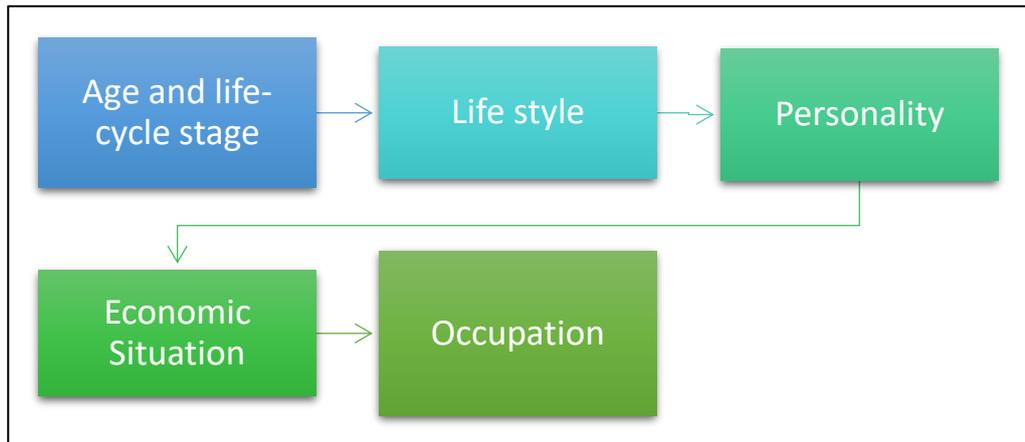
(Source: made by the researcher)

**3.1.3 Personal Factors:**

Personal factors entail the buyer’s age and life-cycle stage, lifestyle, personality, occupation and economic circumstances (Taloo, 2007). By pairing age with life-cycle stage, consideration is given to the tendencies of individuals to change products and services they

purchase and use in the course of their lifetime (Kotler et al., 2008). Noel (2009) stated that older consumers tend to be more loyal than younger consumers, and he also hinted that besides age effects, cohort effects – which are a function of experience – can also have significant influence on consumer behaviour as time evolves.

**Figure 4: Personal Factors**



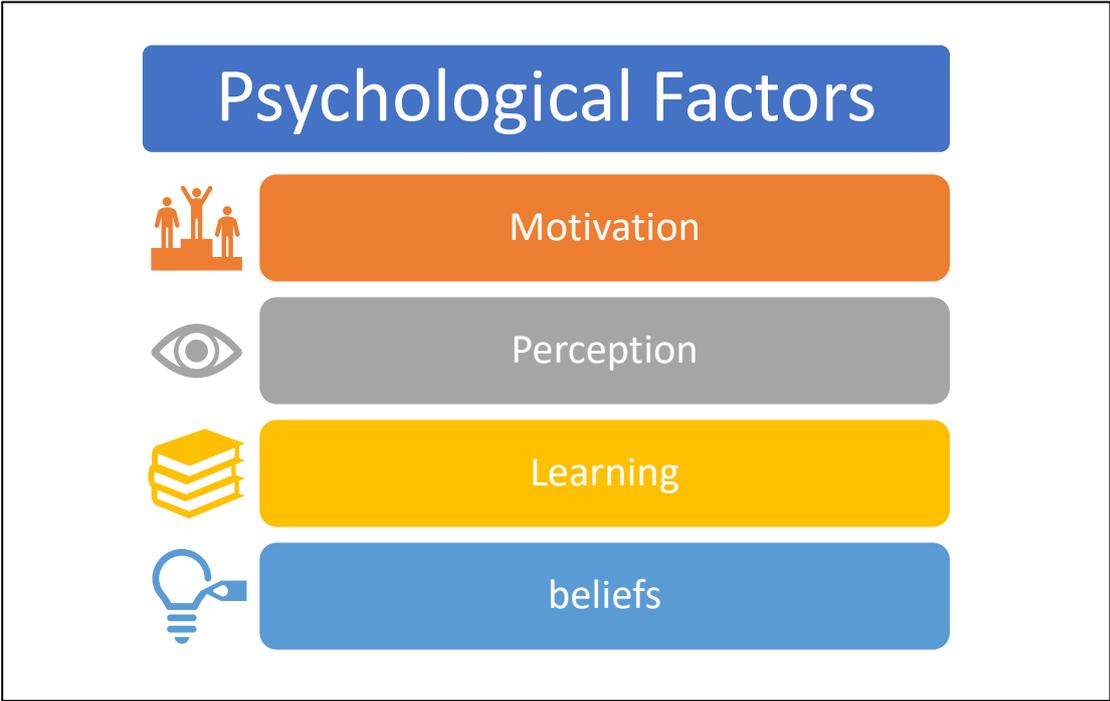
(Source: made by the researcher)

### **3.1.4 Psychological Factors:**

Motivation, perception, learning and beliefs are the four main psychological factors that could affect the buying decision of a consumer (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011). According to Kokoi (2011), the personal perception of the consumer is regarded as being more relevant than reality itself. This is made more apparent considering that perception informs the consumers' actions once needs and wants have been acknowledged (Asch & Wolfe, 2001). Talloo (2007) explains that people's feelings and reactions differ as a result of their personal sensations – which are based on the five senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch. Hence, they tend to organize, interpret and attend to sensory in an individual manner (Talloo, 2007). Consumer's perception should, however, not be seen as being innate; this is due to the fact that the promotional drive employed by a particular firm or brand could also help forge it (that is, perception) to an extent

(Kharaim, 2011). On the other hand, motivation is defined as “a need that is sufficiently pressing to direct the person to seek satisfaction of the need” (Kotler et al., 2008). This speaks volume of the urge that leads an individual to buy a product or service in respect to satisfying his/her needs. Learning, as it regards consumer behaviour, relates to the changes that occur in individual behaviour as informed by their experience (Talloo, 2007), and this can be understood by exploring the interrelationships that exist between stimuli, drives, cues, responses and reinforcement (Kotler et al., 2008). Kotler et al. (2008) went on to emphasize that belief is reflected in the descriptive thoughts that an individual sustains about an entity – products or services in the context of this study.

**Figure 5 Psychological Factors**



(Source: made by the researcher)

**3.2 Stages of Consumer Decision-making Process:**

Understanding consumers’ decision-making process is highly essential in ensuring that marketers tailor their marketing drive or campaign to their target audience. More so, it guides

manufacturers in designing customer-specific products and/or services. therefore, it forebodes to examine the stages involved in consumer decision-making process. Kotler and Keller (2015) outlined five stages which include problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase decision.

**Figure 6: Stages of Decision-making process**



(Source: made by the researcher)

**Problem Recognition**

Problem recognition arises as a consumer identifies the gap between his or her present situation and the desired/ideal state that could be attained (Solomon, 2006). Market researches are hereby aimed at identifying those factors that prompt a consumer’s specific need (Kotler & Keller, 2015).

## **Information Search**

The quest to gather information on how to resolve the problem that has been recognized comes up next, and this is even more crucial in the event whereby a lot of significance is attached to purchase (Solomon, 2006). Kotler and Keller (2015) emphasized that it is incumbent on marketers to understand the sort of information consumers are searching for. They also added that consumers can obtain information from personal (e.g., family, friends, acquaintances, neighbours), experiential, public (e.g., social media, mass media), and commercial sources, with the first three sources being noted as the most effective (Kotler & Keller, 2015).

## **Evaluation of Alternatives**

At this stage, the consumer examines the product or service options that are available in the market with the overarching objective of selecting one that meets his or her needs and/or economic status. Consumers often carry out this evaluation on the basis of the information gathered from various sources (Solomon, 2006). It is not out of place for the consumer, at this stage, to weigh in on the functions or values served by the product(s), as well as pondering on brand image; all these ultimately lead to the next stage – purchase decision. Jobber (2001) pointed to the significance of involvement in this evaluation stage, with involvement being regarded as the extent of perceived relevance and personal importance associated to the selection of a certain brand. In light of this, a consumer may either carry out extensive evaluation – whereby we have high involvement – or minimal as low involvement is concerned (Jobber, 2001).

## **Purchase Decision**

The purchase decision stage is characterized by five major elements – brand, dealer, quantity, timing and payment method (Kotler & Keller, 2015). While a consumer may have preference for a particular brand, his/her experience with the structure in place at a dealership could have a significant influence on the final buying decision. As a result of this, the onus is on marketers to come to terms with those factors that stimulate consumer risk and make moves to address it adequately (Kotler & Keller, 2015).

