A STUDY OF THE FACTORS IMPACTING WOMEN'S PURCHASES OF ANTI-AGING

SKINCARE PRODUCTS

by

T0LESLIE BAILEY

(Under the direction of Jan M. Hathcote)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to discover if information sources, product attributes, and shopping orientation influence which cosmetic and skincare brand is favored by a consumer. Women who were thirty-five years or older were asked to participate in the online questionnaire. A multiple regression analysis was conducted and indicated that all three independent variables influence brand attitude. Shopping orientation had the most influence with *Reputation* being the most significant factor. This means women tend to buy products from the brands they believe are the highest quality and are therefore more credible. Many women also decide to purchase an anti-aging skincare product during a consultation at a cosmetics counter after the salesperson explains the benefits of using the product. With the high percentage of women receiving consultations at the department store, it is no surprise women choose to buy the luxury brands. The more expensive products are perceived to be better quality and also tend to have the more attractive containers which women are pleased to display on their bathroom counters. Limitations and implications of the study are discussed.

INDEX WORDS: Cosmetics, Skincare, Anti-Aging, Marketing, Merchandising, Information
Sources, Product Attributes, Shopping Orientation, Brand Attitude, Purchase Intention

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B.A., Rhodes College, 2009

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2011

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August 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Wanting to look young is nothing new. As Epstein (2010) wrote, "The quest to regain one's lost youth is an ancient human obsession, most famously embodied in the sixteenth-century Spanish adventurers who searched the Americas for a rumored fountain of youth" (p. 119). Even the ancient Egyptians covered their faces in plant products, mud, milk, and kohl to prevent their skin from aging (Wilson, 2008). Products and tips for looking younger continued to appear in the late eighteenth century (Epstein, 2010, p. 119). In today's world, women still want a flawless, youthful face, and they have no problem making it happen with all of the latest discoveries in cosmetics.

Women in the media are proving that it is possible to be fit and sexy over the age of forty which puts pressure on other women to look good. Just look at Demi Moore and Mariah Carey who not only look great, but are married to men more than a decade younger than them as well! If that's not enough, think about Tosca Reno, author of *The Eat-Clean Diet* and *Your Best Body Now,* who didn't find happiness and confidence until the age of forty-two, and at the age of forty-nine became so confident that she entered the Miss Bikini America competition in Las Vegas! (Reno, 2010) Charla Krupp wrote in her book titled *How Not to Look Old: Fast and Effortless Ways to Look 10 Years Younger, 10 Pounds Lighter, and 10 Times Better* (2008) that women have to look young in order to keep their jobs and have a sense of self-confidence.

The point is that women over the age of forty are feeling great, and they want to reflect it in their physical appearance. These women know how to eat right and stay in shape. They sadly

have watched their parents decline in mental and physical health, and they do not want to go through the same process. The majority of the women included in this group are from the Baby Boomer generation. There are about thirteen million women in the United States between the ages of forty-five and fifty-four (Nelson, 1994). In general, they have higher disposable incomes than other age groups and have the time to indulge themselves since their children are grown and out of the house (Ellwood & Shekar, 2008).

Cosmetic and skincare companies make a fortune off of women over the age of forty, especially with anti-aging moisturizers, serums, and eye creams that comprise the "fastest growing sector of the cosmetics industry" (Epstein, 2010, p. 119). Women spend an estimated $470 million a year on these products, often purchasing several products at once since it is not uncommon to use different products in the morning and before bed (Krupp, 2008). Many women have yet another set for traveling and sometimes even a fourth set for the gym (Nelson, 1994). Even during a recession, the cosmetic and skincare companies thrive since women are not willing to cut spending when it comes to their beauty.

Anti-aging skincare products are commonly owned by older women since they promise to get rid of forehead lines, crow's feet, lip lines, smile lines, sagging skin, age spots, and dry skin that give-a-way a woman's true age (Krupp, 2008). With the wide variety of price points available, it is also easy for most women to fit them into their budget. Convenience is not an issue either since anti-aging products are available at multiple locations such as grocery stores, drugstores, department stores, online, etc. Since results are usually not immediate, it is impossible to know which products are going to give actual results. Dr. N.V. Perricone, author of *The Wrinkle Cure* and owner of the Perricone skincare line, was quoted in the *New York Times* saying, "Promise them an unlined face, and you can sell them anything" (La Ferla, 2001, p.3). It

will be interesting to discover why women buy their specific anti-aging moisturizers, serums, and eye creams when they are overwhelmed in the vast jungle of products with claims for the "greater effectiveness of high-priced products with fancy packages and exotic-sounding ingredients" (Epstein, 2010, p. 120).

The question is not whether women want to buy anti-aging products since the market is already generating millions of dollars. This study will look at the reasons why women choose to buy a certain brand and specific product over its competitors. Studying consumer behavior with anti-aging skincare products is particularly interesting since results are usually not expected immediately. The anti-aging products, unlike a lipstick, cannot simply be tested inside the store to let the consumer know if they will be satisfied with the product. These products usually have to be used morning and night over time to see results.

Merchandising and marketing efforts are therefore essential to the selling of anti-aging skincare products. This study divides the merchandising and marketing techniques into three categories: information sources, product attributes, and shopping orientation. Information sources include the areas of advertising, brand websites, and product reviews. Price, packaging, and ingredients are some of the key product attributes, while shopping orientation consists of whether or not consumers seek promotions, prefer to buy from brands practicing social responsibility, where they tend to shop, and other such questions about their personal shopping behavior.

Advertisements are usually the means by which consumers are introduced to an anti-aging product. Levy and Weitz (2004) define advertising as "a form of communication to customers using interpersonal mass media such as newspapers, TV, radio, direct mail, and the

internet" (p. 520). Anti-aging advertisements constantly appear on television and in about every magazine. They all make great-sounding promises and appear to have the research to support their claims.

The area in which all of the advertisements seem to differ is with the face representing the product. Some of the advertisements, such as those for Estée Lauder, feature a young, fresh-faced model while Lancôme products are endorsed by many of the top female actresses, including Julia Roberts, Kate Winslet, and Penélope Cruz. Fifty-two year old actress Andie Macdowell is the spokesperson for L'Oréal Paris.

The French skincare line RoC features average-looking women which the company hopes consumers will find more relatable ("RoC," 2011). This was probably influenced by the successful 1956 decision Clairol made to feature "girl-next-door types rather than glamour shots" (Gladwell, 2009, p. 81). Uniquely, Clinique advertisements do not feature a person because the brand wants viewers to focus on the actual product.

Nelson (1994) wrote, "Smart marketers stopped bombarding every woman with ads featuring fresh-faced seventeen year-old models long ago" (p. 143). The advertisements that continue to do so risk lowering the credibility of product claims. Dior features older models in their advertisements ("Dior," n.d.) while L'Oréal Paris features older actresses such as Jane Fonda ("L'Oréal Paris," 2011).

The smart way to market anti-aging products is by telling women they do not have to look older and by featuring a famous woman to endorse the product (Nelson, 1994). Cindy Crawford appears on television promoting Meaningful Beauty, the product line she helped launch. Cindy looks as good now, if not better, than she did when she was in her late twenties.

Women are quick to buy the products a celebrity claims to use because they know the rich and well-connected celebrity must be using the best quality available on the market. Even though the products often do not meet consumers' expectations, women are often quick to buy the next product being endorsed by a celebrity (Begoun, 2010). Salzman, Matathia, and O'Reilly (2003) disagreed by writing, "People are becoming far less susceptible to the power of celebrity endorsers or other influencers who are seen as shrills for the brand" (p. 18). This could be a second reason Clinique does not feature models in their advertisements.

The cosmetic industry may seem superficial, but female consumers still like to find a brand they feel reflects their values. This is why it is important for companies to have close relationships with their consumers and make sure they are getting input from them (Skoloda, 2009). Ellwood and Shekar (2008) wrote that women would rather build a partnership with the employees of a brand rather than simply make their transaction (p. 167). Research has shown that all customers prefer brands with values similar to their own. The Body Shop, for example, does not test any products on animals which is a major concern for many consumers (Ellwood & Shekar, 2008, p. 172). Avon values trust, respect, belief, humility, and integrity. Its mission is "to be the company that best understands and satisfies the product, service, and self-fulfillment needs of women globally" (Klepacki, 2005, p. 48). The company refers to itself as the "company for women" and has found tremendous success over the years (Klepacki, 2005).

Consumers view socially responsible brands as credible brands involved in the interests of the community, and therefore brand managers often decide to support a local or national cause relatable to their customer base (Skoloda, 2009). Because October is the month for breast cancer awareness, many cosmetic brands do their share to donate money and raise attention to the disease. During October of 2010, Lancôme donated seven dollars to breast cancer research for

every bottle of GÈNIFIQUE sold while Clinique promoted an extra-large size of its Dramatically Different Moisturizing Lotion with proceeds going to the cause, and Esteé Lauder sold a pink lipstick holder with three lipsticks to do their share in contributions.

Avon also supports breast cancer research along with domestic violence by providing scholarships to those in need. The Avon Foundation was created in 1955 as a private foundation aiming to "improve the lives of women and their families with an emphasis on education and job training" (Klepacki, 2005, p. 197). The cosmetic store Sephora knows how important it is to give back to the community as well, which is why it joined together with Operation Smile, the organization providing reconstructive facial surgery to children in both developing countries and the United States. The surgery is focused on providing the children with a greater sense of self-confidence so they can live happier lives (Levy & Weitz, 2004).

The website for Bobbi Brown Cosmetics has a link to "Bobbi's Causes" which lists Dress for Success and Jane Addams High School for Academic Careers as two organizations which Bobbi Brown Professional Cosmetics, Inc. considerably supports. The site states, "at Bobbi Brown Cosmetics our mission is to do what we can to help improve the lives of those in the community and beyond. Whether it's empowering a woman looking for employment or providing meals to a child struggling to survive, we believe in using our resources, passion, and energy to raise awareness and effect meaningful changes" ("Bobbi Brown Cosmetics: Bobbi's Causes," n.d.).

Social responsibility is one of many ways a company increases its credibility with consumers. Involving credible sources in advertising campaigns makes a consumer put more trust in a product. The Clinique website currently features Dr. Orentreich describing some of the

cures for various skin problems. Cindy Crawford partnered with "Europe's premier anti-aging specialist," Dr. Jean-Louis Sebagh, to create the Meaningful Beauty product line ("Meaningful Beauty – Cindy Crawford," 2010). Magazine advertisements for Olay Professional PROx claimed the product was "so credible it was featured in *The British Journal of Dermatology"* ("Olay Professional PROx," 2010a). Another promotion featured in *Marie Claire* included the signatures of eleven dermatologists ("Olay Professional PROx," 2010b).

Issuing a money-back guarantee indicates that a company is confident in its product. The founder of Avon initially implemented a guarantee which remains printed on every brochure today (Klepacki, 2005). The television commercials and website for Meaningful Beauty note there is a money-back guarantee within sixty days of purchase, even if the bottles are empty. Nancy Glass, the Media Spokesperson and Education Executive for Clinique, says the company does not have a limit as to when a customer may return a product. It allows a return or exchange for an empty container anytime without a receipt because it is confident the consultant can reevaluate the customer's skin and suggest a different product without losing the customer's business (N. Glass, personal communication, April 4, 2010). The Meaningful Beauty website encourages customers to share their experiences with the possibility of an offer to star in one of the company's television productions ("Meaningful Beauty – Cindy Crawford," 2010a). This simple request gives consumers confidence the products are going to give them amazing results.

Consumers want to make the best decision possible in the beginning since they live a busy life and do not have the time to continuously try different products. Therefore it is a major help to women when brands post detailed information about the products on their websites. Brands are also benefitted by the online information because it is a cost-effective way to get knowledge to the consumers (Skoloda, 2009). Along with product knowledge, brand websites

help build the brand image and inform customers of store locations, special events/ promotions, and product availability. Customers can also choose to simply buy their desired merchandise online (Levy & Weitz, 2004).

Clinique offers customers personal skin consultations on its website by asking a few multiple choice questions. Once the short survey is completed, a screen appears with the products best suited to that customer's needs. If customers are skeptical about making a purchase, they may click on the "Why Clinique?" icon which will give several convincing reasons why they should trust the brand's products. "Founded on the philosophy that great skin can be created, Clinique pioneered the dermatologist-developed cosmetic brand. Each beautifully crafted Clinique skincare and makeup product is allergy tested and 100% fragrance free – crucial in a world where allergies have been labeled the modern epidemic" ("Clinique: Why Clinique," 2011). The company tests for allergic reactions twelve times on six hundred people. If the slightest reaction occurs during this process, new products are completely reformulated ("Clinique," n.d.).

