

# Impact Of Motivation And Perception On Consumer Buying Behaviour Of Beauty Soaps: Analysis Of Karachi Market As An Industrial Representative Of Pakistan

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## Abstract:

The study of consumer behaviour is a very vast field in psychology that has its deep implications for marketing as well. This research aims to examine the impact of motivation and perception on the consumer buying behaviour for selected beauty soap brands in Karachi as an industrial representative of Pakistan. Three leading soap brands of Pakistan, Lux, Capri, and Dove have been chosen and loyal consumers from each brand have been selected as the research sample. Laddering technique of interviews was used to uncover the end values of using these brands of soap. Motivation and consumer perception came out as dominant factors affecting consumer buying behaviour. A constant probing question of “why” helped reach the end values the study revealed that consumers’ latent end value that impacted their decision the most was self-esteem while sense of belongingness and warm relations with others was also why women bought the soap. Consumers have a positive attitude towards the brand of soap they use because of the effective communication by the brand using contemporary image help shape their buying behaviour as well. This research will help the companies making the beauty soaps in Pakistan design their marketing strategies accordingly and they will be able to identify the gap in their strategy that exist currently that is hindering their sales.

## Introduction:

The world of cosmetics and beauty care essentials has a multitude of products readily available for people to consume. From beauty soaps to hydrating creams and serums, each brand has a wide product portfolio that caters to every basic beauty need of the consumers worldwide. Each brand aims to market and establish a position in the minds of consumers such that their product becomes the bestselling amongst its categories. Different marketing and selling techniques are employed at the part of the brand while a completely different set of factors come in to play when consumers are persuaded to buy these products. While there is sufficient research all over the world on techniques used by the companies to sell and consumer buying behaviour towards these beauty products, this study focuses on

motivation and perception as the factors affecting consumer buying behaviour of beauty soaps in Karachi as an industrial representative of Pakistan.

The beauty soaps industry in Pakistan is a giant with many firms operating and successfully profiting within. It is on the upward trajectory and is said to be inflation proof with a growth of 1.6% in 2021 compared to the previous year. (Global Market Analyst. 2022) With a handful of large players and multiple small ones the consumer market of beauty soaps has a vast variety of choices and many substitutes flooding the market. Although beauty soap is not a high involvement product, we still see a pattern of very loyal consumers who would not switch brands and have used only one kind of soap for most of their lives.

The beauty soaps market of Pakistan has a large variety of soaps available for its consumers to choose from. The key players in this market are Lux, Capri, Vital, Palmolive, Dove, Pears, Himalaya herbal, Skin white, Saeed Ghani, Golden Pearl; to name a few. One of the major players of beauty soap industry in Pakistan are Unilever with the biggest product portfolio of beauty soaps in Pakistan. (Emergen Research. 2023) Currently they are manufacturing Lux, Dove, Fair and Lovely which is now rebranded as glow and lovely. Another large manufacturer with a good market share of the beauty soap industry is Colgate- Palmolive with the star seller of its product portfolio Palmolive soap bar available in five variants. Capri beauty soap is manufactured by Zil Limited, and their product portfolio consists of several other soaps such as opal, lily and Hypro anti-bacterial soap as well. These are just a handful of beauty soaps to name which makes up most of the beauty soap industry market share.

The major factors that drive the beauty soaps industry of Pakistan are consumer perception of the product effectiveness, the quality of the product, the ingredients used, and lastly the brand promotion which reflects the emotional connection a consumer develops with the brand. Price alone is not considered as a major factor that determines the success of the brand. According to Euromonitor, the data from 2017 showed that the beauty and personal care market size was a \$455.3 billion industry with an annual compound growth rate of 5.9% until 2025.

Several factors influence the consumer buying behaviour for these soaps. Perception, personality, learning, communication, attitude, belief, motivation, culture, family and social class and promotion are some of these factors that influence the buying behaviour. Each factor has its distinct impact on the buying pattern of the products however some influence the consumers more than others. Perception is not an easy concept to gauge when it comes to consumer behaviour. There are numerous stimuli about a particular product that forms a

perception and usually these perceptions keep on changing due to varying circumstances. Sometimes the product's failure to deliver its promise through falling quality or a change of ingredients that the consumers do not feel comfortable with or a new promotional message that does not agree with the values of the consumer are some of the factors that cause an alteration in the perception of the buyers. Maintaining perceptual consistency is what brands aim at because not only does it make their work simpler but also makes the lives of the consumers much easier who do not have to consistently make new judgements about the same product that they use.

Motivation activates and directs the behaviour of the consumers towards buying the products. The marketers are supremely interested in finding out the apparent and latent motivational factors that influence their buying pattern. For beauty soap industry the apparent motivational factors are usually the health of the skin, the colour and feel of the skin, glow on the face, standing out amongst the peers based on their appearance, self-consciousness, smelling fragrant and many more. While the easier it is to identify the apparent motivational factors, it is a cumbersome task to do the same with the latent motivational factors. Detailed laddering interviews with the most loyal consumers of the brands gives us insights about the end values that the consumers wish to derive by using the beauty soap they use.

While the beauty products constellation is considerably huge in size, the beauty soaps market occupies a great deal of that space. This paper aims to observe and analyse the consumer buying behaviour of a selection of three main beauty soaps in Karachi acting as an industrial representative of Pakistan. The soaps under study for this research are: lux, Capri, and Dove.

### **LUX, Capri and Dove:**

According to data provided by Unilever, (Unilever Pakistan, 2022) Lux is one of the

world's most popular beauty soaps. Not only it is the most widely selling soap it is also one of the oldest established brands as well with celebrities like Marilyn Monroe and Jennifer Lopez promoting it internationally while Mahira Khan and Saba Qamar doing it locally. Lux's perception is established as an affordable, luxurious beauty soap brand that glamourises cosmetic care and is widely and readily available in a number of sensual fragrances. Lux is available in seven premium fragrances in Pakistan namely: eternal Jasmine, purple lotus, hypnotic rose, velvet glow, fresh splash, elegant gardenia, and rose glow. As of 2021, the unit price of Lux soap varies from variant to variant and usually lies between 56PKR to a bundle of 3 soaps priced at 190PKR.

Capri soap, a product of ZIL limited is one of the products from their portfolio of products. Capri is ZIL's bestselling product. It is a direct competitor of Lux in Pakistan and has second largest market share after Lux. (Khan, N., Moiz, J. 2018) Capri's "Natural Skincare and Wellness Range" delivers a lifestyle to consumers in the premium segment. It is the flagship brand for ZIL and it banks on its natural ingredients as its USP. It comes in 4 variants and each with differing packaging and fragrances which are: Capri Aelo natural extracts, capri strawberry softeners, capri vitalizing water lily, capri purifying green tea, and capri nourishing peach.