## **Post Purchase Decision**

In connection to consumer buying decision, post-purchase evaluation could have impact on a consumer's continual use of a product. Kotler & Keller (2015) pinpointed that it is important that marketing communication strategies are directed at providing supports that would promote consumers' positive feelings about his or her purchase. Post-purchase evaluation would eventually reflect the degree of satisfaction a consumer derives from using a product.

### **3.3 Models of Consumer Behaviour**

Models of consumer behaviour have been postulated by various scholars, and the reason for the development of these may not be unconnected to the need to have a better grasp of the concept. Consumer behavioural models seek to describe the pattern or processes that are associated with buying decisions. Although there are several models of consumer behaviour, only four of these will be discussed in this study.

#### **3.3.1 The Marshallian model**

This model, which was propounded by Alfred Marshall, focused on the economic rationality that would be probably exhibited by a consumer in buying certain sets of products in varying quantities and prices (Hoyer, 2004). The model encapsulates the consumer as making conscious, thoughtful, and purposeful calculations as he/she attempts to spend on the products with the most satisfying value offering. The Marshallian model apparently suffice when making rough evaluation of some types of behaviours that exist in the marketplace (Grewal & Levy, 2010). Nonetheless, a major criticism often associated with this theory is that it falls short when it comes to explaining the emergence of brand and/or product preferences, as well as failing to give comprehensive insight into the variations that are obtainable during the sales and buying processes.

This makes it less of a descriptive consumer behaviour model (Omotoyinbo et al., 2017) thus limiting its applicability.

### **3.3.2 Pavlovian Learning method**

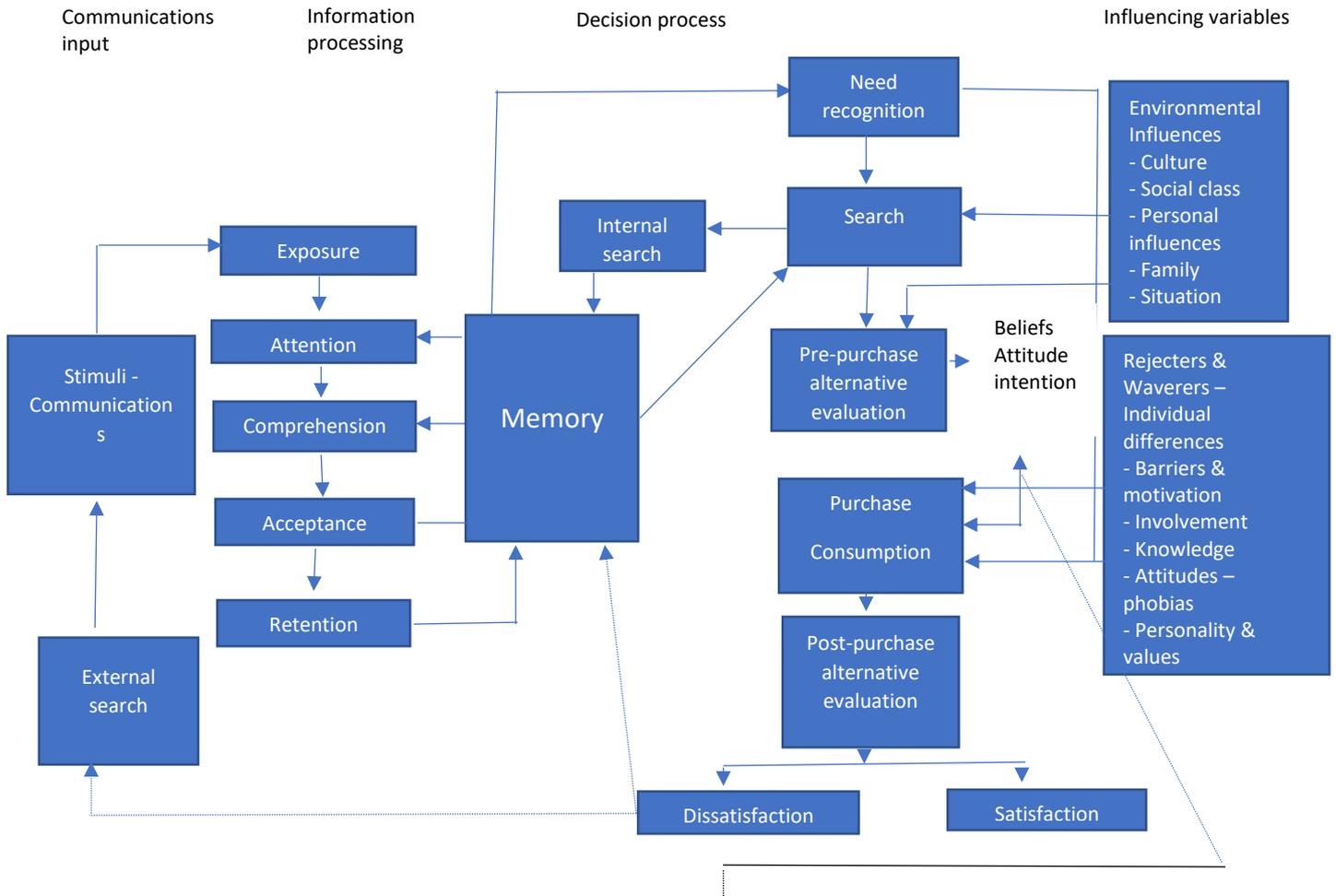
This model is an offshoot of an experiment wherein Ivan Pavlov, a Russian psychologist, rang a bell to get the dog of a dog he eventually fed. He further realized that the bell-ringing action could be used in stimulating the dog to salivate irrespective of whether or not food was offered. With this model, learning is regarded to be an associative process entailing four core elements which are drive, cue, response and reinforcement. It is not unlikely to see marketing strategies being formulated around these elements which speak volume of the conditioning of human behaviour (Galae & Voicu, 2013). Exploring the model further, Omotoyinbo et al. (2017) added that drives can either be learned (social cooperation and acquisitiveness) or psychological (hunger, thirst, cold and pain) while cues concern the environmentally or individually induced factors that determine the response of a person. Response is, however, formed by the reaction of an individual to the multiple cues available. Reinforcement takes place when a rewarding experience is generated from an individual's response. Summarily, the Pavlovian learning model follows a sequential routine whereby any negativity could have a grave impact on how consumers see or accept a particular product or brand thus truncating marketing objectives. As Holt (1995) posited, (positive) reinforcement – which is the goal of marketing and sales campaigns – creates a credible foundation upon which brand loyalty is forged.

### **3.3.3 Engel Black Miniard Model**

This model, which is otherwise known as the consumer decision model, makes it possible to analyse the various influences that a buyer is subjected to as he/she transitions from the stage of need recognition to the post-purchase evaluation (Omotoyinbi et al., 2017). This model develops a roadmap of the consumers' mind, touching on how they think, evaluate and act (Blackwell et al., 2006). So, the Engel-Blackwell-Miniard model is essentially centred around need

recognition, internal/external search for information, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, post-purchase reflection, and divestment (Solomon et al., 2012). The internal process that propagates this model are perception, learning and motivation, with the attitude and personality of the consumer exerting pressure on the process (Omotoyinbo et al., 2017). The Engel-Blackwell-Miniard model consists of four parts, namely, information input, information processing, decision process and external variables influencing the process of decision making, and the information processing section has been regarded as the most significant (Solomon, 2007; Peter & Olson, 2001). This model has however attracted criticisms from various scholars. For instance; Loudon & Bitta (2002) held that the individual and environmental factors portrayed as influencing consumer decision-making process have not been clearly defined. Likewise, the model has also been criticised for its restrictive nature which has made its application to a host of consumer decision situations impossible (Osei & Abenyin, 2016).