Garnier also lists the testing policies as well as information about the natural ingredients on its website. Even though natural ingredients are not always better, consumers often assume they are so this is a major marketing scheme. Visitors to the Garnier website instantly view the anti-aging product advertisement flashing on the homepage with the statement, "Take the two week wrinkle challenge" ("Garnier," n.d.). This statement has the power to entice customers since Clinique products, for example, are not supposed to produce drastic results for twelve weeks ("Clinique," n.d.). To be certain the website features are being enjoyed by customers, Garnier has a customer satisfaction survey pop-up ensuring any issues will be fixed immediately ("Garnier," n.d.).

The Estée Lauder website gives shoppers the opportunity to chat live with a beauty advisor. This is the perfect solution for any confusion the customer feels after examining the various products on the "top rated," "just arrived," and "must-have" lists. Past Estée Lauder customers also aid in the decision-making process by posting product reviews on the website. Currently the site has reviews from over 4,735 customers ("Estée Lauder,"n.d.).

Lancôme lures customers from the internet into the store by posting news about the different counters and in-store events. Like most of the other brand websites, the site lists which products have won awards and encourages customers to join the email list. The customer service page lists contact information in case the customer has any further questions that cannot be answered with the information provided ("Lancôme Paris," 2011).

Invitations to join brands' Facebook pages appear on many of the websites, such as with L'Oréal Paris. This marketing technique leads consumers to feel they are buying from a "popular" brand, and the brand in return achieves a free form of advertisement. L'Oreal also features pages on the website for each spokeswoman. This list includes a long list of actresses and models to further the brand's perceived quality ("L'Oreal Paris," 2011).

Chanel may be one of the more high-priced luxury brands but complimentary shipping is offered on its website. The company has a video to watch when checking out the skincare online that depicts their product to be rare and exotic. The key ingredient is extracted from the golden flower of the Himalayas which makes "skin appear reborn" ("Chanel," 2011). Featuring the video on product history which appears to be a beautifully-created foreign film makes Chanel unique in its approach since the other brands either show a woman's face or simply the products.

Brands want to gain the trust of consumers and to do that many of them put the history of the company on the website for all to read. Bobbi Brown's story includes how she started her career and became famous ("Bobbi Brown Cosmetics," n.d.), the RoC history includes a timeline of when certain ingredients started to be used ("Roc," 2011), and the Meaningful Beauty story is basically about the supermodel Cindy Crawford partnering with the French dermatologist, Dr. Jean-Louis Sebagh (Meaningful Beauty," 2010b). Each brand convinces consumers it is scientifically ahead of the others and has the most-desired, anti-aging products.

Consumers also check the internet to see what other women are saying about different products. Skoloda (2009) wrote, "Women are relying on the opinions of other women in their online communities as the most trusted sources for recommendations" (p. 47). Social networking sites are predicted to become a standard practice in marketing (Skoloda, 2009) which can already be seen with all the brands that have their own Facebook page. Women want to see what other consumers are saying about products so they can get "unbiased and accurate" information (Salzman *et al.,* 2003, p. 18). This is precisely why Clinique and Estée Lauder allow space for customer reviews on their websites. Both good and bad reviews are included which makes the comments believable.

Of course it helps consumers if they have friends or family members using the type of product they are interested in purchasing. Obviously if a woman has beautiful and smooth skin her product suggestions will be taken seriously. "Numerous studies are pointing to family and friends now being the most credible sources of information for women who are considering a purchasing decision" (Skoloda, 2009, p. 47). It is therefore important for brands to make sure they tell a woman exactly how and when to apply their product in order to see the expected results, or otherwise she is going to keep her relatives, friends, and acquaintances from shopping

with the brand (Skoloda, 2009). "According to a 2001 report from McKinney and Company, 67% of sales of U.S. consumer goods are now influenced by word-of-mouth" (Salzman *et al.,* 2003, p. 31).

Paula Begoun's 1,500 page book, *Don't Go to the Cosmetics Counter Without Me,* includes her reviews on cosmetic and skincare products from every brand imaginable. Overall the reviews are based on the listed ingredients compared to the product claims (Begoun, 2010). She claims eye creams are not necessary, and creams should be packaged in a tube rather than a jar or they lose their effect (Begoun, 2010). Because the reviews are so in-depth, readers feel like Begoun's information is based on detailed research. The book is a best-seller and eight editions have been published.

Brands focus a great deal of attention on the packaging of their products. The founder of Avon initially focused on using the best ingredients and did not worry about expenditures on fancy packaging. He soon learned the importance of packaging and the company upgraded the appearance of its products (Klepacki, 2005). Skolova (2009) wrote, "Packaging is more important than ever. Packaging should work for the consumer, not just the brand. In those precious moments when a consumer is in-store making that real purchase decision, the package should help in a real way, not just be an efficient design full of bursts that may not be helpful" (p. 117). One of the key components in Charla Krupp's reviews on over one thousand beauty products was that the product had to look good enough to keep on the bathroom shelf (Krupp, 2008).

Packaging may be one reason why consumers opt for a luxury brand. Chanel products, with the classic logo, make a bathroom counter look glamorous. Some consumers also believe

these products will produce better results since they are more expensive. Krupp (2008) however wrote, "Simply spending more isn't going to buy you any better ammunition for your battle against wrinkles. According to *Consumer Reports' Shop Smart Magazine*, which tested wrinkle creams at various price points, some of the most effective (Olay) were drugstore brands, while some of the least effective (La Prairie) cost hundreds of dollars" (p. 90).

L'Oréal Paris came up with its slogan in 1997 after the company raised prices higher than the competition. "Because I'm worth it" became the slogan for the entire company and sales increased tremendously. The slogan is still featured in all of the brand's advertisements today (Gladwell, 2009).

Product, place, price, and promotion can only get the customer into the store. Once in the store, the sales staff takes over. The salesperson either begins to build the foundation for a lifetime customer or loses her forever. The different cosmetic brands featured in department stores have strict rules on what the employees wear and how they go about building the sale. If the salesperson does not look "up-to-par," the customer will probably take her business to a different counter. Clinique employees wear white lab coats and refer to their counter as "the last stop before the dermatologist's office" (N. Glass, personal communication, June 2010).

There are numerous reasons why a consumer may decide to purchase one brand over its competition. Salzman *et al.* (2003) summed it up by saying, "Smart marketers offer product information, on-the-spot customer service, and brand experiences. Consumers need to feel a sense of trust and involvement, a relationship. When consumers have a chance to come into contact with a brand in a three-dimensional way (events, interactions between people, product

sampling, giveaways, parties, etc.), they are more likely to form a lasting memory or association with the product" (p. 19).

<u>Purpose of the Study</u>

The anti-aging product market is expanding rapidly, and expected to reach $291.9 billion by 2015 ("Global Anti-Aging Products," 2009). Women are introduced to new moisturizers, serums, and eye creams almost every time they open a magazine, turn on the television, or walk through the drug store. How are they supposed to know which product is going to give them the desired results? Will the best product be the most expensive, or will it be the one promoted by America's favorite supermodel? Do all the products really work the same, and therefore the cheapest one available at the grocery store is the smartest choice? Are the magazine articles featuring the "top-rated products" trustworthy, or did companies pay to have their products reviewed in a positive manner? These are just a few of the many questions women face when choosing their anti-aging skincare products. The purpose of this study is to gain insight in how women decide which product to purchase. The researcher studied the extent to which information sources, product attributes, and shopping orientation influence women's brand attitude.

Significance of Study

This study will assist marketing personnel and merchandisers in increasing sales of their anti-aging skincare products by focusing on which marketing and merchandising techniques have the most influence on women.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

1. To determine if information sources influence which cosmetic brand will be favored by the consumer.
2. To determine if product attributes influence which cosmetic brand will be favored by a consumer.
3. To determine if shopping orientation influences which cosmetic brand will be favored by a consumer.

Hypotheses:

H1: Information sources influence which cosmetic brand will be favored by the consumer.

H2: Product attributes influence which cosmetic brand will be favored by the consumer.

H3: Shopping orientation influences which cosmetic brand will be favored by the consumer.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Consumer behavior emerged as a major field of study fifty years ago when universities and scientific knowledge were expanding rapidly. Researchers developed a number of consumer behavior theories based on a cognitive approach and by conducting experiments in the laboratory. These theories include the Nicosia model (1966), the Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell model (1968), and Howard and Sheth's theory of buyer behavior (1969). The consumer culture theory did not appear until the late 1980s. The researchers involved were thought to be attacking the scientific method because rather than performing controlled experiments in the laboratory, they traveled across the United States observing and interviewing actual consumers in uncontrolled settings. The theory developed because many of the postmodern researchers did not believe controlled laboratory research could be representative of how consumers behave in real world settings (Kassarjian & Goodstein, 2009). The pioneers of the consumer culture theory include Paul Anderson, Russell Belk, Elizabeth Hirschman, Morris Holbrook, Sidney Levy, Melanie Wallendorf, and John Sherry (Sherry & Fischer, 2007). Their work was qualitative rather than quantitative, and the purpose was to gain an understanding of consumer behavior rather than make predictions (Arnould, 2006).

Theoretical Framework

The consumer culture theory focuses on the "sociocultural, experimental, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 868). It refers to a group of theories that address the relations between consumer behaviors, the market, and "cultural meanings" rather than a single theory. Consumer culture is defined as the description of a "social arrangement in which the relations between lived culture and social resources, and between meaningful ways of life and the symbolic and material resources on which they depend, are mediated through markets" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 869). It is based on consumers buying material objects in order to portray their social status or the level of status they are seeking to achieve or oppositely, consumers recognizing what the media is trying to make them feel and in turn, back away from the media's influence (Arnould, 2006). Therefore it is essential for marketers to understand what symbolic meanings and lifestyles the consumers desire to convey. Mick and Humphreys (2008) wrote, "Consumers have an array of desires, wishes, intents, plans, and willpower, but sociocultural settings and marketplace agents also facilitate, guide, limit, and block consumers in various manners" (p. 18). The meanings consumers take away from different marketing schemes develop from an "interaction between an individual, objects, and context" (Bäckström, 2006, p. 153).

Arnould and Thompson defined the consumer culture theory in their article titled "Consumer Culture Theory: Twenty Years of Research" by stating, "Consumer culture theory explores how consumers actively rework and transform symbolic meanings encoded in advertisements, brands, retail settings, or material goods to manifest their particular personal and social circumstances and further their identity and lifestyle goals" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 871). Consumers are viewed as "identity seekers" sifting through the vast amount of

commodities to choose the ones which will allow them to build their identity. Three of the key elements to the consumer culture theory include information sources, product attributes, and shopping orientation.

<u>Information Sources</u>

An information source is anything that might give consumers knowledge about a product such as brand websites, feedback from friends or family members, television and magazine advertisements, info-commercials, pictures of results, brochures written about the products by the company, featured articles and reviews, and blogs by other consumers. The Nielsen Global Online Consumer Survey conducted in April of 2009 found that 90% of consumers trust recommendations from people they personally know, 70% trust online posts and brand websites, 62% trust television advertisements, and 59% trust magazine articles (Washington & Miller, 2010).

Consumer culture theorists have most heavily studied the relationship between consumers and advertisements. Advertising creates the cultural meanings for brands (Ozsomer & Altaras, 2008). Conventional research suggests "consumers actively process advertisements that coincide with particular purchase needs, and respond to brand, product or service information according to the cognitive or affective appeals of the advertisement" (Aitken, Gray, and Lawson, 2008, p. 279). This thought process casts the consumers as receivers rather than as creators of the meanings and relationships. The consumer culture theory focuses on the intended audience rather than the advertisers (Aitken *et al.*, 2008).

Printed advertisements, such as those featured in magazines, serve as a popular form of brand promotion because of the "strong imagery enhanced by advanced technology" (Jung &

Lee, 2008, p. 1). Fashion and beauty magazines are the most successful type of magazine produced. *Cosmopolitan,* for example, is published in 28 languages, with 110 editions, and is read by over 36 million women worldwide. It has been proven that the more often a woman reads fashion and beauty magazines, the more likely she will see a need for self-improvement (Thomsen, McCoy, Gustafson, & Williams, 2002).

The audience is thought to be engaged and striving towards specific goals, "linking need gratification with media choice in individual and social contexts" (Aitken *et al.,* 2008, p. 288). Crosier (1983) studied need gratification and found seven different areas of satisfaction which included product information, entertainment, implied warranty, value addition, post-purchase reassurance, vicarious experience, and involvement. Involvement in this framework "is related to the intellectual pleasure derived from participating in and the anticipation of narrative message or executional ambiguity" (O'donohoe, 1994, p. 53). The list of seven areas of satisfaction was later reduced to just four areas including personal identification, entertainment, information, and social interaction. A consumer's attitude toward advertisements is undoubtedly connected with one of the satisfactions she is seeking to obtain (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1994).