Dove, a product of Unilever, came in to being in 1957 as the revolutionary new cleansing bar with ¼ moisturizing cream and with its unique blend it became the number 1 dermatologist recommended brand all over the world. (Unilever Pakistan, 2022) Dove's promise of beautiful, moisturized skin made it the most loved beauty brand and now Dove offers not only the beauty soap bar but a variety of other products such as shampoos, deodorants, hand wash, body wash, conditioners, and a variety of other hair essentials. Dove stands out amongst all other beauty soaps for its marvellous beauty standards. It claims that beauty is not one dimensional that is it cannot be categorised by

age, specific gender or body type or skin colour for that matter. It is feeling your best version and being confident in the skin you are in. It focuses on real women with all their imperfections and gives them confidence by showing them that they are all unique, authentic, and beautiful. The brand invites women to realize their full beauty potential by offering them products that deliver superior care.

### **Rationale for the study:**

There is a significant amount of research done in Asia region about the consumer buying behaviour of skin care products. Generally, the research that is already done focuses on skin care and cosmetic products as a whole and specifically beauty soap category is largely left specifically for Pakistani market. There is one recent study conducted by the students at University of Karachi in 2018, about advertisement affecting the buying behaviour of beauty soaps in Karachi, however it is very limited to the impact of advertisement only. Having said that, this study will focus on how motivation and perception affect consumer buying behaviour of three major beauty soap brands in Karachi being an industrial representative of Pakistan.

### **Problem statement:**

Going through the past research done on consumer buying behaviour of beauty products, it was evident that while other beauty products such as facial creams, scrubs, hand creams, serums, masks, hair care and other body essentials are high involvement products, the beauty soap category is medium to low involvement item. A typical low involvement item is a routine buy, straightforward, repetitive, and often lead to a habit and beauty soaps fall under this category now. (Lumen. 2022). Hence buying a beauty soap bar is routine response behaviour and does not involve much attention and consideration by the consumers.

People making repeat purchases tend to have a positive attitude towards the brand and rely on their experience to form a proper perception of the brand. Having stated that, more research is needed to gauge the motivation driving buying behaviour of consumers specifically towards beauty soaps being sold in Karachi and this is the problem that will be addressed in this study.

Very little research has been done in Pakistan on the market of beauty soap particularly studying the consumer buying behaviour of beauty soaps in Pakistan. Advertisement affecting the buying behaviour of soaps has been highlighted before but the impact of consumer perception affecting and motivation affecting consumer purchase intentions and decisions has yet to be studied. Addressing this problem will give great insights to the marketing companies particularly the companies representing the brands under research here for designing their marketing strategies for these brands in the future and how to appeal to their consumers in a manner they can relate to more. This will in turn help their sales and bring them more profit in terms of a loyal consumer base. The companies can discover and then focus more on the areas they are lagging in and gain advantage for refreshing their product or the marketing approach for it in Pakistan.

### **Objective of the research:**

This research aims to find out:

1. The underlying motivational factors, that lead to end values.
2. Examine and analyse the perception people have of the brands in question.

This study discusses in detail the end values extracted from the laddering interviews conducted to uncover the motivational factors behind using the beauty soaps. It also presents these end values as a hierarchical value map that simplifies the means end theory.

The study also uncovers the perception consumers have of the beauty soap brands they use. How that perception has evolved because of the brand's image and how this affects their buying behaviour towards the brand of soap they use.

### **Literature review:**

#### **Motivation and consumer behaviour:**

There is a good variety of research available on the topic of factors affecting consumer buying behaviour for beauty products. However, a gap is identified specifically for the beauty soap market which this research will aim to address.

Motivation is the basic driving force of an individual that impels them to act. There is tension to fulfil a need behind this driving force and people strive both, consciously and subconsciously to reduce this tension. They select goals and behave in a particular manner to fulfil this need and relieve themselves of this tension. According to **(Schiffman, L., Kanuk, L., et.al. 2016)** there are two kinds of needs namely extrinsic and intrinsic. While intrinsic needs are for one's own happiness and inner satisfaction, extrinsic needs motivate the individuals to achieve the end results. If a person buys a particular product to show off and intimidate people around him, a product that will signify his power and status, that is an extrinsic need.

Beauty products are essential items that lead to fulfilment of the basic need's women have all over the world. Extensive research is conducted around the world to find out motivational factors that derive the buying pattern for these beauty products. **(Anjana, S. 2018)** in her paper **A Study on Factors Influencing Cosmetic Buying Behaviour Of Consumers** researches on Indian consumers who have similar buying patterns and motivational forces behind buying the beauty products. She concluded that brand, advertisement, price, packaging, and quality were the major motivators for buying the cosmetic products and going for re-purchasing. Brand loyalty was largely seen with the use of

cosmetic products. It was determined that very few people take risks with their skin and products related to their grooming and appearance (**Anjana, S. 2018**). Brand loyalty is also a result of the celebrities associated with the brand, who endorse the brand in their advertisements, (**Mukherjee, D. 2012**). This aspect of brand loyalty will also be examined in our research as the soaps under study in this research also use celebrity appeal as a message execution technique.

Advertising is also a crucial element in motivating consumers to buy the product. It is an important element of the marketing mix tying the 4Ps of marketing together. According to (**Latif, A. 2011**), advertising creates an emotional link between the consumers and the product. They associate the product with certain emotions that later forms their intention to purchase the product. If advertising is attractive, it creates a lasting impression in the minds of the consumers and they form a positive attitude towards the product, (**Anjana, S. 2018**).

Packaging of a product has direct impact on consumer's mind, (**Deng, X. 2009**). The better the packaging the more likely it is that consumers will be attracted towards a product. Specially during unplanned purchases, the customers are largely attracted towards the product due to their attractive colouring, labelling and general outlook, (**Rahimniya, et al. 2012**). Our research will also examine the changes in packaging of the soaps in question over the years and how it has impacted the consumer's buying behaviour towards them. Quality of a product is an important tool for creating competitive advantage in the market, (**Zeeshan. 2013**). Continuous improvements in the quality of the product increases consumer satisfaction and hence (**Tariq. Et al. 2013**) argues that it should keep on improving over the period of time to ensure consumer loyalty towards the product.