**Figure 7: Flow chart of Engel Black Miniard Model**



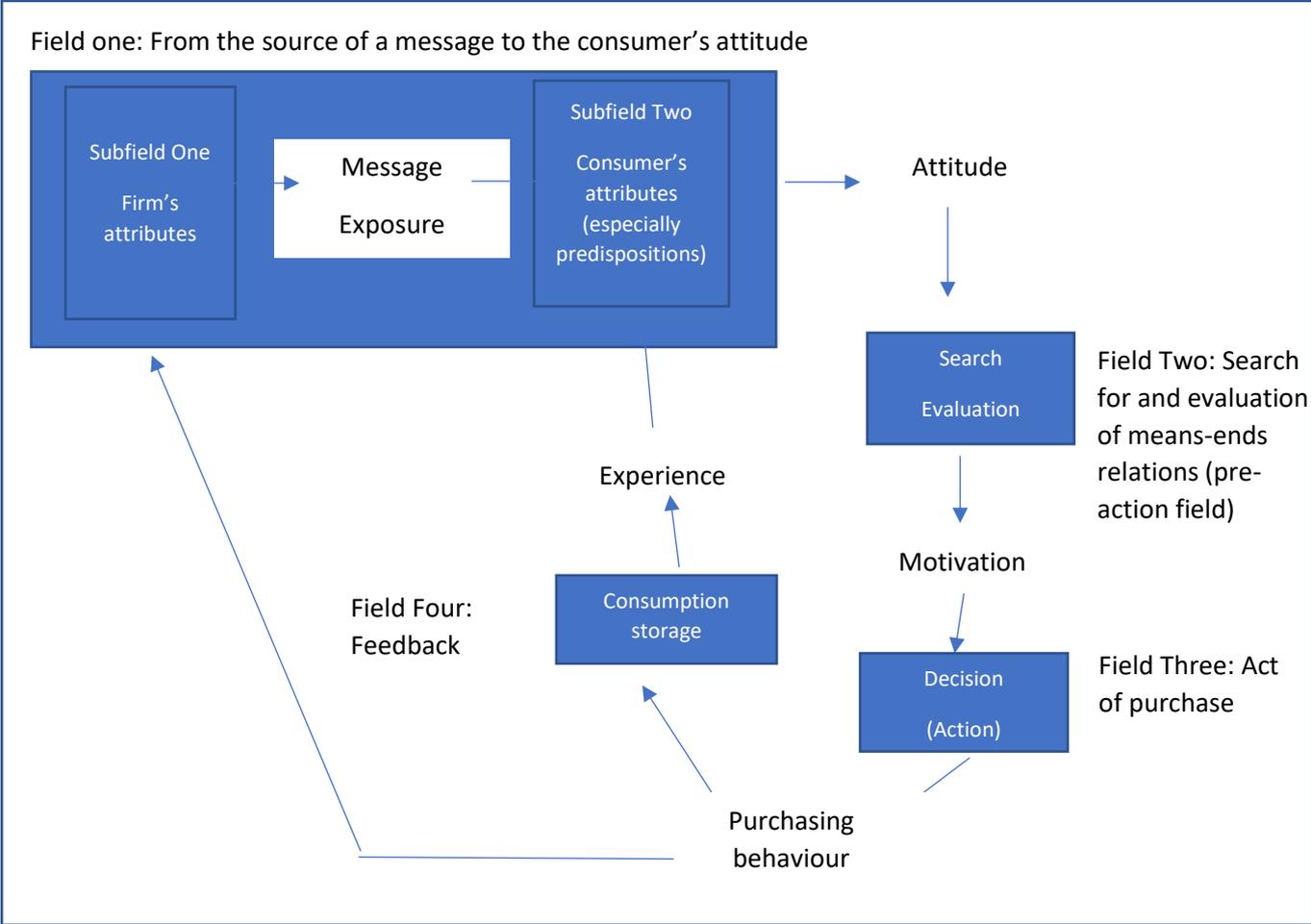
(Source: made by the researcher)

### 3.3.4 Nicosia Model

The Nicosia model was postulated with the primary aim of highlighting the connection that exists consumer attributes, consumer decision-making process and the marketing communication of a company (Runyon & Stewart, 1987). The model encompasses four different fields – exposure of the organization’s message, search and evaluation, purchase and feedback –

and there are different levels of interactions that occur between these fields. The organization’s message (that is, information) is usually passed down via promotional campaigns that bring about awareness in the marketplace (Joy & Li, 2012). Upon the creation of awareness, the consumer proceeds to the second field and moves on to the fourth – depending on his/her attitude. The Nicosia model has, however, been criticised for not explicitly considering internal processes and their impacts on consumer behaviour.

**Figure 8: Nicosia Model**



(Source: made by the researcher)

## **4. Analysis**

Data analysis will be carried out using different test based on the Quantitative data. Besides the descriptive analysis, other tests that will be done will be briefly discussed in this chapter.

### **4.1 L'Oréal India**

L'Oréal is a French company with global presence in 130 nations and has around 88,000 employees – thus it registers as one of the largest manufacturers of personal care products. The company's major product lines cover perfumery, hair care, skin care, make-up, and sun protection; these products are available for individuals across different age-groups and gender types. L'Oréal's market segmentation is designed to capture the service sector where professional products are required; the general populace for whom general cosmetics are made available for mass consumption; lovers of natural cosmetic products; and consumers – who may likely fall within the upper-class strata – for whom certain unique products [which relatively cost more] are produced.

L'Oréal began operations in India as a wholly owned subsidiary in 1994, and it presently has two manufacturing plants in Pune and Himachal Pradesh, and it is from these two facilities that around 90% of the (L'Oréal) products' requirement for the country emerge. The company has its headquarters in Mumbai, as well as two research and innovation centres. It could be said that L'Oréal India has been thriving with the company exporting products to serve other nations within the continent. One notable strategy that has worked for L'Oréal, enabling to maintain significant level of relevance to the local market in different countries despite their global reach, is the ability to tailor products to the culture of consumers (Noel, 2009). It is also worth noting that the company's catchphrase, "...because you are worth it" is one that is customer-centric and yet speaks volume of the market communications that are adopted by the company. Developmentally, L'Oréal has contributed to growth of the cosmetics industry in India; for instance, the company created an innovative hairdressing training/penetration program that has thus far seen tens of thousands of individuals equipped with relevant knowledge in that direction.

## **4.2 India's Cosmetic Industry**

The cosmetics industry is a blossoming one, and this has been associated to the increasing awareness that Indians have on the latest global beauty trends which has even encouraged a host of international producers of cosmetic goods to expand their market to the country (Poranki, 2015). Specifically, the cosmetic industry in India is reported to be growing at a rate of 15 – 20% annually, as this registers as twice of what is attainable in the markets in the US and Europe (Poranki, 2015). The Indian cosmetics market is presently valued at over US\$6 billion, and it is projected to grow to around US\$20 billion in 2025, envisioning an annual (growth) rate of 25% (Das, 2020). Looking at the demographics of the consumers of cosmetic goods, Das (2020) further reported that the spending on branded cosmetics made by 65% of Indian teenagers has amounted to a 75% increase in the past decade, and that the country imports cosmetics worth around US\$400 million annually. The cosmetic goods market in India is quite competitive and some of the major players include Lakme, Avon, Fair & Lovely, Mac & Chambor, Dove, L'Oréal, Revlon, Color Bar, and Elle 18.

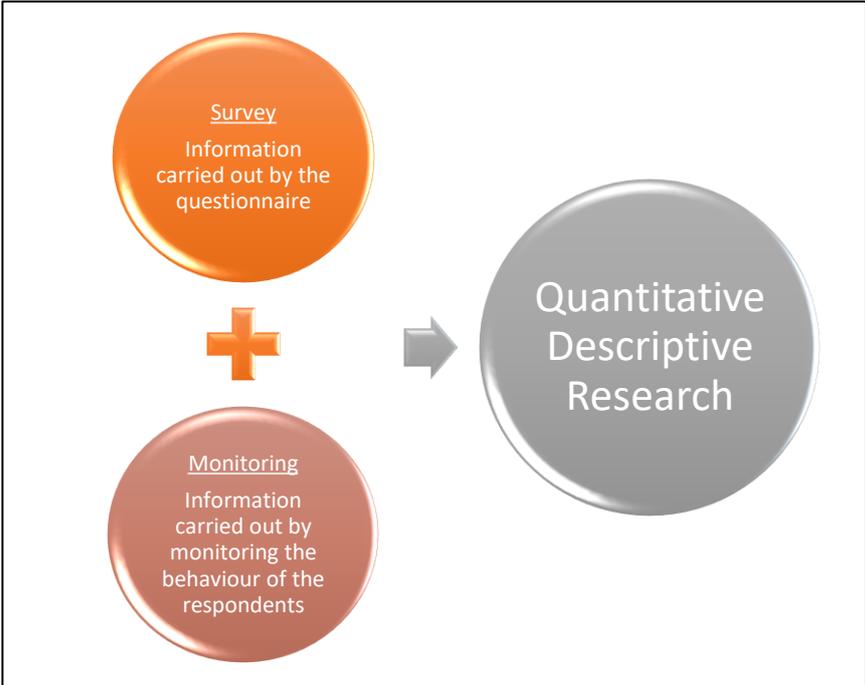
## **4.3 Research Design**

Research design is defined as the “plan that guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting observations”. It follows that any research that is to be appropriately conducted must be laid upon a suitable research design. As (Hendrick & Brickman, 1993) submitted, research design should have strong connection to the purpose of the research and must be driven by the research problem. Basically, research design entails the framework needed to collect and analyse data (Bryman & Bell, 2015); plus, it informs the researcher of the kind of details that have to be gathered in order to adequately address the research objectives (Yin, 2002). From the foregoing, the significance of a tenable research design in ensuring that a study follows a recommended and acceptable is quite apparent (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Eisenhardt & Graebner (2007) further added that the primary objective of establishing a research design is to give precedence to a number of elements that are not just limited to philosophical point of reference, method of inquiry and research direction as it relates to theory

formulation. Again, the need for this precedence is obvious considering the irrationality that would have accompanied the attempt to answer the research questions without the attainment of a sound level of consistency between the research questions and research design (Suddaby, 2006).