Barbara Olsen presented a study at the 2007 Consumer Culture Theory Conference which addressed the cultural role of advertisements by examining advertisements throughout history and the present. She learned particular images that already have been associated with specific emotions and cultural symbols are used in advertisements. Advertisers are responsible for building connections between brands and consumers, and this is usually done by depicting certain values. Current advertisements, for example, associate happiness with fame and fortune (Olsen, 2007).

Consumers respond to advertisements in a certain order. In order to be successful, advertisers must lead consumers through the "cognitive, affective, and conative" stages (Barry & Howard, 1990). This "information-processing model" focuses on "the message, the executional strategy, and the relevance to the consumer of the brands, products, or services featured in the advertisement" (Aitken *et al.*, 2008, p. 280). If the message is understandable and well-delivered, the advertising campaign will be successful (Barry & Howard, 1990). Consumers' roles are dependent upon their particular needs. The reaction of consumers to advertisements is "deliberate, conscious, and presumably predictable" (Aitken *et al.*, 2008, p. 281).

The essential part of advertising is selling the idea that consumers can become like the models or celebrities featured in the advertisement if they accept the idea and purchase the product. The American Girl Doll brand sets up photography studios in their flagship stores where consumers can have their picture taken and then framed as the cover of the *American Girl* magazine. Allowing the consumer to become a "cover girl" leads her to feel like a celebrity and further connect to the brand. The American Girl Doll Place celebrates generations of women and the "cultural reproduction of domesticity" (Sherry, Borghini, McGrath, Muñiz, Diamond, & Kozinets, 2007). The brand promotes the values of family, friends, and feelings which allows consumers to make an emotional connection (Light, 2006).

Consumers do have control over the meanings they derive from the advertisements. "The cultural mediator role played by advertising personnel, agencies, and advertising in general has been extended to a consideration of the role of consumers as co-creators, not just reactors in various marketing and geographical contexts" (Olsen, 2007, p. 60). Consumers engross themselves with the advertisers' messages and determine meanings useful to their own lives. Each individual has his or her own memories and experiences which make it inevitable that

consumers will react to the advertisements differently (Olsen, 2007). Advertisements in the media have become a natural part of the social environment and serve as a means in which consumers make sense of their everyday life. Consumers are able to discuss shared meanings and form relationships as well as interactive communities (Anderson & Meyer, 1988).

Jung and Lee (2008) performed a content analysis on the product/ service types and models' characteristics featured in magazine advertisements in the United States and South Korea. They discovered the majority of advertisements featured in magazines are body-related and are shown with young, beautiful models, even in the magazines *Country Living, Martha Stewart,* and *Women's Day,* which are targeted to older consumers (Jung & Lee, 2008). The advertisements influence the readers to buy beauty products but with so many advertisements in one magazine, it is difficult to choose which brand to purchase.

Jevons (2007) studied the different definitions of "brand" through business research articles and realized there were six key components which included "identity, functionality, symbolism, sustainability, differentiation, and value creation/ delivery." He then developed his own definition: "A brand is a tangible or intangible concept that uniquely identifies an offering, providing symbolic communication of functionality and differentiation, and in doing so sustainably influences the value offered" (p. 117). In consumer culture theory, a "brand is defined as a symbol of a given culture, which consumers may purchase to reinforce their membership in that segment" (Okazaki, Mueller, & Taylor, 2010, p. 21). Wee, Tan, and Cheock (1995) discovered that brand image is positively correlated to intent to purchase, and "status conscious consumers" are more likely to purchase from the luxury brands.

One aspect of advertising that consumers agree on is that celebrity endorsers are beneficial to a brand because they are easily identifiable and they represent a desired lifestyle. However, consumers need to be able to relate to the celebrities (Olsen, 2007). A celebrity who is a mother to several teenagers would be ideal for endorsing an anti-aging product. Her beauty would be admired by the consumers, but they would also relate to her stressful life of working and raising a family at the same time.

Since celebrities are successful in selling products, beauty companies are teaming up with them and allowing the brand to be named after the celebrity. Anisa and Lighthouse Beauty recently joined forces to create the Kim Kardashian beauty brand which is named after the E! Entertainment reality show star. These private label brands are expected to increase in number since the name and face of a celebrity cause successful financial gain for the company, especially for a cosmetics brand since women everywhere are striving to look like an A-list actress or celebrity (Samalonis, 2010).

Yaklef (1999) stated the advertisers' favorite stimuli for the postmodern period are desire for social prestige, approval, pride, ownership, guilt, anxiety, glamour, status, etc. Since the 1920s, brands have been portrayed in Hollywood settings with celebrity endorsers (Olsen, 2007). It is the consumer who relates the product with the stimuli. "The consciousness of the subject is shaped not by a real relationship but by an imaginary one, allowing the subject to be free to project one's desires onto commodities" (Yaklef, 1999, p. 138). Advertisers must be aware of the intended consumers' lifestyles and what their dreams and aspirations are (Ozsomer & Altaras, 2008). Poulsson and Kale (2004) wrote that in order to be successful, marketing techniques should have "personal relevance for the customer, be novel, offer an element of surprise, engender learning, and engage the customer" (p. 271).

Okazaki, Mueller, and Taylor (2010) studied the effects of soft-sell advertising (image-based) and hard-sell advertising (information-based) using the consumer culture theory. A soft-sell advertisement is defined as "one in which image and atmosphere are conveyed through a beautiful scene or the development of an emotional story or verse. Human emotional sentiments are emphasized over clear-cut product-related appeals" (Mueller, 1987, p. 53). A hard-sell advertisement focuses on sales by specifying advantages of the specific brand and products. It is not unusual for a hard-sell advertisement to attack other brands in order to make customers believe its product is "number one" or the "leader" (Mueller, 1987). Okazaki *et al.* (2010) looked at six different advertisements for automobiles, cell phones, and alcoholic beverages and studied the attitudes toward each brand, believability, irritation, and purchase intention. Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra (1999) theorized that soft-sell advertising was more successful because it allowed consumers to generate associations with the brand rather than stating product advantages and performance. Advertisements reflecting "cultural values" are more persuasive than those that exclude them (Hans & Shavitt, 1984). However, in the 2010 study it was discovered that advertisements in the United States tend to follow the hard-sell technique and focus on product facts and credible sources (experts or celebrities), yet the soft-sell appeals are in fact more effective in transmitting brand quality, social responsibility, prestige, and relative price (Okazaki *et al.,* 2010).

Even though advertising is seen as the foremost means of associating cultural meanings with a brand, research done in the past few years has revealed consumption communities, written reviews, blogs by consumers, news reports, and expert columns also influence consumer opinions about a brand (Thompson, 2004). Blogs represent "popular social environments in which people interact by exchanging resources such as information, ideas, and advice about their

common interests" (Chan & Li, 2009, p. 1). Consumers often share their opinions about recent purchases online, whether the experience was pleasant or unpleasant (Kozinets, 1999). This type of activity allows the internet to transform "good marketing into good conversation by putting a more human face on marketplace exchanges without losing the scale of economics mass marketing" (Deighton, 1996, p. 151).

Consumers also go online to review company websites. Brand websites have greatly developed over the past few years and serve as a means for companies to enhance their image, share information with customers, and build customer relationships. These websites often support "cross-channel" promotions, encourage consumers to interact with the company, and inform customers of events with email newsletters which give added value to the brand. By sending newsletters to their customer base, companies present the brand to consumers on typically a monthly basis (Müeller, Florés, Agrebi, & Chandon, 2008). Many of the purchase-oriented websites offer online coupons and store locators to aid consumers in their shopping experience (Dou & Krishnamurthy, 2007). It is necessary for brands to build relationships with customers because consumers buy the brands they are familiar with (Müller *et al.,* 2008).

A survey conducted in 2003 on a random sample of national U.S. internet users showed that 54.6% of consumers prefer to learn about brands from brand websites rather than any other advertising means. Seventy-five percent of these respondents said they would increase their use of brand websites in the future (Dou & Krishnamurthy, 2007). Müeller *et al.* (2008) discovered that more online viewers on a brand's website promotes brand knowledge through absorption of knowledge and that satisfied customers visiting the website are more likely to visit again and recommend the site to their peers, meaning consumers have a more positive attitude toward the brand and higher purchase intent. The more a potential consumer is able to interact with a

website, the more likely the consumer goes from a curious internet searcher to a valued customer (Berthon, Leyland, & Watson, 1996).

However, with all of today's technological advances, it is important not to forget the power of "word-of-mouth communication" which has been found to be more influential than advertisements and sales associates (Lam, Mizerski, & Lee, 2005). "Every-day" word-of-mouth is casual communication between consumers about an organization, brand, or product. The more times a day consumers use a product, the more likely they will talk about it to other possible consumers (Holmes & Lett, 1977). Not only will these frequent users be enthusiastic about the product, but other consumers will view them as credible (Iyengar, Valente, & Van den Bulte, 2008). Washington and Miller (2010) found that word-of-mouth marketing tends to be positive and outweighs negative comments by a six-to-one ratio. Informational susceptibility goes along with the word-of-mouth concept. Bearden *et al.* (1989) defined informational susceptibility as "the tendency to learn about products or brands by seeking information from knowledgeable others, or making inferences based on observing people's behaviors" (p. 473). For example, a consumer may observe her friend using a Chanel anti-aging moisturizer and notice the friend has a beautiful complexion. Therefore, the consumer may purchase a Chanel anti-aging moisturizer in order to get the same radiant skin.

Companies also produce leaflets and brochures to get product information to consumers. Leaflets allow consumers easy access to information such as prices and range of products while brochures give detailed information on the individual products which helps reassure customers they are making the right decision. Brochures including pictures of results are usually successful because they attract attention and show consumers what to expect when using the product (Grunert & Saile, 1978).

Hypothesis 1: Information sources influence which cosmetic brand will be favored by the consumer.

<u>Product Attributes</u>

Product attributes are another key area of focus when consumers decide which brand to purchase. The attributes can include perceived quality, reliability, price, ingredients, guaranteed results, texture, appearance, and the product's packaging (Ozsomer & Altaras, 2008). Brand reputation and familiarity is one of the most important marketing topics for retailers. Being familiar with a certain brand automatically allows consumers to be aware of some of the attributes of the product so it is important for marketers to develop a strong brand image in order to reduce uncertainty and increase purchase intention (Park & Lennon, 2009). Brand reputations give consumers a means to differentiate between retailers and products (Collins-Dodd & Lindley, 2003). Consumers are likely to use familiar cues, such as a well-known brand name, to determine the value of a product, make an opinion about a store, and decide whether or not to purchase a product (Park & Stoel, 2005). A positive brand image can capture consumers' attention, lead to a higher evaluation of a product, and promote repeat purchases. Consumers will put more effort into learning about a product with a well-known brand name. When uncertainty exists about a product, a brand name with a good reputation will have a lower level of perceived risk and the product quality will be assumed to be higher. This is because well-known brands have provided consumers with more information through advertising, word-of-mouth communication, and previous experiences with the brand (Dean, 1999).

Ozsomer and Altaras (2008) created a framework for brand attitude and purchase likelihood which explained how consumers go about forming attitudes toward brands and how

these attitudes affect the intent to purchase. In psychological terms, brands give the consumer an identity and a feeling of success. The more a consumer can use a brand to develop his or her personal identity, the more enthusiastic that consumer will be about the brand (Holt, 2002). Brands have an emotional value connected to them which causes consumers to develop "human-like relationships" with the brands and use their products as a form of self-expression. Brands seduce consumers by symbolizing the values of consumer culture. They become important through "the transfer of cultural resources, individual experiences, and social exchanges to the brand name" (Füller, Luedicke, & Jawecki, 2008, p. 359). "Through the process of meaning transfer, consumers transfer these values and ideals to their self-concept" (Ozsomer & Altaras, 2008, p. 1). Most consumers who purchase premium brands do so because they carry symbolic values such as success and empowerment (Willis, 2006).

These values are "trade-offs" between benefits and sacrifices, and they make up the consumer's perceived value of a product (Woodruff & Gardial, 1996). Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) define perceived value in their article on service quality as the customer's overall evaluation of the usefulness of a product based on opinions about how much the product is benefitting the customer and how much the product costs. Grewal, Krishnan, Baker, and Borin (1998) and Kwon and Schumann (2001) found there is a high correlation between perceived value and purchase intention.