(**Aisyah, M. 2017**) in her paper Consumers Demand on Halal Cosmetics in Indonesia states

that attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and intention directly effects the consumers' decision to purchase a personal care and beauty product. The paper later explains how availability of the right resources such as money, time and accessibility to purchase these halal beauty products greatly form the intention and perceived behavioural control which in turn results in the actual purchase.

### **Theory of Reasoned Action- attitude and subjective norm:**

To explain the motivation of a consumer for buying the beauty soaps it is essential to incorporate the basic Theory of Reasoned Action given by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1967. The theory in a nutshell explains the relationship between people's attitudes and behaviours towards their actions. It is a model that predicts how individuals will behave based on their pre-existing attitudes and behavioural intentions. An individual's decision to engage in a behaviour is determined by their perception of the outcome that they expect from the said behaviour.

These behavioural intentions have two components namely attitude and subjective norm. Attitude of a person towards a behaviour is formed by two components; whether the outcome is even probable and whether it is a positive one. Therefore, attitudes can be either positive, negative or neutral and there is a direct correlation between attitudes and outcomes. For example, if the person perceives the outcome to be positive then the attitude towards the behaviour that will lead to their positive outcome will be positive as well. Subjective norms are again one of the key determinants of behavioural intentions along with attitudes. It is stated by the theory that attitude alone cannot determine a person's intention of perform the behaviour and subjective norm plays a great deal of role. It is the influence of the perception of relevant groups on the decision-making individual. The opinion of friends, family, peers

and social groups greatly influence a person's intentions to perform a certain behaviour.

Since subjective norm is one of the driving factors for buying a beauty product, it is very similar to the behaviour to consumers towards purchasing a beauty soap as well. Perceived social pressure drives the consumers to act in a certain way consciously asking themselves the question: do they want me to do that? This validation from the peers and the social circle a person has brings the consumers to buy and then use a particular product and then talk about it amongst the people. (Ham, M., Jeger, M., Ivkovic, F. 2015)

However, (Kyung, S. 2012) in his research determined that subjective norm had very little to no impact on consumer's intention of buying the product in fact, it was rather consumer innovativeness and attitude that were the major predictors of peoples' intention to buy and use the product. The study further elaborated that referent's opinion did not matter to the consumers at all and they trusted their own intuition and convictions when purchasing the skin care products.

Regarding attitude, (Kyung, S. 2012) concluded that the more positive consumer's attitude towards cosmetic and skin care product the more positive was their intention to purchase the product. Hence, he proved the attitude component of the theory of reasoned action through his research to be valid. In another study, (Ghazali, E., Soon, P., Mutum, D., et.al. 2017) concluded that the repurchase decision for buying any skin care product was more dependant on the consumer's attitude towards that brand rather than subjective norm. A positive outcome of using the product formed a positive attitude of consumer and impacted their intention to repurchase the product. Our study as well will examine the reasons behind consumers' intention to repurchase a particular brand of beauty soap and determine the reason for this consumer loyalty.

### **Perception and consumer behaviour:**

Perception is how an individual selects, organizes and interprets stimuli into a meaningful picture of the world. These stimuli can be product, packaging, brand names, advertisement, and commercials. (Lakshmi, P., Babu, S. 2019). Marketers study perception to determine consumer buying behaviour. Brand awareness holds an important place in forming consumer perception and these brand names provide an expression of familiarity specially when buying a low involvement product such as a beauty soap states.

Perception is generally influenced by individual's beliefs, moods, emotions, attitudes, and experiences. Other factors that also affect perception are the size, colour, and content of the stimulus. (Lakshmi, P., Babu, S. 2019). When customers see advertisement, social media activations, promotions, reviews and feedback they form opinions about the product and marketers use this perception of the consumers to sell their products. Family, culture and peers are also an integral part in forming perceptions of the consumers.

Everyday women are exposed to multiple stimuli, most of which they ignore because of clutter. They subconsciously exercise a great deal of selection as to which aspect of the environment they perceive. This is called perceptual selection as described by (Schiffman, L., Kanuk, L., et.al. 2016). The stimulus that gets selected depends on two factors: the consumers' experience and their need at the time that motivates them to notice certain stimulus and ignore others. (Schiffman, L., Kanuk, L., et.al. 2016). Companies use this information and decide their advertising strategy as such that it directly impacts consumer buying behaviour.

### **Methodology:**

Gauging consumer behaviour for any product is difficult to quantify as it is a descriptive phenomenon and is different for each consumer. Understanding consumer behaviour means to analyse the relationship between

emotions, consumers purchase intent, acceptability and how the consumers react to product and its innovations. Psychological traits like perception, attitude, personality, motivation, and beliefs are all important to understand why a consumer buys any product. It signifies the thought process of the consumer and is best studied using techniques that provide in depth knowledge into consumers' mind such as laddering interviews. Individual analyses of each consumer can then help forming mind maps that give insights about their true intentions. Details are then analysed in the light of consumer behaviour theories and hence qualitative research is ideal for this kind of study.

Two methods of data collection will be used for this study namely Laddering interviews and Focus group discussions. Both the techniques will aim at finding out the deep-rooted real intentions of the consumers for buying the beauty soap. Reasons that consumers do not consciously realise themselves but exist in their subconscious and form basis of their purchase intentions.

**Table 1 Laddering interview participants**

Laddering Interviews	Participants	Percentages
Lux	20	40
Capri	17	34
Dove	13	26
Total	50	100

(Source: Author's own depiction)

Laddering is a technique that was first developed by clinical psychologists in 1960's to uncover people's core beliefs and values. The method, however simple, is a systematic approach to finding out a person's core constructs about how they view the world. Laddering is well established and highly used in the field of psychology and its success led other industries to adapt it for their use as well. (Hawley, M. 2009).

Laddering is a method of interviewing that is helpful in finding out goals and underlying values which is very useful in early stages of

The study takes a qualitative approach because qualitative methods are useful in discovering and understanding the emotions and meanings people attach to phenomenon they experience. Phenomenon that impacts their buying behaviours is best understood by deeply evaluating their motivation and perceptions which can be best discovered using laddering interviews. Constant comparative method is used to analyse the data collected and give meaning to the study. Two different methods of data collection for this research are discussed below in detail.