As this study is concerned, the research design is directed at exploring the concept of consumer behaviour towards the cosmetic products coming from the stable of L’Oréal India. Hence, the researcher shall identify and evaluate the factors that have significant impact on consumer behaviour.

**Figure 9: Quantitative Descriptive Research**



(Source: made by the researcher)

Moving on; there are typically kinds of research design – exploratory, explanatory, experimental and descriptive – and each of these is suited to different circumstances (Akhtar, 2016). Exploratory research design is usually the best choice in the event whereby a phenomenon or problem has been scarcely tackled as evident by the lack of broad knowledge in a specific research focus or topic. So, in essence, exploratory research design presents researchers with the amplitude to gain new and useful insights into ill-addressed topics, and it is more appropriate to

use this kind in a qualitative research setting than a quantitative one (Hair et al., 2003). Explanatory research design is adapted to pioneer studies whereby a research topic is being studied for the first time (McNabb, 2010). Researchers utilizing this design aim to find answers to the “why” question without drawing any sort of comparisons (McNabb, 2010). Experimental research designs are more common with scientific studies, and they are about exploring the cause-and-effect relationships (Hair et al., 2003). More so, experimental designs centre on evaluating variables within a controlled context while the observations are subsequently taken note of. Lastly, we have the descriptive research design which enables researchers to tap from comprehensive, structural details that have been provided, through multiple literature, beforehand (Bougie & Sekaran, 2010), and it is upon these details that the primary theme of a new research objective is forged. With this research design, a researcher is expected to strategically ponder on and process the available information as she attempted to gain extensive understanding of the key aspects of the research focus. The end to which studies employing descriptive design are aimed is the provision of reliable details that would contribute to the development of further (future) research (Hair et al., 2003). For a descriptive research design, the researcher is out to collect data that will enable her to sufficiently answer the questions bordering on “how”, “when”, “where”, and “who” even as the attributes of the research interest are unambiguously outlined.

Having perused all the research designs that can be applied to a study, it is intuitive to note that the descriptive research design is well-suited to the incorporate into this present study as it allows the author to build on a variety of scholarly works that have been completed in the past. Additionally, the researcher shall use this design along with a deductive approach which enables researchers to draw logical conclusions from assumptions that ultimately have an effect on the entire process (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2010).

#### **4.4 Questionnaires Design**

Questionnaires are the mostly used tools used in gathering primary data and the reason for this, is majorly down to its convenience and efficiency (Zikmund, 2003). Notably, questionnaires are suitable to use in the scenario whereby a researcher has a clear understanding of the research requirements and variables that are to be studied (Sekaran, 2003). With respect to this present

study, a 22-item questionnaire, having a mix of close-ended and open-ended questions, was created and made available to the respondents online. Questions 1 – 8 are centred on the participants’ characteristics while the others (9 – 22) were designed to obtain responses from the participants on brand loyalty, brand knowledge, packaging, price and quality of L’Oréal products. The latter part (9 – 22) of the questionnaire were scored using Likert scale 1 – 5. The scale is represented as follows:

- 1 (Strongly disagree)
- 2 (Disagree)
- 3 (Neutral)
- 4 (Agree) and
- 5 (Strongly agree)

**Figure 10: Likert Scale**

	<i>strongly disagree</i>	<i>Dis agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
<i>Question 1</i>	•	•	•	•	•
<i>Question 2</i>	•	•	•	•	•
<i>Question 3</i>	•	•	•	•	•
<i>Question 4</i>	•	•	•	•	•
<i>Question 5</i>	•	•	•	•	•

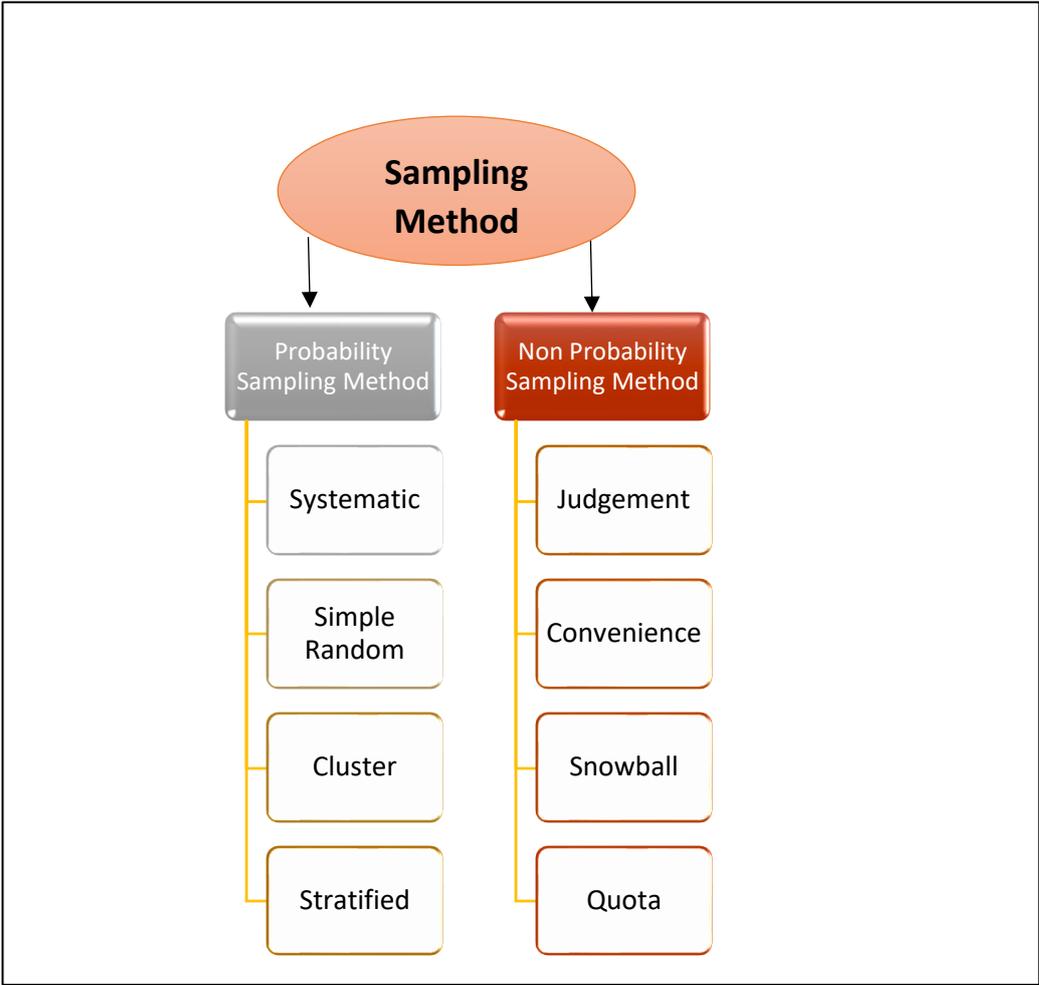
(Source: made by the researcher)

**4.5 Selection of study population**

There are basically two different ways through which a study population can be selected – probability sampling and non-probability (Saunders et al., 2012). Non-probability sampling is

applicable in the instance where there is no inference on a study population (Awang, 2012). Hence, it is only logical that the researcher employs a non-probability sampling technique as a targeted group – consumers of L'Oréal products – from diverse background is involved.

**Figure 11: Different types of Sampling Method**



(Source: made by the researcher)

## 4.6 Cronbach Alpha's

The Cronbach Alpha's is typically utilized in measuring how reliable the constructs presented in a questionnaire are. Reliability test tells researchers about the level of stability and consistency that the variables [so measured] show (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). On the interpretation of Cronbach's Alpha, the closer the value is to 1, the higher the internal consistency and reliability of constructs (Sekaran, 2003).