Consumers also are constantly adding new meanings to brands through the "process of meaning re-creation." In order for one brand to rise above the others, it must communicate a "unique image" to consumers, meaning it must be authentic. Consumers search for authentic brands when making important purchases so that they can distinguish themselves above their fellow shoppers (Ozsomer & Altaras, 2008). Companies must achieve it or they will be

unsuccessful (Holt, 2002). Aaker (1995) discovered authenticity is the highest-rated characteristic for buying a certain brand.

Social responsibility, quality, prestige, and brand credibility are key areas of focus in forming a brand attitude (Ozsomer & Altaras, 2008). "Brand credibility is defined as the extent to which the product position information contained in a brand is perceived as believable. Credibility depends on the willingness and ability of firms to deliver what they promise" (p. 151). Brands involving more marketing techniques have been shown to be more credible and brand investments also contribute to brand credibility. Klein and Leffler (1981) define brand investments as money spent on brands to make sure the brand delivers what is promised and show the company leaders' long-term dedication to the brand. This exhibits company honesty in its product descriptions and its commitment to deliver the promised results. Brand investments can include brand logo, sponsorships, or a powerful advertising slogan (Ozsomer & Altaras, 2008). Credible brands therefore have products perceived as valuable. Brand credibility is perhaps the most important of these key areas of focus because if the product is not delivering the expected results, the brand is not going to be favored by the consumer anymore and the negative reviews will cause a downfall in the reputation of the brand (Ozsomer & Altaras, 2008).

Quality has a direct affect on brand credibility in product categories that vary in attribute uncertainty, information acquisition costs, and perceived risk of consumption. Quality-made items tend to be more expensive but they are worth the price since the products will last throughout the years. Owning credible brand items signifies a higher level of social class because the consumer had to pay premium for the quality products (Ozsomer & Altaras, 2008). Holt (2002) wrote that seeking to elevate one's social status is a key reason behind the purchase of certain brands.

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Whether or not consumers are familiar with the different brands selling anti-aging products, they are still likely to form opinions about the quality of a product before purchasing it. Perceived quality is "the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority" (Tsiotsou, 2006, p. 210). It results from the perceived customer value. Price is commonly thought to be one of the most important cues of quality but Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) did not find a relationship between perceived quality and price. Tsiotsou (2006) found product quality is highly correlated with purchase intention in the study researching the relationships between values, involvement, satisfaction, and perceived quality of sports shoes with purchase intention. Consumers determine the level of quality based on product costs (Erickson & Johansson, 1985). However, even if the perceived quality is high, some consumers may not want to pay the high costs (Cai, Tang, & Jia, 2009).

The consumers who do not mind paying the higher price feel the product is worth the investment. Marketers have the challenge of convincing consumers that the product will work after dedicated use. As time passes, products promise consumers more extreme results, and consumers in return become more suspicious. In order to make consumers more comfortable with their purchase they need to know the results are guaranteed, and if for any reason they are unsatisfied with the product, they want to know they have the opportunity to return or exchange it (Huang, Liu, & Murthy, 2006).

Anti-aging products have a wide-range of price points. Consumers' opinions about what the price of their anti-aging products should be are formed based on "pricing patterns they have observed over time" (Kalwani, Yim, Rinne, & Sujita, 1990, p. 251). With all of the information available on the internet about products, prices, and stores, consumers have an increased awareness and are more price-sensitive (Grewal, Krishnan, Baker, & Borin, 1998).

It is not unusual for consumers to examine the product description before deciding to purchase the product. Product descriptions create "a network of thoughts or cognitive operations which activate the affective responses of craving and desire" (Moore, 2005, p. 608). If the consumer did not read a description online or in a magazine previous to purchase, she will most likely pick up the product's box and read the product description in the store.

Hypothesis 2: Product attributes influence which cosmetic brand will be favored by the consumer.

<u>Shopping Orientation</u>

Shopping orientation related to the purchase of anti-aging products can include loyalty to brands practicing social responsibility, service convenience, where one usually shops, amount of attention given to store displays, and how often one takes advantage of promotions, events, and sales. These patterns of consumption highly depend on one's social class (Holt, D., 1998), schedule (Cotte, Ratneshwa, & Mick, 2004), where they live (Sherry, 2000), and their preference of store atmosphere (Bitner, 1991). Belk (1988) believes consumers possess a central sense of their identity which is expanded by the purchase of items to which consumers feel attached. The core self can include the body, thought processes, ideas, experiences, family, and community (Ahuvia, 2005).

Frederick (1978) wrote that social responsibility represents the idea of a large company's involvement to make the community a better place. Sethi (1979) continued this thought in his description of how businesses respond to social issues. He noted that businesses begin their planning by studying the social needs determined by the market and the law. Actions taken by the company must agree with "prevailing social norms, values, and expectations"

(Niehm, Swinney, & Miller, 2008, p. 333).The steps taken by the company to practice social responsibility will result in support by the customers, employees, shareholders, and suppliers (Galaskiewicz, 1985). The supporters are likely to donate to the company based on the influence of community groups (Uzzi, 1996). This priceless, valued relationship between the company and the community is known as social capital (Niehm *et al.*, 2008). Steir (2001) wrote that social capital is priceless because it takes much time and effort for the company to be viewed by the community in this positive way. The value cannot easily be changed (Steir, 2001). Companies practice social responsibility as a "positioning strategy" which gives them an edge over their competition (Brammer & Millington, 2006).

David, Kline, and Dai (2005) found that a company's social responsibility practices have a significant effect on the company's identity, which in turn affects purchase intention. Companies have started to realize this, and the money spent on social responsibility already exceeds one billion dollars annually (Barone, Miyazaki, & Taylor, 2000). These activities can include everything "from supporting 5K walks for breast cancer research to promoting child adoption programs" (p. 292). More than eighty percent of Fortune 500 companies discuss social responsibility on their company websites (David *et al*., 2005). Pava and Krausz (1996) reviewed twenty-one studies and found twelve of them showed high positive correlations between social responsibility practices and high financial performance.

Service convenience is another major factor in how consumers decide where or how they want to shop. Berry, Seiders, and Grewal (2002) define service convenience as "consumers' time and effort perceptions related to buying or using a service" (p. 1). Pan and Zinkhan (2006) discovered service convenience-related aspects, such as fast checkout and location, are positively correlated to store preference and repeat purchases while Seiders, Voss, Godfrey, and Grewall

(2007) also found this to be true along with the finding that service convenience also positively impacts consumers' perceived enjoyment. Seventy percent of all the department store retailers located in Europe have plans to build stores with more convenient layouts by 2015 (Bokaie, 2008). Inconvenience has been found to be one of the most common reasons consumers stop shopping at a certain store. Types of inconvenience can include location, hours of operation, or waiting time for service (Keaveney, 1995).

Consumers who view shopping as more enjoyable are more likely to examine store displays. These consumers often believe the displayed items are on discount and therefore decide to take advantage of "the deal," even if they had no previous intention of buying the product that day. Displays create a higher level of excitement in the store and have been proven to increase the average amount of money spent by consumers (Chevalier, 1975).

Consumers often choose to shop in a department store rather than a discount store because they perceive the department store products to have a higher status (Chen-Yu & Kincade, 2001). Beliefs such as this influence the consumer's attitude on a product or brand. The country-of-origin has the same power (O'Cass & Choy, 2008). Batra, Ramaswamy, Alden, Steenkamp, and Ramachander (2000) discovered that some consumers buy non-local products to appear higher socially because these non-local products have "status-enhancing capabilities."A higher brand status has a more positive effect on brand attitude (O'Cass & Choy, 2008). This may be a reason some consumers prefer products from the Lancôme Paris counter.

It is not unusual for a consumer to purchase a certain brand based on a promotion event, such as a gift with purchase (Park & Lennon, 2009). Consumers often feel more satisfied with their purchase when it is part of a promotion (Darke & Dahl, 2003). Promotions are created by marketers to inform customers a product is available for purchase, generate awareness of a

retailer or brand, encourage customers to visit the store, and to increase consumer loyalty (Bagozzi, 1998). Loyal customers feel the promotion is a reward for their "patronage" (Sun & Sirnivasan, 2003). These customers may also decide to purchase certain items according to the retailer's promotion schedule (Park & Lennon, 2009). Consumers feel lucky if they happen to stumble upon a promotion and feel less guilty for making an expensive purchase (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Unexpected promotions can lead to impulsive and spur-of-the-moment purchases (Park & Lennon, 2009). Price promotions, such as discounts, lead a customer to feel the price of the product is more fair which strengthens the perceived value of the deal, intent to purchase, and customer satisfaction (Darke & Dahl, 2003). Collins-Dodd and Lindley (2003) discovered promotions are one of the most important variables that contribute to a positive store image. They are also an effective way to entice customers to switch from other brands (Sun & Sirnivasan, 2003).

Consumers are especially attracted to "exclusively-framed" promotions such as birthday discounts because their emotional feelings of "uniqueness and individuality" are played into (Page, Mittal, & Swaminathan, 2008) Consumers who buy their anti-aging products at department store cosmetic counters will often wait for the free gift event. Promotions focusing on "inclusiveness" with the brand, and also promotions that target individuals are positively correlated to purchase intention (Harrington, 2006; Page *et al.,* 2008).

Promotions can also have negative effects. Some consumers may feel the price of a product is inflated if it comes with a free gift. Other consumers do not care for free gifts because they have no desire for the included products and do not want added clutter in their home (Park & Lennon, 2009). Even when a price is simply discounted, some consumers believe it should be lowered even more which is why discounts do not always lead to more sales (Kwon &

Schumann, 2001). Dodson, Tybout, and Sternthal (1978) found promotions lower the reputation of a brand. However, this finding has not been supported by other researchers.

Hypothesis 3: Shopping orientation influences which cosmetic brands will be favored by the consumer.

Retailers need to make sure there is consistency in the brand's image, advertisements, product characteristics, and store features over a lengthy period of time to increase a product's reputation and establish a positive reputation of a retailer by reference to a brand (Park & Lennon, 2009). Figure 2.1 shows the model for factors impacting women's purchases of anti-aging skincare products. It is likely that a consumer is going to be drawn to a specific brand for one reason or another and will have the intention to buy that brand's product. Westover and Quint (2009) found brand attitude and purchase intent to be highly correlated in their study on the models in diet soft drink advertisements.

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│     Part I      │
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│   Information   │────┐
│     Sources     │    │
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│     Part II     │        │                 │
│                 │───────▶│     Part IV     │
│     Product     │        │                 │
│    Attributes   │────┐   │  Brand Attitude │
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│    Part III     │    │
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│    Shopping     │
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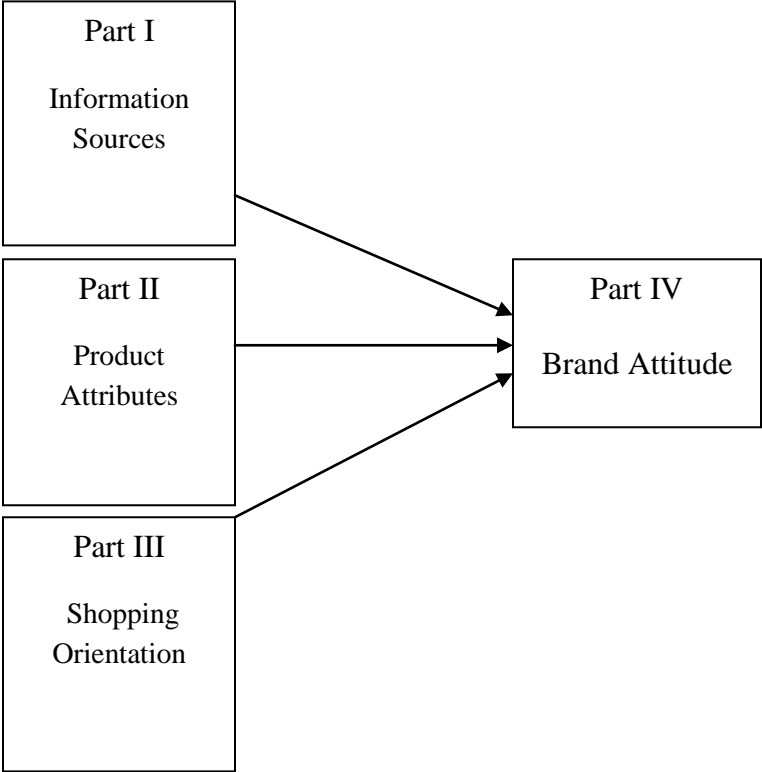
Figure 2.1: Model for Factors Impacting Women's Purchases of Anti-Aging Skincare

Products

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted to find the factors that most commonly influence women's purchases of anti-aging skincare products. The survey was created online so that participants were able to forward it to their acquaintances. All of the results were collected in just a few days.