### **Methods of data collection- Laddering interviews:**

First method of data collection used for this research was laddering interviews. 50 laddering interviews were conducted out of which 96% gave hefty insights into the consumer's buying behaviour for the beauty soaps under study. Out of 50 laddering interviews, 17 consumers were users of Capri beauty soap, 20 consumers used Lux and 13 consumers used Dove beauty soap bar.

user experience research. Market researchers have specially adapted this technique to gain insights for consumer markets and organizational research. However, the early marketers who adapted this technique also formed a new Means End Chain Theory which links consumer values to their overall purchasing behaviour. This theory provides a framework for assessing qualitative laddering consumer data and link it with their core values and behaviours. (Gurbert, T.).

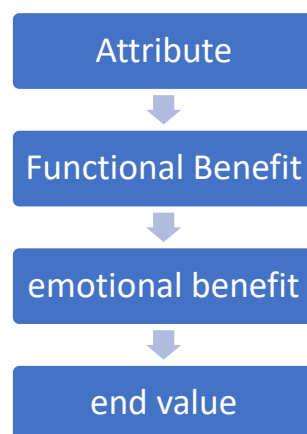
### **Means end chain theory:**

According to the Means end chain theory there is a hierarchy of consumer perception to product knowledge with components such as attributes (A), consequences (C), and personal values (V). Attributes are at the top level of this hierarchy which are easily recognizable by the individuals as the most likable attributes of the products. An example for this is “I like Lux because it has a long-lasting fragrance.” Fragrance here is an attribute that was easily recognised by the consumer, the most obvious reason why she uses the beauty soap Lux. In turn, these attributes have consequences for the individuals such as the fragrance being long

lasting makes her feel fresh and active. Finally, each consequence is linked to a core value of the person’s life, such as a feeling fresh throughout the day makes her feel attractive, gives her confidence and she can deal better in social gatherings with people. This A-C-V sequence forms a chain or a ladder that indicates a relationship between product attribute and the core values. (Hawley, M. 2009).

Below is an illustration of the means end chain theory:

Figure 1 Means End Chain Theory



(Source: Author’s own depiction)

For one product multiple ladders can form for an individual and collecting these ladders together gives us a hierarchical value map which is a representation of all the end values achieved by the individual by using one product. These hierarchical value maps can contain many attributes of the product that link to a smaller set of consequences that project on to further limited set of end values. Hierarchical value maps constructed after the information received from the consumers interviewed for this research are demonstrated later in the paper.

When an individual is asked about why they purchased a product they will respond by stating simple attributes of the product. Laddering interviews help the researcher dig deeper and then inquire about the impact of

these attributes stated by the consumer. The consequences reveal more personal aspects of the relationship the consumer has with using that product and asking WHY helps the researcher go deeper to know the emotional values attached to the product usage. Asking the question WHY is the most crucial for uncovering the core values. Sometimes the participants are not able to clearly enunciate the values, but it is the researcher’s responsibility to engage them and best read between their words and then connect their consequences ladder to the end values.

**Methods of Data collection\_ focus group discussion:**



The second approach used for data collection for this research is focus group discussion. 20 focus group discussions with 10 participants each were conducted to gain insights about different components of consumer buying behaviour for beauty soaps in Pakistan. The

participants were a mix of Capri, Lux and Dove beauty soap users in each FGD conducted. Overall, in focus group discussions there were 50 users of Dove soap, 80 users of Lux and 70 users of Capri beauty soap.

**Table 2 Laddering Interview Participants**

Focus Group (20x10)	participants	percentages
Lux	80	40
Capri	70	35
Dove	50	25
Total	200	100

(source: author's own depiction)

Focus group discussion is a qualitative technique of data collection which is used in conversation research where the researcher assembles a group of individuals to discuss a specific topic aiming to draw from their complex personal attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and experiences through a moderated interaction. (Mukharjee, N. 2018).

In FGD the researcher adapts the role of a moderator and facilitates discussion between participants and does not actively participate in the discussion rather just observe and collect the data generated. It is essential that ethical guidance is sought from the participants before starting the FGD and a set of questions are designed prior to it as well so that the discussion does not deviate from the topic unnecessarily. It is also important that the group members are homogenous in characteristics so that they can discuss the questions well and can relate to each other, mixed gender FGDs tend to give the best results however, since this is a research based on female consumers hence the FGDs and all participants are females. There are a few steps to conducting a successful FGD:

1. Recruit the right participants. Members need to have sufficient knowledge of the topic to participate well in the discussion and add value and provide quality data.
2. Choose a moderator. The researcher can themselves be the moderator. The moderator

must understand the topic and should not deviate from the objective of the research. The moderator should also remain impartial and regulate those group members who are dominant.

3. Keep a record of the meeting for future purposes
4. Write clear discussion guidelines
5. Conduct the session and generate a report It is a common practice in the initial stages of research to conduct focus group discussions as they help form basis for deeper research and gives an initial idea of the end results and provide hefty material for the analysis of data for the research.

### **Sampling Frame:**

There are millions of users of these three soaps in Pakistan alone, however not all of these users classify to become the sampling frame. For a consumer behaviour study that focuses on finding out the end values a consumer has for using beauty soaps it was essential that only those women were selected for the study who are loyal users of each beauty soap. Women who only use one soap brand and have been doing so for a couple of years so that they can clearly define the motivation and perception for the beauty soap brand they use. Hence only those women were approached and shortlisted

who are loyal users of Lux, Dove, and Capri respectively and have been using the soap for at least 5 years and are based in Karachi. The age range selected for each beauty soap was also in line with the brands' target market description and consumer profile that is 18 to 35 years old women.

Hence the sampling frame is:

- Loyal users of each beauty soap
- Been using that particular beauty soap for at least 5 years
- Based in Karachi
- Women between ages 18-35 years

### Target consumer profile:

After consolidating the three consumer profiles of the beauty soaps under research for this study, the target consumer profile of beauty soap users in Pakistan that were selected to participate in this research is as follows:

- Women aged between 20 to 35 years
- All the women interviewed were of the age bracket above 18 years of age because they could buy their personal beauty items themselves. Younger girls tend to rely on their parents, especially mothers to buy the skin care and hygiene products for them so they could not contribute towards the data needed for this research.

**Table 3 Family system of participants**

Family system	Participants	Percentages
Joint family	220	88
Nuclear family	30	12
total	250	100

(source: author's own depiction)

**Table 4 Marital status of participants**

Marital status	participants	percentages
Married women	190	76
Unmarried women	60	24
total	250	100

(Source: Author's own depiction)

- The women selected were a mix of career oriented and home makers who run the household budget and shop for their basic skin care needs themselves.

- The socioeconomic class of the target population was middle and upper middle-class women with a monthly income of PKR150,000 and above.

- Education of the women selected was ongoing undergraduate level, graduate and masters.