**Figure 12: Cronbach's Alpha test**

<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Internal Consistency</b>
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

(Source: made by the researcher)

## 4.7 Descriptive Analysis

In this Chapter, the researcher highlights the analysis which have been obtained from the survey. The results are based on the total of 148 completely answered questionnaires that were arrived after all (187) submitted online surveys were thoroughly examined.

Generally, surveys are credible instruments used in collecting data involving the assessments of variables such as attitudes, behaviour, values, opinions and beliefs (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2010). That said, online surveys are known to be cost-effective and are relatively less time-consuming (Saunders et al., 2012) as they can be easily passed across to the respondents. Self-administered surveys, like we have here, are reported to encourage nearly 100% response rate (Sekaran, 2003)

since the participants have some substantial degree of freedom – in the absence of the interviewer (Hair et al., 2006).

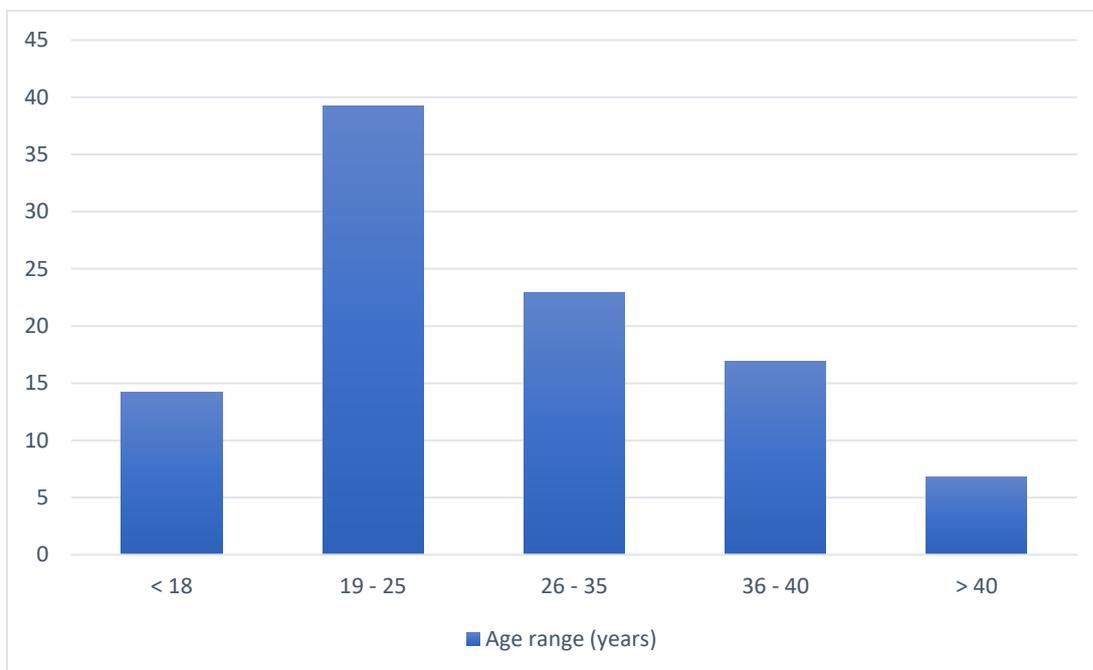
**Table 1: showing the demographic characteristics of the study population**

	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
< 18	21	14.2
19 – 25	58	39.2
26 – 35	34	22.9
36 – 40	25	16.9
> 40	10	6.8
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	36	24.3
Female	112	75.7
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	86	58.1
Married	62	41.9
<b>Work status</b>		
Student	18	12.2
Self-employed	54	36.5
Employee	64	43.2
Retired	5	3.4
Unemployed	7	4.7
<b>Monthly household income (INR)</b>		
< 25,000	33	22.3
25,000 – 45,000	28	18.9
45,001 – 65,000	39	26.4
65,001 – 85,000	36	24.3
> 85,000	12	8.1

<b>Purchasing rate</b>		
Once a month	64	43.2
Twice a month	42	28.4
Others	42	28.4
<b>Favourite L'Oréal product line</b>		
Haircare	125	84.5
Skincare	97	65.5
Make-up	56	37.8
Fragrances	28	18.9
<b>Purchasing influence</b>		
Self	64	43.2
Family	38	25.7
Friends	72	48.6
Advertisement	54	36.5
Celebrity	58	39.2

(Source: made by the researcher)

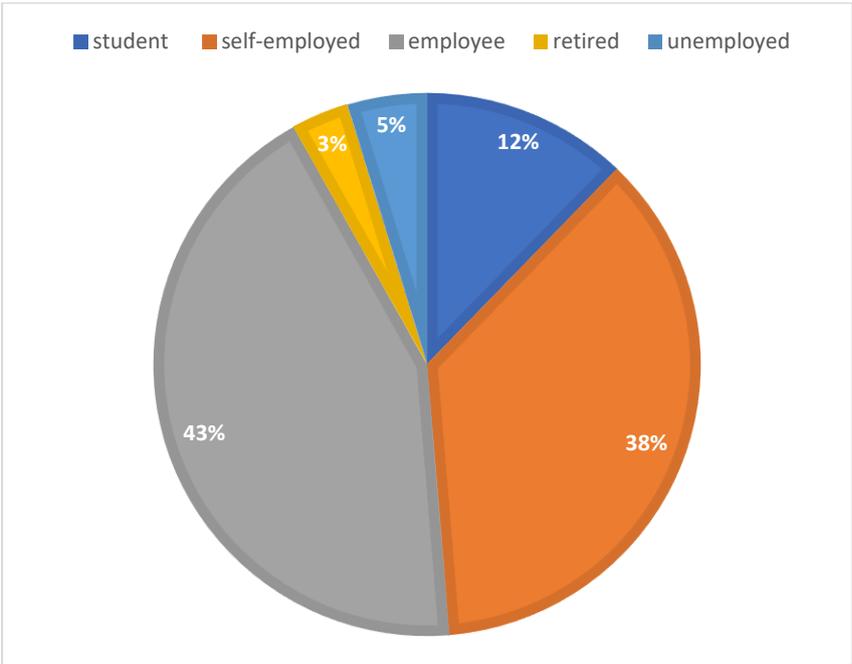
**Figure 13: showing percentage frequency of age distribution among respondents**



(Source: made by the researcher)

**Interpretation:** From the above chart, it can be seen that majority of the respondents are in their youthful age (19 -35), and these account for a cumulative of 62.1% of the entire study population. Here, it is identified that the lowest number of the responses are from the age (>40)

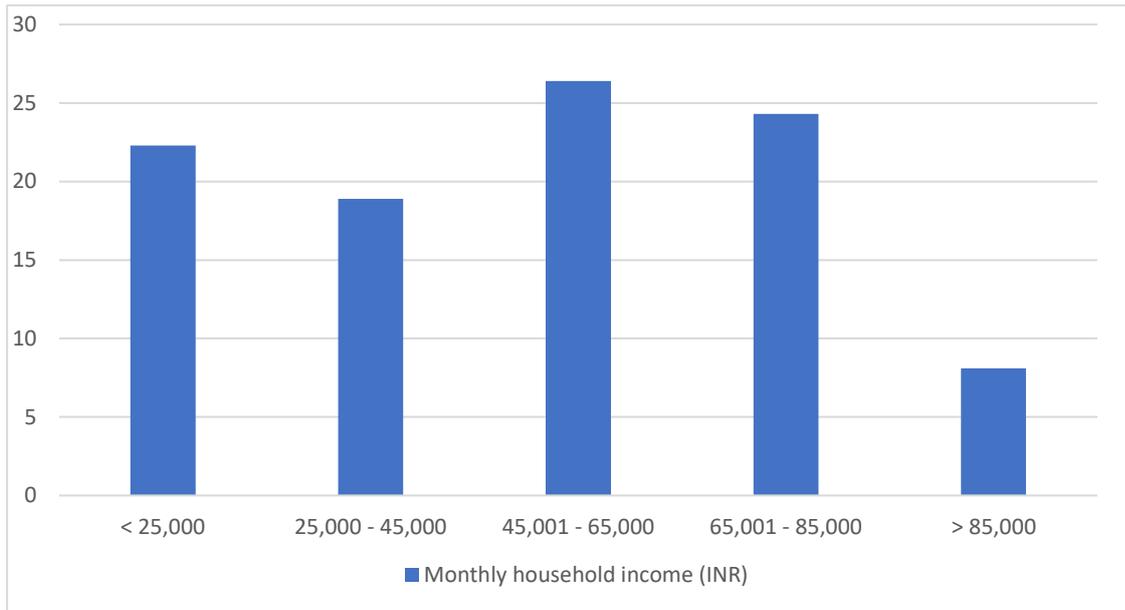
**Figure 14: showing percentage frequency of respondents’ work status**



(Source: made by the researcher)

**Interpretation:** From the above chart it can be seen that a combined 79.7% of the respondents are engaged in one form of employment or another while another 4.7% are unemployed. Along with this 12.2% are students and 3.4% are the people who have retired from the work respectively. Majority of the respondents are self-employed and employee.