Population and Sample

The convenience and snowball sampling techniques were used for this survey in order to recruit a greater number of participants. The researcher surveyed 215 women age thirty-five or older since women of this age are more likely to have a concern with aging. Individual emails and Facebook messages were sent to the researcher's acquaintances who were then asked to forward the survey to other women.

Administration of the Instrument

The structured questionnaire and business card with the researcher's invitation to participate were approved by IRB before anyone was asked to take part in the survey. Once the survey was created on surveymonkey.com, the researcher asked six acquaintances to take part in the pre-test in order to make sure the survey questions were clear. After gaining feedback from the pre-test, a few questions were deleted because either they were unclear to the participants or because they were redundant. Several other questions were re-worded.

The questions asked in the survey pertained to which factors have the most influence on women's brand attitudes by inquiring about their purchasing decisions towards anti-aging

serums, moisturizers, and eye creams. The survey consisted of four categories, including information sources, product attributes, shopping orientation, and brand attitude. The researcher developed the questions strictly for this study, but some of the factors were adapted from other studies.

Many of the questions about television advertisements and celebrities were influenced by Olsen's 2007 study presented at the Consumer Culture Theory Conference. The questions about facts, guarantees, and pictures in advertisements were adapted from Okazaki, Mueller, and Taylor's 2010 study on soft-sell and hard-sell advertising. Ozomer and Altaras (2008) linked desired lifestyle to brand attitude while Müeller *et al.* (2008) linked both brand websites and credibility to brand preference. The questions in the survey about word-of-mouth communication come from the work of Lam, Mizerski, and Lee (2005).

The section on information sources had a total of twenty-two questions and the purpose was to determine if magazine and television advertisements or articles, brand websites, friends and family, info-commercials, or product leaflets and brochures have a major impact on women's decisions to buy a certain anti-aging product. Further questions were asked to discover which types of advertisements have the most influence. The product attribute section asked women if they look for certain ingredients, price range, or if the packaging and container swayed their decision. The section had a total of eleven questions. The sixteen questions in the third section asked women where they tend to shop, if they seek special promotions, if sales associates have much influence on them, if they need a money-back guarantee, etc. The last six questions dealt with brand attitude. All of these questions, along with the five questions in the demographic section and one optional short answer question, make up the sixty-one question survey.

A Likert-type, five-point scale was used for participants to rate their feelings on each question. If a participant chose a "1," it meant they strongly disagreed with the statement while a "5" meant they strongly agreed. If the participant did not feel too strongly about the statement, they chose a number in the middle.

Demographics

The demographic section made up the final section of the survey. The five questions from this section were adopted from Miller and Washington's 2010 study on the demographics of healthcare spending. Participants were asked about their age, race, household income, location by region, and level of education.

Analyzing Data

The researcher used the SPSS statistics software program to run reliability tests, factor analysis, and multiple regression analysis in order to study the relationships between the independent variables with the dependent variable. The hypotheses were tested by using the established 0.05 significance level.

Conceptual Definitions

Aging – "the progressive deterioration of physiological functions in organisms, eventually leading to senescence and death" (Menon, Dryer, & Kalafsky, 2008, p. 266)

Anti-aging – "anything that slows down the progressive deterioration of physiological functions in organisms, eventually leading to senescence and death" (Menon, Dryer, & Kalafsky, 2008, p. 266)

Cosmeceuticals - "a term widely used by the cosmetic industry to refer to cosmetic products that also possess drug-like effects" (Dayan, 2008, p. 460)

Cosmetics – "articles intended to be applied to the human body for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering the appearance without affecting the body's structure or functions" (Wilson, 2008, p. 27)

Credible – "offering reasonable grounds for being believed" (*Merriam-Webster*, 2011)

Luxury – "an indulgence in something that provides pleasure, satisfaction, or ease" (*Merriam-Webster,* 2011)

Promotion – "the act of furthering the growth or development of something; especially the furtherance of the acceptance and sale of merchandise through advertising, publicity, or discounting" (*Merriam-Webster,* 2011)

Quality – "superiority in kind" (*Merriam-Webster*, 2011)

Social Responsibility – "obligation of an organization's management towards the welfare and interests of the society which provides it the environment and resources to survive and flourish, and which is affected by the organization's actions and policies" (*Business Dictionary*, 2010)

Brand Attitude – "thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and so on that become linked to the brand" (*Wikipedia*, 2011)

Intent to Purchase - "a plan to purchase a particular good or service in the future" (*Business Dictionary*, 2011)

Information Sources – "the data and information assets of an organization" ("PC Magazine," 2011)

Product Attributes - "custom-facing, configurable characteristics of a product or its components" (*Bookshelf,* 2003)

Shopping Orientation – "shopping lifestyles that place emphasis on certain activities in particular" (Visser & du Preez, 2001)

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The objectives of this study were to determine if information sources, product attributes, and shopping orientation will determine a consumer's brand attitude. Before the results were analyzed, the researcher cleaned the data by using two different methods. The frequencies for each question were analyzed and every tenth respondent's answers were analyzed for mistakes and to also make sure a respondent did not give the same answer for every question.

Respondent Demographics

A summary of the respondents' characteristics is shown in Table 4.1. The total number of respondents was 202. One hundred percent of the participants were women ranging in age from thirty-five to seventy-five. Responses were only analyzed from women who own and use anti-aging skincare products. As seen in the table, 17% of the respondents were thirty-five to forty-four, 38% were forty-five to fifty-four, 34.5% were fifty-five to sixty-four, 10% were sixty-five to seventy-four, and only 0.5% of the participants were seventy-five or older. It was not surprising to have fewer participants in the oldest age group since the survey was conducted online and this group is less likely to access computers on a daily basis. The majority of participants were forty-five to fifty-four which was expected by the researcher since the baby boomer generation in general has higher disposable incomes and more time to indulge themselves since their children are grown and out of the house.

Table 4.1
Profile of Respondents

		Number	Percentage
Race	Asian	0	0.0%
	Black	1	0.5%
	Hispanic	2	1.0%
	White (Non-Hispanic)	198	98.0%
	Other	1	0.5%
Region	Northeast	12	6.0%
	Midwest	11	5.5%
	South	169	84.9%
	West	7	3.5%
Age	35-44	34	17.0%
	45-54	76	38.0%
	55-64	69	34.5%
	65-74	20	10.0%
	75 or older	1	0.5%
Income	Under $20,000	0	0.0%
	$20,000-$39,999	9	5.0%
	$40,000-$49,999	11	6.1%
	$50,000-$69,999	23	12.7%
	$70,000-$79,999	7	3.9%
	$80,000-$99,999	31	17.1%
	$100,000-$119,999	22	12.2%
	$120,000-$149,999	15	8.3%
	$150,000 or above	63	34.8%
Education	Less than high school graduate	0	0.0%
	High school graduate	9	4.5%
	Some college	26	12.9%
	Associate degree	15	7.4%
	Bachelor degree	85	42.1%
	Masters, doctoral degree	67	33.2%

Note: Numbers may not add up to 202 due to missing data.

Nearly 85% of the survey participants were from the southern region due to the

researcher's location. However, every region of the United States was represented in the

research. Six percent were from the Northeast, almost another six percent of respondents were

from the Midwest, and about four percent were from the West. It was not likely many respondents would be from the West since the starting point of the snowball sampling began in the South.

Participants' race was predominately white, specifically 98%. Hispanics made up 1%, Blacks made up 0.5%, and the other category made up the remaining 0.5%. There were no responses from Asians. These statistics are also consistent with the research topic since Caucasians tend to show signs of aging earlier than other races (Rawlings, 2006).

Most of the respondents' household incomes were in the $150,000 or above range which is in conjunction with the research topic. Individuals with a greater amount of disposable income are more likely to buy into an expensive skincare system. This range consisted of 34.8% of the respondents. None of the respondents had household incomes $20,000 or less. Five percent of the participants had household incomes of $20,000 to $39,999, 6.1% had $40,000 to $49,999, 12.7% had $50,000 to $69,999, 3.9% had $70,000-$79,999, 17.1% had $80,000 to $99,999, 12.2% had $100,000 to $119,999, and 8.3% had $120,000 to $149,999.

All of the participants had graduated high school. Almost five percent had no further education, 12.9% attended college, 7.4% had their associate degree, 42.1% had a Bachelor's degree, and 33.2% had either a Master's or a doctoral degree. It was expected most of the respondents would be well-educated since education is usually positively correlated to income.

The researcher did not make any formal hypotheses about the demographics but the overall characteristics of the participants were not surprising. However, the researcher was surprised to find that some of the participants with lower household incomes buy skincare products from expensive cosmetic brands. Marketers and retailers need to be aware that what individuals choose to spend their money on cannot always be easily forecasted.

Preliminary Analyses: Instrument Reliability

Before analyzing the results, the researcher obtained estimates of internal consistency reliability to measure the variables. This was done by using the SPSS software program to perform a reliability analysis. For a variable to be reliable, the researcher was looking for the Cronbach's alpha score to be greater than or equal to 0.70. Even if the alpha score was acceptable, the researcher still examined the potential alpha scores if certain questions were to be eliminated. All of the variables were found to be reliable, and none of the research questions had to be eliminated since doing so would not significantly change any of the alpha scores. The Cronbach's alpha scores for each variable can be seen in Table 4.2

Table 4.2
Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Information Sources	0.91
Product Attributes	0.74
Shopping Orientation	0.82
Brand Attitude	0.85

Preliminary Analyses: Factor Analysis

Before testing the individual hypotheses for the study, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with varimax rotation was performed for information sources, product attributes, and shopping orientation. Based on the factor analysis, items with rotated loadings greater than 0.50 and factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were retained. Items that did not load greater than

0.50 and that loaded on more than one factor with a loading score equal to greater than 0.40 on each factor were excluded from the analysis.

According to this criterion, six items for information sources were discarded from the analysis. The six deleted items are listed in Table 4.3. The researcher retained items with communalities greater than 0.40. Variables in this study with communalities less than 0.40 were deleted from the analysis because they were not significant in explaining variance.

Table 4.3
Deleted Items – Information Sources

5	I am easily influenced to purchase an anti-aging skincare product if the advertisements feature a celebrity or model over the age of forty rather than a younger model.
6	If I can relate to the celebrity endorser or model in the advertisement, I am likely to purchase the anti-aging product being advertised.
7	Information about the proven results and success of the product given in advertisements influenced me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.
12	Facts supported by credible sources such as experts in advertisements influenced me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.
15	I decided to buy my anti-aging products after reading product reviews by other women.
16	I bought my specific anti-aging skincare products after they were suggested by a friend or family member.

Once the information sources factor model was re-specified with the exclusion of the six deleted items, sixteen items remained. From these remaining items, four factors were formed, indicating that 64% of the total variance was explained by four information source dimensions. Factor 1 included five items, with Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.84 and eigenvalue of 2.98 explaining 18.7% of the total variance. Factor 2 included five items, with Cronbach's alpha

coefficient 0.78 and eigenvalue of 2.66 explaining 16.6% of the total variance. Factor 3 included four items, with Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.78 and eigenvalue of 1.45 explaining 9.07% of the total variance. Factor 4 included two items, with Cronach's alpha coefficient 0.75 and eigenvalue of 1.12 explaining 7.29% of the total variance.

The four factors were based on similarities among the items that made up each factor (Table 4.4). Factor 1 was titled *Media Source.* The items included in Factor 1 (1, 2, 3, 4, and 19) pertained to the basic influence of television and magazine advertisements (items 1, 2, and 19) and the models and celebrities representing the products (items 3 and 4). Items 5 and 6 were deleted from Factor 1 due to high cross-loading.

Factor 2 was named *Marketing Promotion* and included five items (13, 14, 17, 18, and 20). These questions asked respondents about information provided on brand websites, leaflets/ brochures, and the product's packaging. The information could include facts, guarantees, and pictures of results.

Factor 3 was named *Emotional Content* and included four items (8, 9, 10, and 11). These items dealt with whether or not advertisements affect the consumer emotionally by making them feel a need to improve their physical appearance, depicting their desired lifestyle, or in some way allowing the consumer to personally relate to the advertisement. Items 12 and 15 were removed due to high cross-loading.

The final factor under information sources, factor 4, was named *Rating Information.* It included two items (22 and 21). These questions asked respondents if they were influenced to purchase a certain brand's product after learning it was one of the "top rated" anti-aging skincare products in a magazine article or on a talk-show.