- The common personality traits of the women selected were:

- Social and friendly
- Conscious about their skin care
- Conscious about the brands they use
- Avid users of social media platforms.

### Sample size:

A sample of 250 women were selected for this research in Karachi based on the sampling frame and consumer profile needed for this study. 50 laddering interviews were conducted and 20 focus group discussions with 10 participants each were held online to gather the sufficient data required for the study. 30 participants lived in nuclear families while 220 lived in extended (joint) family system. Out of 250 participants 190 women were married and 60 were unmarried.

**Motivation:**

Consumer motivation is a phenomenon that is very difficult to quantify hence in-depth qualitative research was undertaken to understand and discover true motivation of the consumers behind their buying behaviour for beauty soaps. Laddering interviews were conducted for the three beauty soaps being

researched upon and clear end values were received at the end of the process. Consumers listed a set of attributes that were common for all three soaps that led to varying consequences which in turn gave similar end values. The table below shows the attributes leading to consequences that are driven by end values common for all three beauty soaps:

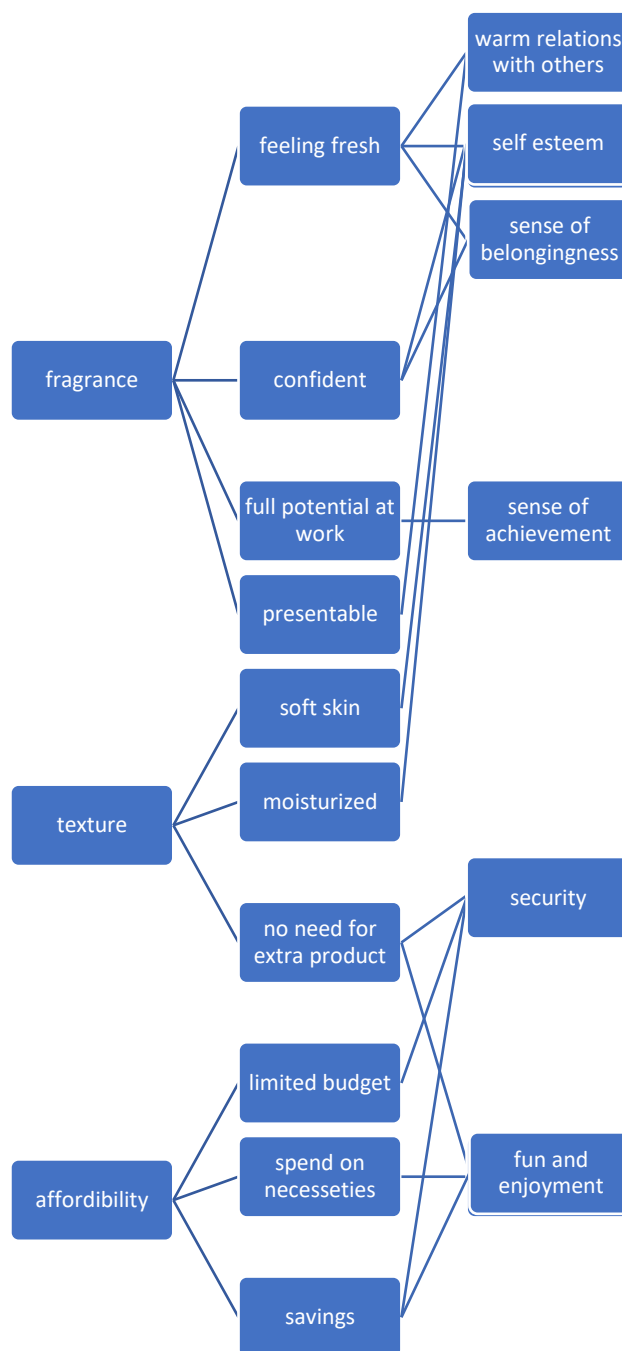
Table 5 Attributes Leading to End Values

Attributes	Consequences	End values
Fragrance	Feeling fresh all day Feel confident. Presentable Full potential at work	Warm relations with others Self- esteem Sense of achievement Sense of belongingness
Texture	Soft skin Moisturised No need for extra products	Self esteem Security Fun and enjoyment
Price	Limited budget Able to spend on necessities savings	Fun and enjoyment Security

A theme emerged after conduction all the laddering interviews that helped in forming a hierarchical value map for each soap which was later consolidated to form one single

hierarchical value map showing the end values being derived from each attribute since their results were largely similar. The consolidated hierarchical value map is shown below:

Figure 2 Hierarchical Value Map



(Source: Author's own depiction)

The focus group discussions held for motivational factors impacting buying behaviour of beauty soaps for consumers also revealed that the three main attributes for purchasing beauty soaps were indeed

- Fragrance
- Texture

- price point.

Mixed response was received from each interview participants who chose all three or a blend of different attributes for using the beauty soaps. The table below shows the frequency of each attribute as a reason for purchasing the beauty soap.

**Table 6 Frequency of Attributes as a reason for using beauty soaps**

Attributes as a reason for using beauty soaps		
	Frequency	Percentages
<b>Fragrance</b>	50	100
<b>Texture</b>	40	80
<b>Price</b>	32	64
Total number of respondents	50	-

(Source: Author's own depiction)

An additional factor for purchasing the brand was its availability however, this was not a common and recurring factor which was also confirmed by the laddering interviews hence was not included in the hierarchical value map. Hence The final resultant six end values discovered that are responsible for consumers' latent purchase intentions are listed below:

1. Sense of belongingness
2. Sense of achievement
3. Sense of security
4. Warm relations with others
5. Fun and enjoyment
6. Self esteem

The frequency of each end value received is presented below in tabular form:

**Table 7 Frequency of End Values**

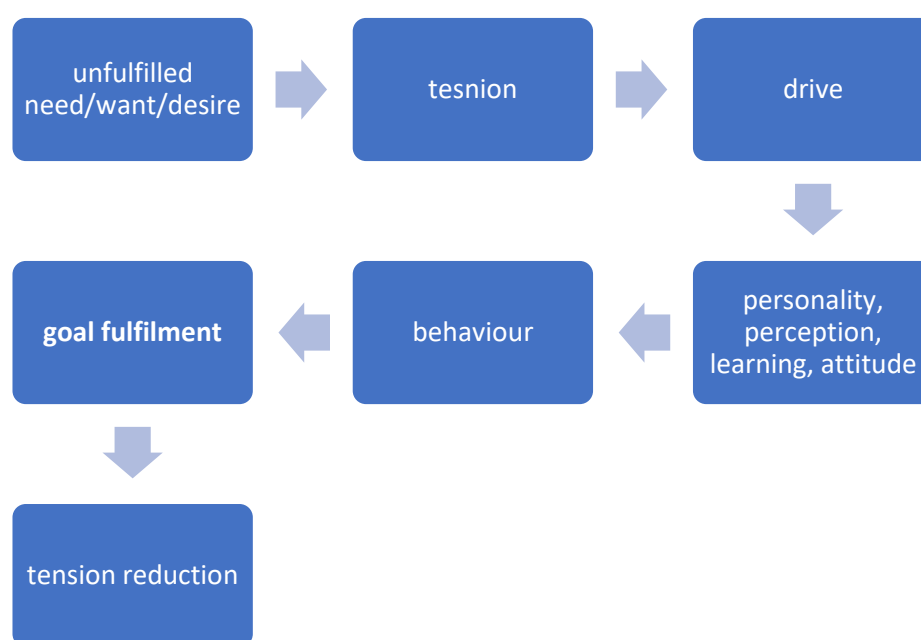
End values as received in Laddering interviews		
	frequency	percentage
<b>Sense of belongingness</b>	45	90
<b>Warm relations with others</b>	25	50
<b>Self esteem</b>	50	100
<b>Security</b>	42	84
<b>Sense of achievement</b>	25	50
<b>Fun and enjoyment</b>	18	36
Total number of respondents	50	100

(Source: Author's own depiction)

Goals or end values as termed in this paper, are the sought-after results of motivated behaviour. The model of motivation shown below that all behaviour is goal directed and consumers see these goals to fulfil their basic needs and reduce

the tension that arises from unfulfilled needs and desires. Today's marketers are interested in finding out these product specific goals that consumers select to fulfil their needs and tap on these to sell their products.

Figure 3 Model of Motivation



(Source: Dugree, J. 1996)

Goals can be positive or negative. (Shiffman, L., et al. 2016) a positive goal, also known as approach object, is when the behaviour is directed towards it and a negative goal also known as avoidance object, is when the behaviour is directed away from it. The marketers use these to establish the unique selling point for their beauty soaps, for example Lux sells on the proposition of soft smooth skin. This is a positive goal while an example of negative goal would be that of product Clean and Clear conveying to their consumers that if you don't want acne prone skin, use our product. The end values discovered in this study are a mix of positive and negative goals. To fulfil these goals, people can have rational motives as well as emotional motives however, the findings of this study suggest that people buy beauty soaps because of emotional motives more than for rational motives. This is elaborated with each of the six end values discussed below.

#### End Values Explained:

The need to belong is a human emotion to be affiliated with, belong to, and be accepted by a

particular group, be a member of any clubs, relate with the co-workers and peers in other social gatherings. People having a **sense of belongingness** have intrinsic motivation towards self-presentation and social comparison. According to social psychology, people are always comparing themselves to others in their community to become socially acceptable and then present themselves accordingly in particular manner to be socially presentable and gain greater acceptance.

It is our need to belong that drives us to maintain long lasting healthy relationships as well. In **Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs** pyramid, **sense of belongingness** comes right in the centre as a **social need**. While in the **trio of needs**, the **sense of belongingness** is directly linked to the **need for affiliation** which suggests that people's behaviour is strongly influenced by the desire for friendship, for belonging and for acceptance.

It was found during the research that one of the most common reasons affecting consumer buying behaviour for beauty soaps is their sense of belongingness. 90% of the women admitted

that they use the beauty soap because its features help them to have a better relationship with people around them. They look presentable and it makes the people around them happy to be with them. Examining the field notes it was found that one of the Participants noted:

“I like Capri because it smells nice and has a long-lasting fragrance. This helps me to stay fresh the whole day and when my husband comes back home after his work, he loves to see me fresh and spend time with me. He enjoys the fact that I am always presentable for him and compliments me for the same that I smell great, and it uplifts his mood after a tiring day...”

Another participant said about Dove:

“Dove has a great texture. It gives me soft smooth hands and I love how they feel afterwards. My skin can breathe better. My friends at college always tell me how they love the feel of my hands and their softness. They have asked me for recommendations for themselves too. It's been many years now and Dove is my favourite because people are always complimenting me for my soft hands and skin.”

Keeping **warm relations with others** simple means that the person wants to have a healthy relationship and give their best to their committed relationships. It is different from sense of belonging because in the latter, there is a need to belong and be associated with a group

and seek approval from people. However, in the need to have warm relationship with others the person wants to live in a harmonious environment with their loved ones and seek support and warmth in relationships rather than approval.

The need for **warm relationship with other** also falls under the **social need in Maslow's hierarchy** and is an intrinsic motivation and similarly in the **trio of needs** it falls under the category of **need for affiliation**. This goal or end value was also well received in the laddering interviews.

50% participants indicated their desire to have warm relationships in their personal life. One of the participants said that:

“Since Capri has such a refreshing tone to it, it makes me super fresh and lifts my mood. In summers when Karachi is like an oven Capri's scent is long lasting and I stay fresh throughout the day... this way I am able to give my full to my children and stay positive in the house as well with others... when I am happy, everyone around me also feels happy.”

46% women also noticed that since they feel refreshed after using the beauty soap their potential for being socially active and their general mood improves. This helps them behave better with their children and their husbands and family which in turn puts others at ease around them. 10% of single girls said that when they are in their comfort zone and feeling good about themselves after using the beauty soap bar, they deal better with their friends at work and in college and have cordial relations with them. It not only improves their day but also cheers their friends and colleagues up.

One of the participants noticed that:

“My brother is always picking on me and it drives me crazy. I have noticed it that every time when I am back from my university, I have a fight with my brother because he says one thing or another but as soon as I freshen up I instantly feel better and his antics annoy me less. I enjoy with him instead and it just generally lifts both our moods.”

**Self-esteem** was the most common of all the end values retrieved during the research. 100% participants said that by using the beauty soap they gain better skin and either feel presentable, refreshed, confident, can give their full potential at work, or have soft, and moisturized skin all of which boost their self-esteem. It is of prime importance to the women to have a greater self-esteem to feel content with themselves and have a better life.

**Self-esteem** is at fourth position in **Maslow's hierarchy of needs**, and it represents the need to have self-worth, acceptance, respect and be recognized for one's accomplishment. While in the **trio of needs** self-esteem falls under the **need for power** which states that an individual desires to control his environment and influence others which is linked to a boost in the person's ego and hence increase his self-esteem.