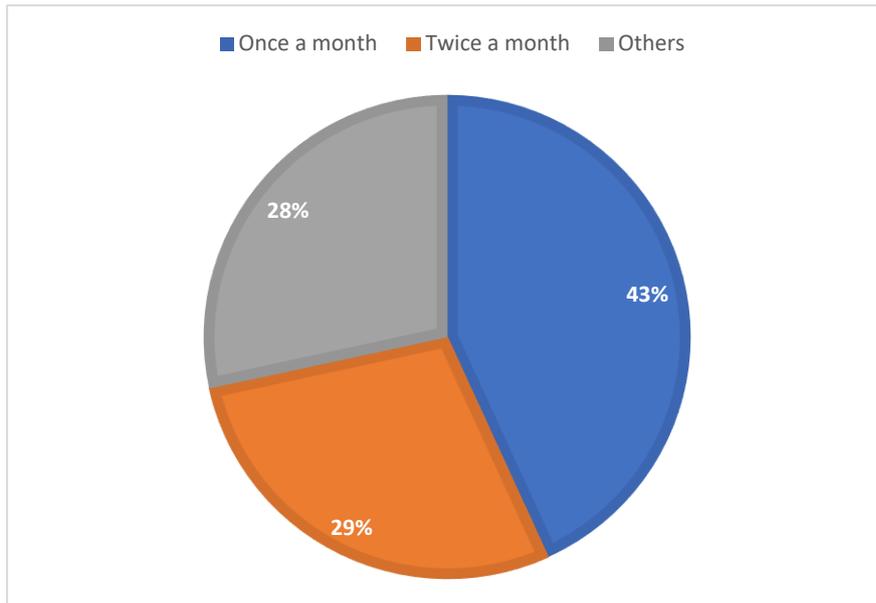
**Figure 15: showing percentage frequency of monthly household income (in INR) among respondents**



(Source: made by the researcher)

**Interpretation:** On the income status from the above chart, it can be observed that 26.4% - which is the highest in this regard - fall within the upper middle-class income level and this is followed by respondents within the upper-class income level, accounting for 24.3%. Beyond this however, individuals with a monthly household income exceeding 85,000 INR - which may best be suited to place in the elite class - accounted for 8.1% (12) of the study population. 22.3% (33) and 18.9% (28) respectively respondents within the lower class and lower middle-class levels.

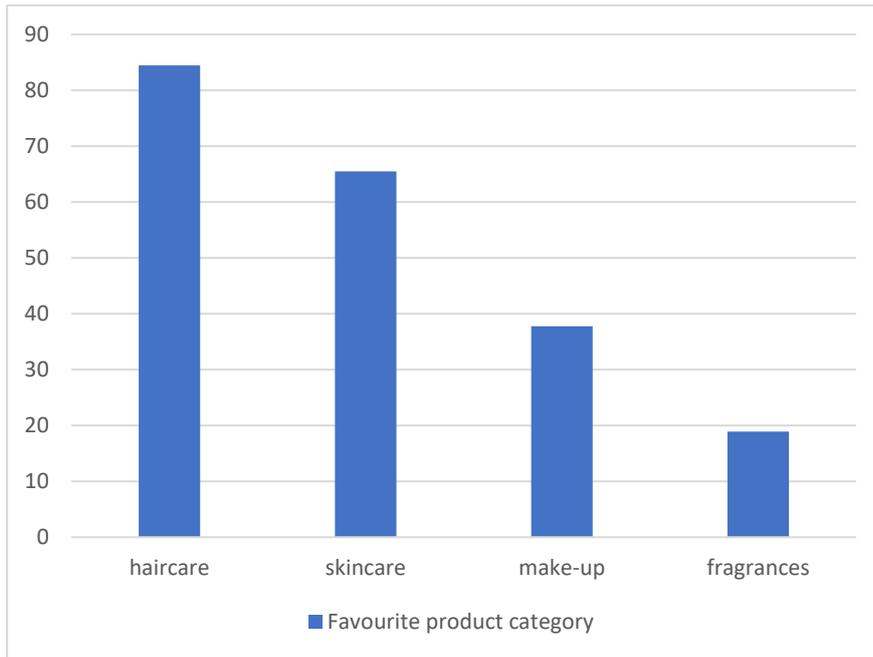
**Figure 16: showing percentage of purchasing frequency of L'Oréal products among respondents**



(Source: made by the researcher)

**Interpretation:** With respect to the frequency of purchase on the basis of above chart it can be observed that 43.2% (64) submitted that they bought L'Oréal products once every month while 28.4% (42) of the respondents said they purchase product from the brand twice every month. The rest of them belong to the 'others' category - these compasses 15.5% (23) who communicated that they get the products once every two months and 12.8% (19) which stated that they get the brand products once every week. It seems like majority of the respondent prefer to purchase the product once in a month.

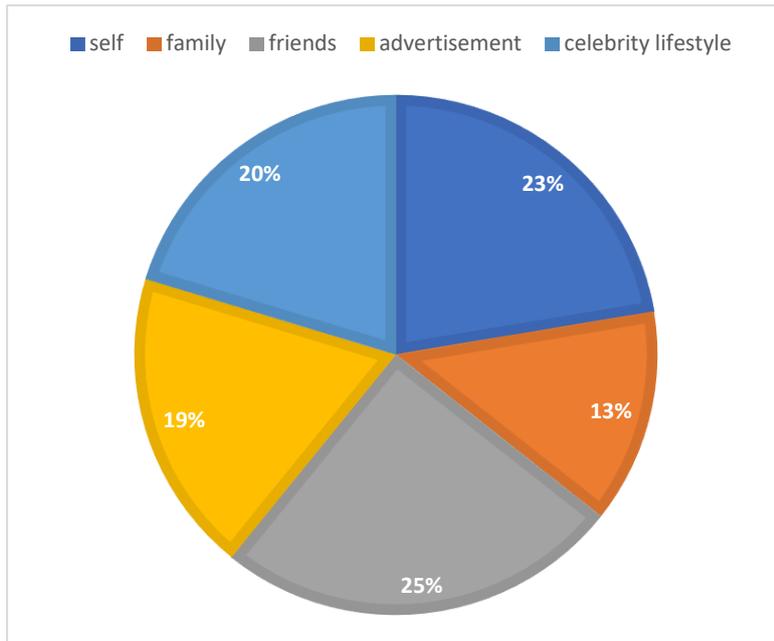
**Figure 17: showing percentage frequency for respondents' favourite L'Oréal product category**



(Source: made by the researcher)

**Interpretation:** In reference to the product categories from the above chart that it can be observed that the respondents usually purchase; majority (84.5%) chose hair care products, and this was followed by skincare products (65.5%), make-up products (37.8%) and fragrances (18.9%) in that order. It clearly states that consumer is satisfied with the hair care products at utmost.

**Figure 18: showing percentage frequency of purchasing influence for L'Oréal products among respondents**



(Source made by the researcher)

**Interpretation:** From the above chart it can be observed that as per the purchasing influence, 48.6% (72) responded that they were influenced by friends while another 39.2% and 36.5% intimated that they were motivated by celebrity lifestyle and advertisement in respective order. That said, 43.2% of the respondents admitted that they were self-motivated to buy L’Oréal products.

**Table 2: showing the result of Cronbach’s Alpha test**

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.974	.982	14

(Source: made by the researcher)

- The Cronbach’s Alpha test, with a value of 0.974, reflects that the construct of the questionnaire has a strong internal consistency and show a high degree of reliability.

**Discussion of responses to Question 9 – 22**

- **Question 9: I usually care a lot about getting products from the particular brand I wish to buy**

This question is designed to assess the consumers’ attachment to cosmetic brands, and going by the responses gathered, it can be inferred that the respondents appreciate sticking with their favourite cosmetic brands. The result showed that 83.2% of the respondents agreed to this item while the remaining 16.8% went for the ‘neutral’ option.