Table 4.4
Factor Analysis Results: Information Sources

Factor	No.	Statement	Eigen Value	Factor Loading	Total Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha
Factor 1: *Media* *Source*	4	The featured models in skincare advertisements influenced me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.		0.84		
	3	Celebrity endorsers influenced me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.		0.84		
	1	Television advertisements influenced me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.	2.98	0.72	18.7%	0.84
	2	Magazine advertisements influenced me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.		0.63		
	19	I purchased my anti-aging skincare product after watching an info-commercial about it.		0.53		
Factor 2: *Marketing* *Promotion*	17	The facts listed in the product's leaflet/ brochure influenced me to purchase it.		0.89		
	18	I purchased my anti-aging product after viewing a leaflet/ brochure that included pictures of results.		0.82		
	20	I purchased my anti-aging product after reading the description on the product's packaging.	2.66	0.67	16.6%	0.78
	14	I decided to buy my anti-aging products after searching brand websites.		0.55		
	13	Guarantees made in an advertisement influenced me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.		0.50		

Factor						
Factor 3: *Emotional* *Content*	9	Advertisements for anti-aging skincare products affect me emotionally.	1.45	0.83	9.07%	0.78
	10	Advertisements for anti-aging skincare products depict my desired lifestyle.		0.80		
	8	Advertisements for anti-aging skincare products make me feel a need to improve myself physically.		0.67		
	11	I am more likely to buy an anti-aging skincare product if I can personally relate to its advertisement.		0.62		
Factor 4: *Rating* *Information*	22	I purchased my anti-aging skincare product because it was mentioned on a talk-show as one of "the top" anti-aging products.	1.17	0.83	7.29%	0.75
	21	I purchased my anti-aging skincare product because it was written about as one of "the top" anti-aging skincare products in a magazine article.		0.77		

The product attribute section was analyzed next. The only item discarded under this section was "I purchased my anti-aging product because I liked the fragrance." The remaining items resulted in three different factors which can be seen in Table 4.5. Over 66% of the total variance was explained by these three dimensions.

Factor 1, *Luxury,* consisted of items 3, 4, 5, and 6, inquired whether women purchase more expensive products because they view them as more quality and also if they intentionally buy a product that will look attractive in their bathroom. The factor had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82 and an eigenvalue of 3.08, explaining 30.8% of the variance.

The second factor, *Formula,* consisted of four items (7, 9, 10, and 11). These items pertained to the fragrance and ingredients in a product's formula and also whether or not women

seek a product that has been allergy-tested. The factor had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.72 and an eigenvalue of 2.08, explaining 20.8% of the variance.

      Price was the last factor under product attributes. It included items 2 and 1 which addressed whether or not the price influenced the purchase of a particular brand's product. This factor had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.79 and an eigenvalue of 1.48, explaining 14.8% of the variance.

Table 4.5
Factor Analysis Results: Product Attributes

Factor	No.	Statement	Eigen Value	Factor Loading	Total Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha
Factor 1: *Luxury*	3	The "expensive" price influenced me to purchase my anti-aging product.		0.81		
	4	The "expensive" price Influenced me to purchase my anti-aging product because I felt the product must be made of quality.		0.81		0.82
			3.08		30.8%	
	5	The colors, text, and/or shape of the packaging influenced me to purchase my anti-aging product.		0.82		
	6	The product's container influenced me to purchase my anti-aging product because I thought it would look attractive on my bathroom counter.		0.76		
Factor 2: *Formula*	9	I purchased my anti-aging product because it was allergy-tested.		0.81		
	11	I purchased my anti-aging product because it was made with all-natural ingredients.		0.76		
			2.08		20.8%	0.72
	10	I purchased my anti-aging product based on the ingredients listed.		0.74		
	7	I purchased my anti-aging product because it is fragrance-free.		0.60		
Factor 3: *Price*	2	The "cheap" price influenced me to purchase my anti-aging skincare product.		0.89		
			1.48		14.8%	0.79
	1	The price influenced me to purchase my anti-aging product.		0.87		

Eight items under shopping orientation were discarded from the analysis since they had communalities less than 0.40. The eight deleted items are listed in Table 4.6. Three factors resulted from the remaining eight items, indicating that 67.8% of the total variance was explained by three shopping orientation dimensions.

Table 4.6
Deleted Items-Shopping Orientation

1	I simply picked up my anti-aging product while running errands at either the grocery store or the drug store.
2	I purchased my anti-aging product from a door-to-door salesperson.
5	I purchased my anti-aging product because the counter selling it was offering a free gift.
6	I purchased my anti-aging product based on a special promotion/ event/ sale.
8	I purchased my anti-aging product because the salesperson pressured me into buying it.
9	I purchased my anti-aging product because the brand practices social responsibility.
11	I purchased my anti-aging product because I am status-conscious and perceive the brand's product as luxury.
13	I purchased my anti-aging product because it was the focus of an eye-catching store display.

Once the shopping orientation factor model was re-specified with the exclusion of the eight deleted items, eight other items remained. Factor 1 included four items, with Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.71 and eigenvalue of 2.71 explaining 33.8% of the total variance. Factor 2 included two items, with Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.75 and eigenvalue of 1.51 explaining 18.9% of the total variance. Factor 3 also included two items, with Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.71 and eigenvalue of 1.21explaining 15.1% of the total variance. The shopping orientation factors can be viewed in Table 4.7.

Factor 1, *Incentive,* consists of items 4, 14, 15, and 16. These questions include whether or not women are tempted by the ease of the internet to order their products online, if they were influenced to purchase their product at a skincare party, if they were offered a free sample first, or if they need to know there is a money-back guarantee. Knowing the products can easily be returned eliminates the perceived risk a consumer might have when purchasing new skincare products.

Factors 2 and 3 each consist of two items. Factor 2 is made up by items 7 and 3. It is titled *Salesperson* because the items inquire whether or not a salesperson romanced the product or if it was recommended during a consultation at the cosmetics counter. The final shopping orientation factor, *Reputation,* includes items 10 and 12. These items pertain to previous opinions the consumer may have had about the brand's credibility and level of quality.

Table 4.7
Factor Analysis Results: Shopping Orientation

Factor	No.	Statement	Eigen Value	Factor Loading	Total Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha
Factor 1: *Incentive*	4	I purchased my anti-aging product because I could easily purchase it online.	2.71	0.61	33.8%	0.71
	14	I purchased my anti-aging product at a skincare party.		0.65		
	16	I purchased my anti-aging product after making sure there was a money-back guarantee.		0.88		
	15	I purchased my anti-aging product after trying a free sample first.		0.73		
Factor 2: *Salesperson*	7	I purchased my anti-aging product because the salesperson talked it up.	1.51	0.87	18.9%	0.75
	3	I purchased my anti-aging product because it was suggested to me during a consultation at a cosmetics counter.		0.86		
Factor 3: *Reputation*	10	I purchased my anti-aging product because I view the brand as more credible than the others.	1.21	0.88	15.1%	0.71
	12	I purchased my anti-aging product because I am familiar with the brand's level of quality.		0.86		

Multiple Regression Analysis

The independent variables were information sources, product attributes, and shopping orientation. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationships of the three independent variables with the dependent variable. The summated score of the six items in the final section of the survey were calculated to derive the dependent variable which was brand attitude.

Multicollinearity among the independent variables may be a threat to the interpretation regarding the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables in the regression analyses. When variables are highly collinear with each other, the highly correlated variables often account for the overlapping of the variability in the dependent variables and, in turn, cause an overestimation for the predictive power of each independent variable on the dependent variable. Multicollinearity can be found by examining the ratio of the largest to smallest eigenvalue, also known as the condition number of the correlation matrix. The condition numbers presented in the collinearity diagnostics charts ranged from 1 to 15.2 which were not greater than the cut-off score of 1,000. Therefore, multicollinearity was not found in this study.

The multiple regression analysis results for the relationship between information sources and brand attitude are shown in Table 4.8. The analysis reported 7.2% of the variance in cosmetic and skincare brand attitude was explained by four information sources factors: *Media Sources, Marketing Promotion, Emotional Content,* and *Rating Information* (R^2=0.07). The regression model was significant in explaining the relationship between information sources and brand attitude, with F=2.67 and $p<.05.$ The test of relative contributions of the independent variables was used to explain the influence of information sources on brand attitude and showed that *Rating Information* (Factor 4) was the strongest indicator and the only significant factor,

with a standardized coefficient of 0.21. The t-value for *Rating Information* was significant at a

0.05 level. Thus, the first hypothesis, stating information sources influence which cosmetic brand

will be favored by a consumer, is supported.

Table 4.8
Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 1

Independent Variable: *Information Sources*			
Dependent Variable: *Brand Attitude*			
Factors: *Media Sources, Marketing Promotion, Emotional Content,* and *Rating Information*			
Analysis of Variance: $F=2.67$, $p < 0.05$			
R^2: 0.07			
Factors	DF	Standardized *Coefficient*	t-value
Media Sources	4	-0.01	-0.09
Marketing Promotion	4	0.05	0.49
Emotional Content	4	0.07	0.72
Rating Information	4	0.21	2.13*
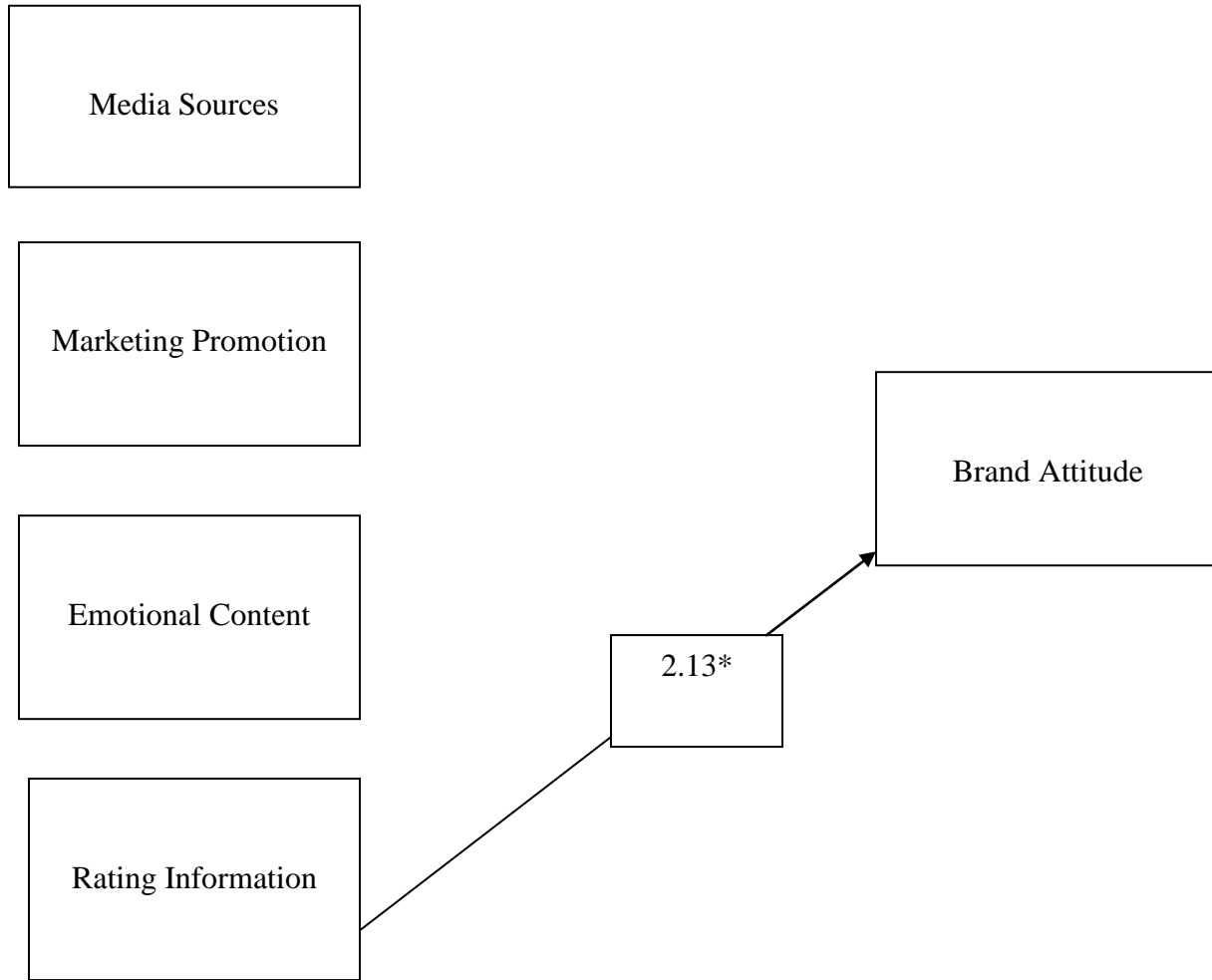
**p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001*

Figure 4.1
Multiple Regression Results for Hypothesis 1: The Relationship between Information Sources and Brand Attitude

Table 4.9 and Figure 4.2 represent the multiple regression results for the second hypothesis. The analysis indicated that 8.3% of the variance in cosmetic and skincare brand attitude was explained by the three product attribute factors: *Luxury, Formula,* and *Price* (R^2=0.08). The regression model was significant in explaining the relationship between product attributes and brand attitude, with F=5.40 and $p < .01$. The test of relative contributions of independent variables was used to explain the influence of product attributes and brand attitude. The test showed that *Luxury* (Factor 1) was the strongest indicator of influence on brand attitude, with a standardized coefficient of 0.20. *Price* (Factor 3) was the second strongest indicator, with a standardized coefficient of -0.18. The negative sign means that women are less likely to buy an anti-aging product if the price is cheap. The t-value for *Luxury* was significant at the 0.01 level and the t-value for *Price* was significant at the 0.05 level. The t-value for *Formula* (Factor 2) was not significant. Because two of the factors were significantly related to brand attitude, the second hypothesis, stating product attributes influence which cosmetic brand will be favored by a consumer, is supported.