Women who see the beauty soap as means to fulfilling this goal to have greater self-esteem engage in purchasing the soap regularly. 100% participants used the word 'confident' when describing how the use of beauty soap made them feel. Fragrance was the most noted attribute that led to feeling confident with moisturized skin and looking presentable coming in second. 100% women buy the beauty soap for its fragrance as their top attribute and 98% said that it leads them to feel confident and in turn gives them greater self-esteem. 88% of the women also noted that along with fragrance

the texture of the beauty soap also makes them feel confident by giving them soft moisturized skin. Below is a tabular representation of the attributes and their frequency leading to the end value self-esteem through confidence consequently.

**Table 8 confidence as an attribute leading to Self Esteem**

<b>Confidence</b> as a consequence of the attributes of beauty soaps leading to <b>Self esteem</b>		
Attributes	Percentages	Self esteem
Fragrance	98%	
Texture	88%	

(source: Author's own depiction)

Talking about self esteem one of the participant's noted that:

“I like Capri because of its fragrance. It is very long lasting, and I am smelling great throughout the day... it is important for me because I feel confident while I go about my business at work. I never have to worry about my body odour, and it gives me greater comfort. As a result, I am able to give my full at work and then receive appreciation from my peers and boss for my work well done.”

The **sense of achievement** in social psychology refers to the feeling of being fulfilled to the point that you are able to realise your true place in the society. It is the ability to take on non-standard difficult tasks and completing them on your own without any external help. It is also the ability to think beyond oneself and eliminate the I from the personality and thinking about the bigger picture and greater good. In **Maslow's hierarchy** this end value fits in to the topmost level of the pyramid being



represented by **self-actualization** and coincides with the **need for achievement** in the **trio of needs**.

While talking about sense of achievement 58% of the participants revealed that they are able to focus of their work better if they feel fresh and do not need to worry about self-maintenance during the day. One of the participants revealed that:

“my work focus has improved greatly because I am able to concentrate on things that actually matter rather than worrying about my personal hygiene at work. It gets very annoying for me if I have the issue of body odour during the day and I am unable to focus on anything else... using Lux helps me in this regard.”

Many others like her also felt that they feel their concentration is improved and they feel empowered with all they can achieve as a result of this.

For this research the need for **security** stemmed from the attribute price and affordability of the beauty soaps. It is the basic need for financial security that drives consumers to take decisions to engage in certain buying behaviour and beauty soaps is one such products. 42% women quoted that price of the beauty soap was a factor that impacted their buying behaviour towards the soap. When inquired how does price effect their decision, they elaborated that being in a fixed budget is essential and their main goal is to accumulate savings for the family for future needs.

Having savings in their bank accounts caused emotional arousal for the customers and gave them a sense of security that in cases of any emergency needs or for their kids' education they have enough funds available. 5% of the participants also pointed out that they fear about their health and having suffered from family

trauma in the past of losing parents at young age they fear the same for their kids hence saving money is essential to them.

**Security** as an end value is represented by **Maslow's hierarchy of needs** as the second step in the pyramid. While in the **trio of needs**, security falls under the **need for power**.

The research participants were particular to mention how saving money is essential for them. One of the participants said that:

“I am big on affordable items. When I can get a good quality product in low prices then why should I go for soaps that cost more and offer the same quality? Why not I save this money today for a rainy day... my father passed away when I was in college, and we struggled a great deal financially after his demise because there were no savings. I would never want to put my kids or my family in that position ever again.”

Another participant noted that:

“I love Dove for the fact that I do not need to spend extra on additional creams to moisturize my skin afterwards... that helps me save for my future plans as I want to apply for my master's degree from abroad and I require savings for it...”

The final end value received from the ladders formed after the interviews was **fun and enjoyment**. This end value or consumer goal for buying beauty soaps was the least popular among the consumers however enough participants, that is 18% women indicated their desire to save so they can spend on leisure such

as travelling. This end value also stemmed from the attribute affordability of the beauty soap. The general idea behind this goal was that the consumers sought to buy the beauty soaps that are reasonably priced so they can save and this in turn enabled them to utilise their savings for travelling, dining out with family and friends and spend on other leisure activities.

The end value **fun and enjoyment** fall under the category of **self-actualization** which encompasses exploration and play once the other more basic needs are fulfilled. In the **trio of needs** this end value is represented by the **need for achievement**. The participants who expressed their desire for this need were clear on the fact that they value quality of life over constant contingency planning unlike the people who desired security. Their main goal behind saving was to make better life choices eventually. One of the participants said that:

“I choose Lux because it offers me the opportunity to stay in my budget and save for things that matter to me greater than a beauty soap... I would prefer to spend on a new phone every time they release a better version. I love having the latest version of my phone because it helps me feel proud among my friends when I socialise...”

Another one noted that:

“my husband and I, we spend very wisely on things throughout the year so that we can then take that yearly vacation we always plan for. It really depends on our ability to save whether we will be going abroad for vacations or take one locally, but it is very important for us... Capri is

my choice of soap because it is budget friendly, and I do not want to splurge on a beauty soap at least that is an essential item and is used in large quantity every month.”

Every participant who indicated towards this goal focused on the price point of the beauty soap they use. Hence the attribute of affordable beauty soap led to the end value fun and enjoyment which influences the consumer's decision to buy the beauty soap.

These six end values combined impact the consumer buying behaviour by causing emotional and cognitive arousal together. The consumers go into a state of tension due to an unfulfilled need and this tension drives them to engage in buying the beauty soap of the brand of their preference and hence results in tension reduction. But motivation is not the only factor impacting consumer behaviour. We now examine the impact consumer's perception have on their buying behaviour towards beauty soap in Karachi.

### **Perception:**

It is an established fact by research done on consumer perception that consumers act and react based on their perception and not on the objective reality. Based on their values, personal experiences, needs, and wants reality becomes a very personal phenomenon for everyone hence for the marketer, consumers' perception of their product becomes much more important than the objective reality of the product. For it is the consumers' thought process that impacts their buying behaviour greatly more than other external facts about the products. For beauty soap market majority of the soaps give a general impression of glamorous personality, soft, moisturized skin, feminine looks, confidence, and success all because of using the beauty soap. Only Dove is the beauty soap brand that sets itself apart by eliminating the glamorous factor and uses real

women with their natural skin colours and flaws and gives the message that every woman is beautiful. Meanwhile Lux and Capri both use fair skinned, delicate, selective body type, petite models, and actresses to promote their soap and create an image in the minds of consumers. The main stimulus for consumers of beauty soaps according to all participants include product packaging, brand name, and advertisement which helps them differentiate the brand from its competitors.