**Table 3: Usually care a lot about getting products from the brand I wish to buy**

<b>Usually care a lot about getting products from the brand I wish to buy</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Agree	83.2%
Neutral	16.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: made by the researcher)

- **Question 10: I am willing to make extra effort to L'Oréal products**

It was discovered that 63.5% (71) of the respondents agreed in this direction while 18.9% (28) of them barely disagreed and the rest (17.6%) can be said to be indifferent as they settled for the neutral option. The pattern of the responses in this respect reveals that while brand loyalty is ascertained with some regular users of L'Oréal products, some perceived loyal users may eventually look elsewhere whenever they are not pleased with the product offering.

**Table 4: I am willing to make extra effort to L'Oréal products**

<b>I am willing to make extra effort to L'Oréal products</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Agree	63.5%
Disagreed	18.9%
Neutral	17.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: made by the researcher)

- **Question 11: I am fine with using a substitute brand to L'Oréal**

54.78% (63) of the respondents do not appear to have any problem using products from other brands as they chose the 'agree' option. This could tell of the presence of other credible and/or top-rated cosmetic brands that make the market more competitive. However, at the other extreme, are the 58 (39.8%) respondents who disagreed with the notion of being okay with substitutes. To have respondents replying in the manner of this latter set does not only speak volume of the brand loyalty but also the level of trust that they have in L'Oréal. The other 17.6% (26) were not definitive in their response.

**Table 5: I am fine with using a substitute brand to L'Oréal**

<b>I am fine with using a substitute brand to L'Oréal</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Agree	63	54.78%
Disagreed	58	39.8%
Not Definitive	26	17.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>112.18%</b>

(Source: made by the researcher)

- **Question 12: I derive a lot of interest in L'Oréal products and will readily share product information with others**

In respect to this question; 68 (45.9%) and 42 (28.4%) of the respondents chose the 'agree' and 'strongly agree' options in respective order, meaning that they are committed to knowing more about L'Oréal's products and that they will share what they know with others. 38 (25.7%) of questionnaire had neutral responses as this item is concerned.

**Table 6: I derive a lot of interest in L'Oréal products and will readily share product information with others**

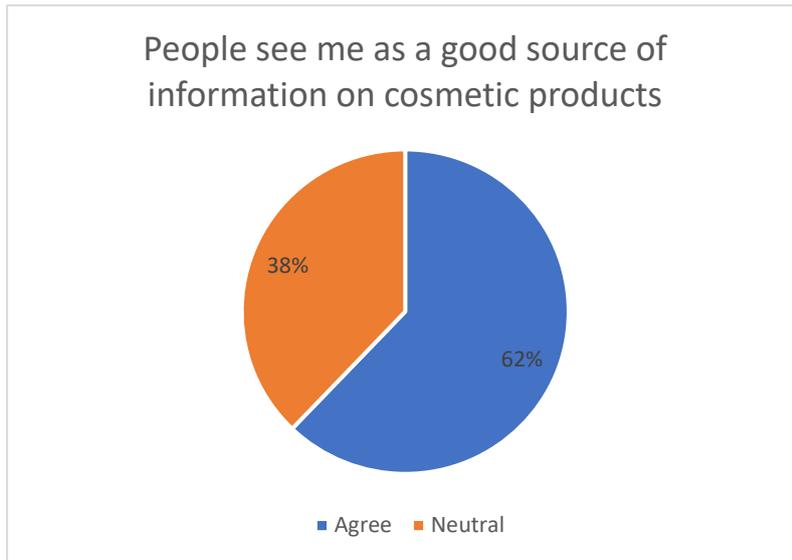
<b>Derive a lot of interest in L'Oréal's products &amp; will readily share product information with others</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Strongly agree	42	28.4%
Agree	68	45.9%
Neutral	38	25.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: made by the researcher)

- **Question 13: People see me as a good source of information on cosmetic products**

Most of the respondents (92) agreed that they are regarded as good source of information on cosmetics while the other 56 respondents do not seem to have a clear insight into how others see when it comes sharing such information. In a broad sense, the ones who agreed to this item could have a significant impact on the buying decision of others who look to them for details on cosmetic products. That said, it is important to note that the considerably high number of respondents selecting the neutral option could may not be unconnected to the lack of substantial knowledge about the brand.

**Figure 19: People see me as a good source of information on cosmetic products**



(Source: made by the researcher)

- **Question 14: I am always eager to recommend L'Oréal products to others**

77.7% (115) of the respondents agreed – albeit to varying extent – that they will readily recommend L'Oréal products to others while the remaining (22.3%) were neutral in their response. Viewing this from another perspective, one could infer that the tendency of consumers to make recommendations about these products is fed by the degree of trust they have in them.

**Table 7: I am always eager to recommend L'Oréal products to others**

Always eager to recommend L'Oréal products to others	Frequency	% of Responses
Agreed	115	77.7%
Neutral	33	22.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: made by the researcher)

- **Question 15: The colour and design of the packaging of L'Oréal products motivate me to buy**

A sizeable number of the respondents – 133 of them – insinuated, by selecting either of them of the agree option, that they were motivated to buy L'Oréal products by the colour and design of packaging. The remaining 15 respondents responded in neutrality.

**Figure 20: The colour and design of the packaging of L'Oréal products motivate me to buy**



(Source: made by the researcher)

- **Question 16: I like the packaging innovation of L'Oréal**

The pattern of responses here shows some degree of consistency with question 16 above as 89.9% (133) of the respondents also agreed to the fact that they like the innovation on L'Oréal's packaging, with 10.1% (15) selecting the neutral option. From this, coupled with the pattern of responses for item 15, one can draw that the market communications employed by the company has some significant level of effectiveness about them. More so, the personnel overseeing the marketing functions of L'Oréal appear to understand their target audience to a creditable extent.

**Table 8: I like the packaging innovation of L'Oréal**

<b>Like the Packaging innovation of L'Oréal</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Agree	133	89.9%
Neutral	15	10.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: made by the researcher)

- Question 17: I believe L'Oréal products are moderately priced**

77% (114) of the respondents believed that L'Oréal products are moderately priced while, on the other extreme, 10.1% (15) of them disagreed on this; the rest (12.9%) responded neutrally. An interesting aspect about the extent of agreeability in this respect could be linked to L'Oréal's inclusion objectives whereby the company aims to cover a broad range of consumers – across socioeconomic strata.

**Table 9: I believe L'Oréal products are moderately priced**

<b>Believe L'Oréal products are moderately priced</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Agree	114	77%
Disagreed	15	10.1%
Neutral	19	12.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: made by the researcher)

- Question 18: I look for sales promotion to buy L'Oréal products at relatively lower prices**

Even though many of the respondents agreed that the products were moderately priced, it is apparent that the respondents will very well appreciate price reduction avenues like promotions. This is based on the fact that 90.5% (134) of the respondents agreeing to the item raised here while only 9.5% chose a different – neutral – response.

**Table 10: I look for sales promotion to buy L'Oréal products at relatively lower prices**

<b>Look for sales promotion to buy L'Oréal products at relatively low prices</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Agreed	134	90.5%
Neutral	14	9.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: made by the researcher)

- **Question 19: I consider my economic/financial situation when buying cosmetic products**

Majority (94.5%) of those who participated in the survey were clear that they would consider their financial standing before buying cosmetic products. However, the remaining 5.5% (8), who selected a neutral reply, may or may not give consideration to their financial situation.

**Table 11: I consider my economic/financial situation when buying cosmetic products**

<b>Consider my financial situation when buying cosmetic products</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Agree	140	94.5%
Neutral	8	5.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: made by the researcher)

- **Question20: I am satisfied with the quality of L'Oréal products**

Virtually all the respondents – safe for a meagre 2.02% (3) that were neutral – showed their satisfaction with the quality that comes with L'Oréal products. This can only come on the

back of having a substantial degree of guarantee that the cosmetics from the brand will serve the purpose for which they have been purchased. Moreover, this goes to show impact that L'Oréal's innovative drives, in terms of the incorporation of top-notch scientific and technological elements into production, have thus far generated.

- **Question 21: I find L'Oréal's products very safe to use**

There appears to be a consensus about the safety of L'Oréal products as all the respondents agreed to this particular item even though to a differing extent – 36.5% (54) strongly agreeing and 63.5% (94) simply agreeing. The response pattern in this regard yet gives credence to what is attainable from the immediately preceding question.