Table 4.9
Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 2

	Independent Variable: *Product Attributes* Dependent Variable: *Brand Attitude*		
	Factors: *Luxury, Formula,* and *Price* Analysis of Variance: F=5.40, $p < 0.01$ R^2: 0.08		
Factors	DF	Standardized Coefficient	t-value
Luxury	3	0.20	2.74**
Formula	3	0.10	1.32
Price	3	- 0.18	- 2.46*
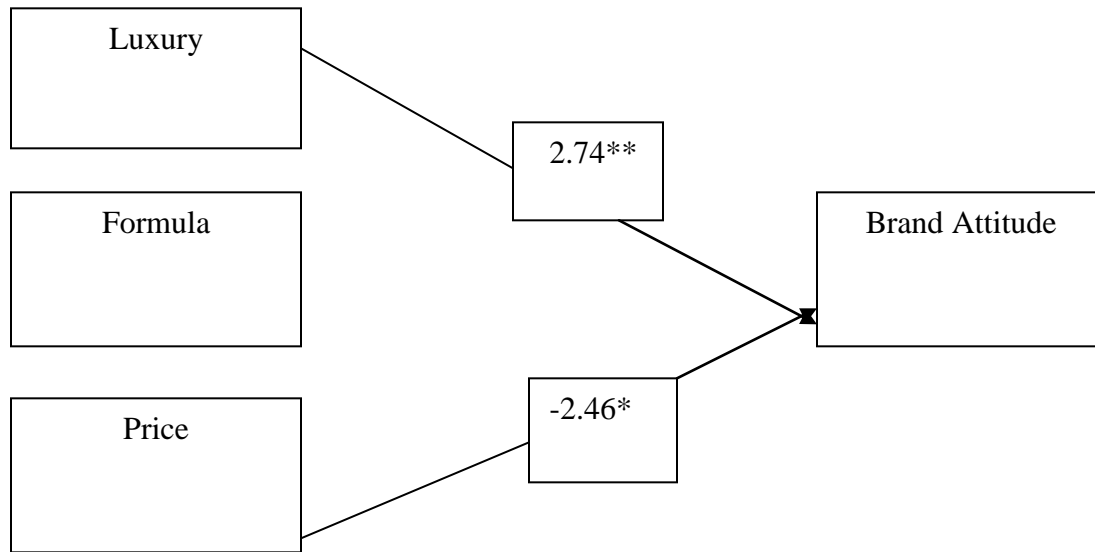
*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$

Figure 4.2
Multiple Regression Results for Hypothesis 2: The Relationship between Product Attributes and Brand Attitude

The results for the testing of the third and final hypothesis can be viewed in Table 4.10

and Figure 4.3. The multiple regression analysis indicated that 54.6% of the variance in cosmetic

and skincare brand attitude was explained by the three shopping orientation factors: *Incentive,*

Salesperson, and *Reputation* (R^2=0.55). The regression model was significant in explaining the

relationship between shopping orientation and brand attitude, with *F*=74.3 and *p* < .001. The test

of relative contributions of independent variables was used to explain the influence of shopping

orientation on brand attitude and showed that *Reputation* (Factor 3) was the strongest indicator of

influence with a standardized coefficient of 0.70. *Salesperson* (Factor 2) was the second

strongest indicator of influence on brand attitude with a standardized coefficient of 0.14. The t-value for *Reputation* was significant at the 0.001 level and the t-value for *Salesperson* was significant at the 0.01 level. *Incentive* (Factor 1) was not found to be significant. These results indicate that the third hypothesis, stating shopping orientation influences which cosmetic brand will be favored by a consumer, is supported.

Table 4.10
Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 3

Independent Variable: *Shopping Orientation*			
Dependent Variable: *Brand Attitude*			
Factors: *Luxury, Formula,* and *Price*			
Analysis of Variance: $F=74.3$, $p < 0.001$			
R²: 0.55			
Factors	DF	Standardized Coefficient	t-value
Incentive	3	0.01	2.22
Salesperson	3	0.14	2.60**
Reputation	3	0.70	13.8***

*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$

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┌─────────────────┐
│   Incentive     │
│                 │
│                 │
└─────────────────┘

┌─────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────┐
│  Salesperson    │      ┌────────┐     │  Brand Attitude │
│                 │──────│2.60**  │────▶│                 │
│                 │      └────────┘     │                 │
└─────────────────┘                     │                 │
                       ┌────────┐      │                 │
                       │13.8*** │─────▶│                 │
┌─────────────────┐    └────────┘      └─────────────────┘
│  Reputation     │───/
│                 │
│                 │
└─────────────────┘
```
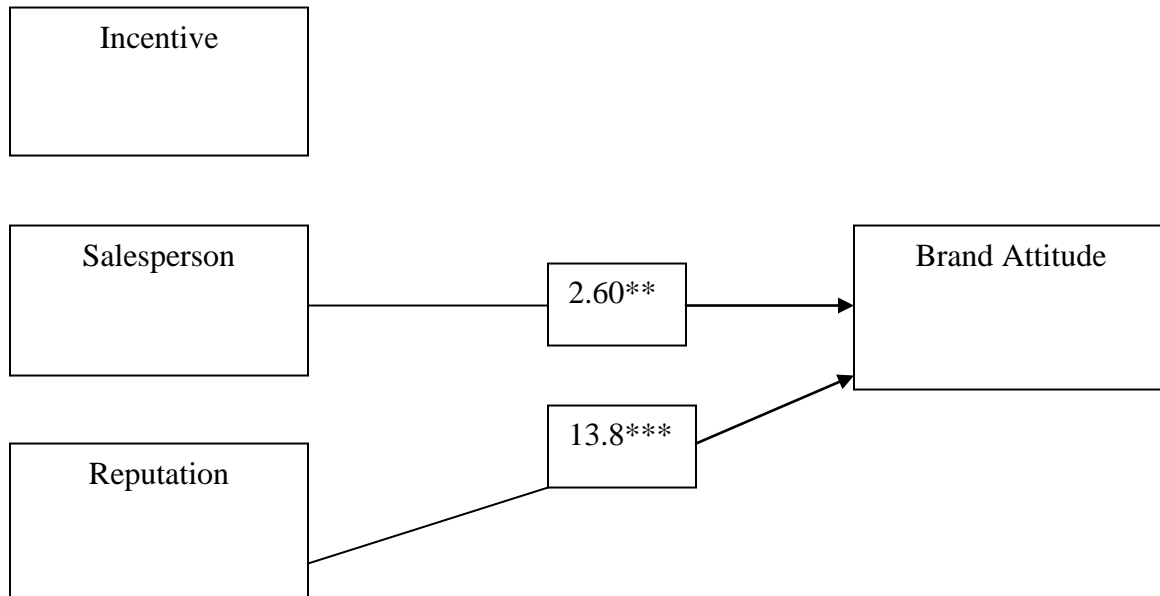
*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

Figure 4.3
Multiple Regression Results for Hypothesis 3: The Relationship between Shopping Orientation and Brand Attitude

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

All three of the hypotheses were found to be true, allowing the entire research model to be supported. Shopping orientation made up the highest percentage of the variance, approximately 54.6%, and was therefore the most influential independent variable. Within shopping orientation, *reputation* and *salesperson* were the strongest indicators of influence. Product attributes and information sources also influence women's purchases of anti-aging skincare products but not to the same extent as shopping orientation. Product attributes explained 8.3% of the variance with the significant factors being *luxury* and *price.* Information sources had only one significant factor, *rating information*, which explained 7.2% of the variance in brand attitude.

Reputation was expected to be the most significant factor since it included women purchasing their product because they were familiar with the brand's level of quality and viewed the brand as more credible. A brand's perceived credibility is important when selling anti-aging skincare products because the products tend to be expensive and it may take awhile to see results. Women want to buy from a brand they trust rather than waste money on a product from a brand they have never previously heard of. If an anti-aging product is getting rid of women's wrinkles, the brand is going to be raved about and the good reputation is going to be well-known among female shoppers. Companies need to make sure they have a marketing staff generating awareness of their brand and its products.

It was no surprise that *salesperson* was the second most influential factor since the department store cosmetic counters are still one of the most common places women buy their anti-aging skincare products. This factor included women purchasing their product because it was suggested to them during a consultation at the cosmetics counter and because the salesperson talked it up. The salesperson at the cosmetics counter represents the brand, and he or she has the power to turn a first-time customer into a loyal customer for life or they can make a bad impression on the customer and the customer may never choose to shop with that brand again. Women shop at the cosmetic counters in order to receive advice. If a consultant is not knowledgeable on the products, the consumer may as well order the products online. Luckily, many of the cosmetic counter consultants seem to enjoy their jobs, and the same department store brands have been around for years, maintaining a solid reputation with consumers. It is important for the companies to realize the power of their consultants and to make sure they are training the consultants in product knowledge as well as in how to build a sale. The consultants should make commission on everything they sell or otherwise they may have no desire to sell as many products as possible to a customer.

Before conducting the study, the researcher thought many women would assume the drug store brands work just as well as the department store brands, and would therefore decide to purchase the cheaper product. This was not the case. The majority of the women mentioned the specific department store brands they use in the short answer section of the survey. Because women are buying department store brands, *luxury* was significant. This includes women buying more expensive products because they perceive them to be made of more quality ingredients. Women are also concerned with the packaging of the product and prefer to buy a skincare product that will look attractive on their bathroom counter. The department store brands tend to

package their products more beautifully than drug store brands. The designer name on the package alone is enough to entice a female shopper, such as Chanel or Dior. If the cheaper brands are looking to increase sales, they may want to reconsider their package design and make something more aesthetically appealing rather than produce a generic container. An attractive package is a simple way to attract consumers to a certain brand when the product is being sold on a shelf among many other anti-aging products.

Price negatively affected women's purchases of anti-aging skincare products because women are not looking for a cheap product. The claims of anti-aging products are already questioned in the minds of female consumers, and if the product is only a few dollars then it will be assumed the product is worthless. If a cream or serum really has the power to make women look younger, consumers expect to pay a decent amount of money for it. In order for women to trust a less-expensive brand, they need to read positive reviews on the brand's products and begin to view the brand as credible.

The last significant factor, *rating information*, showed that women are influenced to purchase an anti-aging skincare product after it is written about in a magazine or mentioned on a talk-show as being one of the top-rated products on the market. This is one way marketers can entice women to switch from one brand to another. Oil of Olay seems to always top these lists which is why it was probably the most frequent drugstore brand mentioned by participants in the survey. One participant said she only allows herself to buy her expensive skincare products once a year and then she uses Oil of Olay the rest of the year to save money. Marketers need to get the brand's products to the different magazines and talk-shows and make sure they are included in the next article or television segment on skincare products.

The non-significant factors included *media source, marketing promotion, emotional content, formula,* and *incentive.* By not being significant to women's purchasing decisions, these non-significant factors suggest companies may be spending unnecessary amounts of money. For example, *media source* and *emotional content* included all of the questions about television and magazine advertisements. The participants in this study did not feel they were influenced to buy their product by advertisements, celebrity endorsers, models, or info-commercials. This could be because the women did not personally relate to the advertisements and did not feel a need to improve their physical appearance after watching one on television or glancing at one in a magazine. Even if an advertisement influenced a woman to start using anti-aging skincare products, she would probably discuss her skincare with a consultant or go ahead and purchase a product from her brand of choice.

Marketing promotion included several different questions that were surprisingly not significant. Women either do not pay attention to guarantees made in advertisements or do not care about them. Most likely, they assume all of the advertisements for anti-aging skincare products are making the same promises and therefore do not pay specific attention to the individual advertisements. Women do not usually read about the products on brand websites, read the product's leaflet/ brochure, nor do women read the description on the product's packaging. Again, this is likely due to women believing they will read the same promises and descriptions for the different products and would therefore rather go with the brand they already perceive to produce quality products and believe is more credible than the others or possibly receive inside tips, opinions, and advice from a consultant.

The researcher had expected *formula* to be significant because that would have included women wanting a product that is fragrance-free, allergy-tested, made of all-natural ingredients,

or that possibly included any key ingredients the consumer was looking for. Previous to the study, the researcher assumed many women would look at the specific ingredients in products to make sure they were not allergic to any and to see if there were new ingredients being used that might signal a better product. Companies such as Clinique and Neutrogena spend time and money ensuring their products will be safe for those consumers with bad allergies. Also, many consumers in today's world seek to use all-natural products because they believe the natural products will be better for their skin and the environment. The insignificance of *formula* should save companies a lot of stress since they do not necessarily have to create all-natural and allergy-tested products.

Incentive included whether women purchase a certain brand's product because it can easily be purchased online, if they purchased it at a skincare party, if they tried a free sample first, and if there was a money-back guarantee. Women are not concerned with purchasing their product online since they would prefer to have their own consultation in-person and really feel like they are purchasing the right product for them. The majority of women probably have never been to a skincare party and a free sample would not be enough for a consumer to decide if a certain skincare product is going to work for them. It was most surprising to find women are not influenced to purchase a product if they know there is a money-back guarantee because it seems knowing that information would lower their perceived risk of purchasing the product. Companies can save themselves a lot of money by not offering a money-back guarantee since there is always a handful of customers who take advantage of the system.

The results of this study show women shop for anti-aging skincare products as a way to indulge themselves. They want to buy expensive-looking products from the luxury brands and they want to be pampered at the cosmetics counter. Shopping at the department store counters

often results in a free makeup application, facial, hand massage, free gifts, etc. They enjoy the process of buying the product and then they happily go home with the promise of a more youthful appearance.

Brands selling anti-aging skincare products need to allow themselves time to develop a solid reputation. It would help if they could hire a well-trained sales staff to share with women the benefits of using the product and why it is the right product for them. The beauty consultants need to be comfortable with inviting the customers to take a seat at the counter and giving them the luxurious experience they seek to have. Departments store brands, such as Estée Lauder, Clinique, Lancôme, and Chanel, have found success with their consultants, as well as brands who hire independent sales leaders, such as Avon and Mary Kay. Lastly, if the marketers can get their brand's products on the top-rated lists, the company is on its way to an exponential increase in sales.

Limitations and Future Study:

There are several limitations associated with this study.

1. Because of convenience sampling, most of the survey participants were white women living in the southern states. The sample is therefore not wholly representative of the total female population across the United States.

2. This study only included women in the sample, but it is well-known that men are becoming more concerned with skincare. Some of the cosmetic and skincare companies have a separate skincare line just for men.

3. This study examined every factor the researcher could think of that could influence a woman to favor a certain cosmetic and skincare brand over the others. This prevented the factors from being individually studied in-depth.

Based on the limitations discussed, several suggestions can be made for future studies. First, additional studies should be conducted in various regions of the United States rather than just in the South in order to determine if the results found in this study are consistent when sampling women in other parts of the country. In addition, a larger number of survey participants would be beneficial in order to gain a better idea of what exactly is most important to women when purchasing an anti-aging skincare product. A study including men in the sample would also be conducive because it could possibly lead to new marketing opportunities for cosmetic and skincare companies. This study provides a general basis in understanding the purchasing of anti-aging skincare products. Future researchers may want to choose certain parts of the study to elaborate on in order to gain a better understanding of the influence certain factors have on women's cosmetic and skincare brand attitudes.

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APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM AND QUESTIONNAIRE

The University of Georgia

Dear Participant,

      I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to participate in this questionnaire. Answering the questions should take no more than fifteen minutes. Allow me to tell you a bit about myself as well as the research being conducted.

      My name is Leslie Bailey and I am pursing a Master's degree in Textiles, Merchandising, and Interiors at the University of Georgia in Athens. This questionnaire is part of my graduate thesis work and I look forward to reviewing your responses!

      This research focuses on identifying the merchandising and marketing techniques that have the most influence on women's purchasing decisions towards anti-aging skincare products. Most women want to appear younger. With all of the anti-aging skincare products on the market, it will be interesting to see how women determine which products they will use. Also, it takes time to really see results and women are often unsure if they will see any results at all. Anti-aging products range in price from a few dollars to hundreds of dollars and you can pick one up while buying your groceries, shopping at your favorite department store, or by simply ordering online. The thought process behind this research is to gain knowledge of the particular areas merchandisers and marketers should focus their attention when trying to sell a certain anti-aging product. Before answering the following questions think about the moisturizers, serums, and eye creams you are currently using or might have used in the past. Even if you are not one who sticks with a beauty routine, maybe you have a product in mind you have been considering buying or were given a free sample of recently. By participating in the research, you have the possible opportunity to let cosmetic companies know what is important to you when purchasing skincare products.

      Please be honest with your answers. There is no right or wrong answer and participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Please note that internet communications are insecure and there is a limit to the confidentiality that can be guaranteed due to the technology itself. If you are not comfortable with the level of confidentiality provided by the Internet, please feel free to print out a copy of the survey, fill it out by hand, and mail it to me at the address given below, with no return address on the envelope. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research

participant should be directed to The Chairperson, University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, 612 Boyd GSRC, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; telephone (706) 542-3199; email address irb@uga.edu. Please feel free to contact us regarding this research at any time with questions or comments and thank you again for lending your time to this research,

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Directions: Based on your experiences purchasing anti-aging skincare products, including moisturizers, serums, and eye creams, think about what led you to purchase the particular brand of product and why you purchased it at the specific location. Also consider different reasons why you would want to buy a particular anti-aging product. Please show the extent to which you think a particular merchandising or marketing technique has an effect on your purchasing decisions towards anti-aging products. If you feel a certain merchandising or marketing technique has no effect on your purchasing decision, mark the number "1". If you feel a certain merchandising or marketing technique is absolutely essential in your decision to buy an anti-aging product, mark the number "5". If your feelings are less strong, mark one of the numbers in the middle. Answers are not right or wrong. We simply want to gain an understanding of what influences you to purchase a particular anti-aging product over all of the others.

Part I: Information Sources:

I1. Television advertisements influenced me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I2. Magazine advertisements influenced me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.

1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I3. Celebrity endorsers influenced me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.

1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I4. The featured models in skincare advertisements influenced me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.

1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I5. I am easily influenced to purchase an anti-aging skincare product if the advertisements feature a celebrity or model over the age of forty rather than a younger model.

1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I6. If I can relate to the celebrity endorser or model in the advertisement, I am likely to purchase the anti-aging product being advertised.

1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I7. Information about the proven results and success of the product given in advertisements influenced me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.

1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I8. Advertisements for anti-aging skincare products make me feel a need to improve myself physically.

	1	2	3	4	5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I9. Advertisements for anti-aging skincare products affect me emotionally.

	1	2	3	4	5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I10. Advertisements for anti-aging products depict my desired lifestyle.

	1	2	3	4	5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I11. I am more likely to buy an anti-aging skincare product if I can personally relate to its advertisement.

	1	2	3	4	5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I12. Facts supported by credible sources such as experts in advertisements influenced me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.

	1	2	3	4	5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I13. Guarantees made in an advertisement influenced me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.

	1	2	3	4	5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I14. I decided to buy my anti-aging products after searching brand websites.

	1	2	3	4	5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I15. I decided to buy my anti-aging products after reading product reviews by other women.

	1	2	3	4	5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I16. I bought my specific anti-aging products after they were suggested by a friend or family member.

	1	2	3	4	5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I17. The facts listed in the product's leaflet/ brochure influenced me to purchase it.

	1	2	3	4	5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I18. I purchased my anti-aging product after viewing a leaflet/ brochure that included pictures of results.

	1	2	3	4	5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I19. I purchased my anti-aging product after watching an info-commercial about it.

	1	2	3	4	5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I20. I purchased my anti-aging product after reading the description on the product's packaging.

	1	2	3	4	5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I21. I purchased my anti-aging product because it was written about as one of the "top" anti-aging products in a magazine article.

            1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

I22. I purchased my anti-aging product because it was mentioned on a talk show as one of the "top" anti-aging products.

            1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

Part II: Product Attributes:

P1. The price influenced me to purchase my anti-aging product.

      1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

P2. The "cheap" price influenced me to purchase my anti-aging product.

      1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

P3. The "expensive" price influenced me to purchase my anti-aging product.

      1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

P4. The "expensive" price influenced me to purchase my anti-aging product because I felt like the product must be made of quality.

      1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

P5. The colors, text, and/or shape of the packaging influenced me to purchase my anti-aging product.

      1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

P6. The product's container influenced me to purchase my anti-aging product because I thought it would look attractive on my bathroom counter.

      1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

P7. I purchased my anti-aging product because it is fragrance-free.

      1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

P8. I purchased my anti-aging product because I liked the fragrance.

      1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

P9. I purchased my anti-aging product because it was allergy-tested.

      1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

P10. I purchased my anti-aging product based on the ingredients listed.

       1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

P11. I purchased my anti-aging product because it is made with all-natural ingredients.

       1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

Part III. Shopping Orientation:

S1. I simply picked up my anti-aging product while running errands at either the grocery store or the drug store.

       1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S2. I purchased my anti-aging product from a door-to-door salesperson.

       1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S3. I purchased my anti-aging product because it was suggested to me during a consultation at a cosmetics counter.

       1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S4. I purchased my anti-aging product because I could easily purchase it online.

       1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S5. I purchased my anti-aging product because the counter selling it was offering a free gift.

       1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S6. I purchased my anti-aging product based on a special promotion/ event/ sale.

       1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S7. I purchased my anti-aging product because the salesperson talked it up.

       1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S8. I purchased my anti-aging product because the salesperson pressured me into buying it.

       1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S9. I purchased my anti-aging product because the brand practices social responsibility.

       1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S10. I purchased my anti-aging product because I view the brand as more credible than the others.

       1   2   3   4   5

"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S11. I purchased my anti-aging product because I am status-conscious and perceive the brand's product as luxury.

	1	2	3	4	5
"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S12. I purchased my anti-aging product because I am familiar with the brand's level of quality.

	1	2	3	4	5
"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S13. I purchased my anti-aging product because it was the focus of an eye-catching store display.

	1	2	3	4	5
"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S14. I purchased my anti-aging product at a skincare party.

	1	2	3	4	5
"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S15. I purchased my anti-aging product after trying a free sample first.

	1	2	3	4	5
"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

S16. I purchased my anti-aging product after making sure there was a money-back guarantee.

	1	2	3	4	5
"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

Part IV. Brand Attitude and Intent to Purchase

B1. I purchased my anti-aging product from the cosmetic and skincare brand I perceive as superior to the rest.

	1	2	3	4	5
"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

B2. I am proud to buy from the brand that created my anti-aging skincare product.

	1	2	3	4	5
"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

B3. I purchased my particular anti-aging product because I am a frequent shopper with the brand.

	1	2	3	4	5
"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

B4. My favorable view of the brand is what led me to purchase my particular anti-aging skincare product.

	1	2	3	4	5
"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

B5. I would not have purchased my anti-aging skincare product if I had not previously had a positive attitude towards the brand.

	1	2	3	4	5
"Strongly Disagree"   "Strongly Agree"

B6. The brand that makes the product is the most important attribute when considering the purchase of an anti-aging skincare product.

1	2	3	4	5
"Strongly Disagree"				"Strongly Agree"

Part V. Demographic Section

1. Age:
   35-44
   45-54
   55-64
   65-74
   75 or older

2. Race:
   Asian
   Black
   Hispanic
   White (Non-Hispanic)
   Other

3. Location by Region:
   Northeast
   Midwest
   South
   West

4. Household Income:
   Under $20,000
   $20,000-$39,999
   $40,000-$49,999
   $50,000-$69,999
   $70,000-$79,999
   $80,000-$99,999
   $100,000-$119,999
   $120,000-$149,999
   $150,000 or Above

5. Education:
   Less than high school graduate
   High school graduate
   Some college
   Associate degree
   Bachelor degree
   Masters, doctoral degree

6. [Optional] Which brand do you buy your anti-aging skincare products from and why?