### **Perceived Product Quality:**

The perception of people regarding the beauty soap they use is positive and meets their perceived product expectations of quality, consistent performance, and maximum utility. All the participants were asked how they feel about the brand of soap they use and how does the usage of brand make them feel. Their answers reinforced that indeed their perception of the brand is positive.

One of the participants of the focus group quoted:

“Capri delivers its promise of soft glowing skin. I do feel confident about the fact that I never smell bad after using Capri it helps me in my day-to-day routine.”

While another one from a different focus group discussion noted that:

“Lux is a good quality soap in reasonable prices that is why I use it. Plus, it is a big brand name, so whenever guests come over at my place and use my bathroom, I’m comfortable with the fact that they know I use good quality brands for skin care.”

100% of the consumers of Dove who were a part of this research use Dove because they like

the texture of the soap and how it leaves their skin feeling soft and supple compared to any other soap they have ever used. They stated that they have been using the soap for my years and the quality hasn’t changed over time. Their satisfaction with the beauty soap remains the same and even with newer variants introduced overtime and the imported variants too keep the standard of quality the same.

Consumers use intrinsic cues such as fragrance, texture, size, and product life as well as extrinsic cues such as product packaging to form perception about quality. Perceived product quality is the reason why consumers stay loyal to the brand over the years and continue to buy the same brand of soap and are less likely to make a switch easily.

### **Perceptual Interpretation:**

Stimuli are generally highly ambiguous, and people often perceive them how they wish to fulfil their personal needs, wishes, and interests. Individuals often carry biased pictures in their minds about various stimuli that we term as stereotypes. (Schiffman, L. et al. 2016) To form perceptions around beauty soap brands, marketers use these stereotypes about physical appearance, descriptive terms and first impressions to sell their product.

People often tend to associate attributes and qualities about the product to the people who represent them onscreen whether they do this consciously and hence marketers take great care into selecting the models who represent their brand. The beauty soaps being marketed in Pakistan showcase successful models such as Mawra Hussain, Mehvish Hayat, Saba Qamar, Mahira Khan and Ayesha Omer to convey the message of the brand. Using these models, they establish a certain image of the product in the minds of their consumers that tells them that if they will use the product being promoted by these women, they will also gain the attributes these women have. These models are selected on a very strict criteria that defines a particular body type that is culturally appropriate as well.

The models are petite and smart, fair skinned, have beautiful, long, healthy hair, highly successful in their careers, and have a great deal of confidence in their personalities.

Over the years the portrayal of beauty has shifted from attaining fair skin to gaining confidence in the skin you are in by nourishing it and having it glow. Consumers of these beauty soaps highlighted these attributes very clearly in this research. Their idea was that the usage of soap gives them healthy looking skin which gives them confidence to carry themselves and refines their personalities. All participants recognized that the message of the brand was that healthier looking skin gives women the confidence they need in their lives while 88% stated in one way or another stated that they gained more confidence by having healthier skins which was a result of their skin care routine that involved the use of beauty soaps.

All participants recognised the general stereotype about physical appearance that healthy skin is key to confidence these beauty soap brands now portray. Hence the marketers have done a fine job in establishing this stereotype about physical appearance that relates solely to giving confidence to their users. While another technique they use to form perceptions around the brand is describe the ingredients used in the soap. The deliberate use of technical jargon impresses the audience and gives them an understanding that the ingredients used are vital for good skin care. Words used like natural aloe extracts, almond and honey minerals, ¼ moisturizing cream, and seven beauty ingredients impact the consumer thought process and builds a positive image of the brand. 10% of the participants were keen to point out about the ingredients of the soap when talking about its texture.

Participants noted the same:

“...The texture of dove is the best part. I think it has to do with the ingredients

used in the soap as it is made of moisturizing cream which really helps my eczema.”

“I only use capri because I researched about the ingredients used in this soap and all the other ones too. Capri is the only soap that uses mild ingredients and I know because I am a pharmacist. All other soaps use very harsh chemicals that can damage the skin in long run. So capri is my only choice.”

Other participants alike also talked about how the ingredients of the soap are beneficial for them based on their limited research. Marketers use these descriptive terms to create perception and the study proves that this indeed affects their buying behaviour towards the soap.

### **Product Positioning using Contemporary Image:**

Product positioning is the essence of successful marketing because it is the image the product has in consumer's mind. If the marketer is successful in creating the image of the product, they want the consumers to believe and couple it with a decent quality product with an integrated blend of marketing mix, the product is bound to be a success.

Women have become acceptable of the fact that fair skin is not the beauty standard and marriage is not the goal that used to be some 20 years ago in the subcontinent. Healthy, glowing skin, a confident persona, career aspirations and a strong personality that makes an impact is what they wish to achieve now. This is the result of educational awareness as well as the cultural adaption by generation Millennials and onwards. Marketers are aware of this fact and hence over the past years they have also worked tirelessly to enhance their positioning in the

minds of the consumers and adapt to this image that consumers now want to see.

The marketers have tried to adapt to the modern-day women who are now the decision makers, and each brand showcases this very image in every ad they air. After scrutinising different advertisements of Lux, Capri and Dove soap it can be deduced that the image they want to establish of the brand in consumers' mind is that of a strong, successful, independent woman who is confident, career oriented, boss lady, someone who cares for her public image and takes good care of her skin all the while being feminine. This woman aspires to be beautiful and feel confident in her own skin, she loves to go out and socialise, have an equally aspiring life partner, and seek romance in life.

Participants in this research were asked to describe the brand of soap they use if it were to be a person in front of them. In marketing terminology, they were asked about the persona of the product and 100% participants unanimously agreed to a particular description of the persona of beauty soaps they use. The image perceived by the consumers is very similar to what is portrayed on Tv. The major similarities in all answers were that- if beauty soap was to be an actual person, she would be a woman around 25 to 30 years old, who is strong, confident, glamorous, and stylish. She loves to take care of her skin and is highly brand conscious. Since the woman is independent, she aspires to have a career of her own and a man by her side for companionship. Participants pointed out the trait confidence the most that stemmed from the desire to be self-sufficient, having greater self-esteem and have warm relations with other as discussed earlier.

Therefore, marketers of beauty soaps in Pakistan take great interest in developing the brand values around latent consumer motivations behind using their product. they keep the product positioning in accordance with the perceptual interpretations of the brand by the consumers and use contemporary image to relate to them better so that they can build long

term customer loyalty with their beauty soap brands.

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