**Table 12: I find L'Oréal's products very safe to use**

<b>Find L'Oréal products very safe to use</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Strongly agree	54	36.5%
Agree	94	63.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: made by the researcher)

- **Question 22: I am to pay any price for the quality reflected on L'Oréal products**

68.91% (102) of the respondents agreed that they were willing to pay any price for the quality reflected on L'Oréal products, but 13.5% (20) disagreed with this. So, on one hand, the response pattern communicates consumers' trust in the brand while on the other hand, it shows the tendency of some consumers to either look to L'Oréal's competitors for their cosmetic needs or avoid the use of such products – as a result of probable increase in price. The rest of the respondents (26) tended towards neutrality.

**Table 13: I am to pay any price for the quality reflected on L'Oréal products**

<b>I am to pay any price for the quality reflected on L'Oréal products</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Agreed	102	68.91%
Dis agreed	20	13.5%
Neutral	26	22.59%
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: made by the researcher)

## 5. Results and Discussion

It is obvious, from the discourse that had preceded this section, that consumer behaviour towards L'Oréal India has been largely positive, and this can be traced to a host of underlying factors – among which are the effective marketing strategies that have been set in motion. To have a good grasp of the efficacy of these strategies, it is worth stating that the revenue of L'Oréal India has grown by over 100% in the last half a decade; this is an eye-opener to how well consumers have embraced the brand's products in the country, and as it was found out in the quantitative study, there is a commensurate degree of attachment that consumers have developed towards L'Oréal India's cosmetics over the years. While it may be rightly deduced that the measures targeted at culturally induced, customer service/product offering, it would be unimaginable to leave out the pricing strategy that has helped the company grow its customer base to a commendable extent. By this strategy, certain cosmetic goods are provided in smaller packages that make them obtainable at affordable prices. So, this further explains why we have respondents across different socioeconomic classes. Notwithstanding, India is reported to have a relatively lower per capita spend on cosmetics – compared to what is attainable with countries in China, USA, and some parts of Europe. Another strategy that seems to be working for the brand is the drive towards educating the people in the area of beauty, and there have been a number of academies that have been set up for this purpose. Besides, the product diversification, as well as the prerogative to produce local products that prick the interest of the consumers, are another set of strategic moves undertaken by the company. Even more importantly, and considering the realities on the ground, L'Oréal India is beginning to leverage digital opportunities to reach out to its target market which comprises mostly of individuals in their youthful age. So, as it stands, taking the brand to social networks where this group spends a considerable amount of their time is bound to give the company a competitive advantage – provided they are able to continually sustain consumer interest – in a market that is already highly competitive.

It is quite glaring in the face of a positive consumer perception and huge market potential that L'Oréal India's business is set on a pedestal of success for a long time to come. This is even more conceivable with the brand adjusting its strategies to better meet the ever-changing demands

of their prospective customers. In spite of this, there is a certain area that the company may need to shore up in order to appreciably maximize the opportunities that are derivable therein; these will be addressed under the recommendation section.

## **Recommendations**

This section is about recommendations which are derived from the findings/observations attained from this research. The recommendations are basically centred on marketing strategies, and they are presented as follows:

- **Better engagement of loyal customers:**

It is undeniable that a sizeable number of those who participated in the survey have become fond of L'Oréal products, and these present a great avenue upon which the company can build further its success – not just about retaining them but using these loyal consumers to drive its marketing campaigns. In light of this, the company can embark on series of loyalty programs where closer ties with the consumers can be initiated with the view of using them as reference groups to reach others – lead generation – through word-of-mouth. This sort of programs can even be incentivized to encourage the consumers who actively participate in it.

- **Increased penetration into the upper-class market:**

Another important trend that was noticed is the limited number of respondents within the upper class. The fact that these individuals were relatively small compared to others could mean that marketing campaigns are not usually targeted at them. This is, however, somewhat surprising with the reputation that L'Oréal India is building for itself – although it may be argued that the company needs to first steady its base in the mass market. Thus, it is important that the brand intensifies its efforts to reach a wider audience within the upper class by designing products that would appeal to them, triggering positive consumer behaviour thereafter.

L'Oréal India, on its own, can become a model cosmetic company that is worthy of emulation in the not-so-distant future. This is on the basis of how well it is perceived by those who have consumed its products. With this mind, extensive research studies should be conducted to evaluate how it is evolving amidst the dynamic world of business.

## 6. Conclusion

The conclusion of the study shows the most significant influencing factors on consumer behaviour and also demonstrate the data which perceive the consumers of L'Oréal products in India. To understand the consumer behaviour, it is necessary to consider the different variables which impacts the customer mentality. To identify the consumer decision making process which start with the need for the product, make the decision and buy the product to fulfil the need, afterward examine the product where the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction from the product may arise and finally at the end consumer may get convinced to be the loyal customer of the product.

Looking at each of the variables, the fact that brand loyalty significantly affected consumer behaviour is a pointer to the measures that the company has taken towards ensuring retention of customers. Some of these measures may include, but definitely not limited to consistency in producing high-quality cosmetic products that are backed by innovations in science and technology. It is not inconceivable to see customers look away from low-quality brands as they search for products that effectively address their needs. Linking this to the responses of the participants when the item about their satisfaction with the quality of the L'Oréal brand was brought up, one will clearly see that most of the consumers were indeed pleased with what the company has to offer. Moving on to psychological attributes which also has significant impact on consumer behaviour, it is apparent that the consumers reserve considerable knowledge about the brand's products. While this could be readily seen as an offshoot of the company's marketing/advertisement campaigns, it also advances the cause to promote the brand through word-of-mouth. In view of this, as consumers effortlessly recall the product features and attributes, it becomes much easier for them to let others know how the benefits derivable from using a particular product from the brand.

In terms of aesthetics, L'Oréal products appear to be making a great deal of appeal to the consumers in India as the result yet reflected a significant value. It is on this premise that one gets to realize the effectiveness of understanding and modelling or tailoring marketing campaigns to the culture(s) attained in the local market. L'Oréal India is informed about the taste of its Indian target audience and given them products they will long to have on a consistent basis. The

consideration on pricing can be addressed from different angles. For one, that the consumers viewed L'Oréal products as being moderately priced means they would very likely exhibit a positive towards the brand in this direction, and this could ultimately encourage the loyalty towards the brand. Nonetheless, the consumers, as would have been expected in any market setting, also showed the desire to leverage and take advantage of promotional offers and other price reduction initiatives. On the part of the company; the pricing mechanism employed by them can best be described as efficient since different persons across socioeconomic strata were able to afford the brand's products.

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## 8. Appendices

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeNtBh3uXhgk6ORnwC26WhPp-apu7WYScX1P3LaeQVMPCGsPQ/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeNtBh3uXhgk6ORnwC26WhPp-apu7WYScX1P3LaeQVMPCGsPQ/viewform?usp=sf_link)

### **SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE:**

#### **1. AGE:**

- Less than 18 years
- 19 – 25 years
- 26 – 35 years
- 36 – 40 years
- Above 40 years

#### **2. GENDER:**

Male

Female

#### **3. MARITAL STATUS**

Single

Married

#### **4. WORK STATUS**

Student

Self-employed

Employee

Retired

Unemployed

#### **5. MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

Below 25,000

25,000 – 45,000

45,001 – 65,000

65,001 – 85,000

Above 85,000

**6. How often do you buy L'Oréal products?**

Once every month

Twice every month

Others (specify): .....

**7. Which of the following product categories are you interested in?**

Haircare

Skincare

Make-up

Fragrances

**8. Which of the following influence(s) your buying decision towards L'Oréal products?**

Self

Family

Friends

Advertisements

Celebrity lifestyle

**9. I usually care a lot about getting products from the particular brand I wish to buy**

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**10. I am willing to make extra effort to L'Oréal products**

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**11. I am fine with using a substitute brand to L'Oréal**

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**12. I derive a lot of interest in L'Oréal products and will readily share product information with others**

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**13. People see me as a good source of information on cosmetic products**

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**14. I am always eager to recommend L'Oréal products to others**

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**15. The colour and design of the packaging of L'Oréal products motivate me to buy**

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**16. I like the packaging innovation of L'Oréal**

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**17. I believe L'Oréal products are moderately priced**

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**18. I look for sales promotion to buy L'Oréal products at relatively lower prices**

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**19. I consider my economic/financial situation when buying cosmetic products**

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**20. I am satisfied with the quality of L'Oréal products**

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**21. I find L'Oréal's products very safe to use**

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

**22. I am to pay any price for the quality reflected on L'Oréal products**

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree