

Summary

Sunscreen products are an important part of sun prevention, protecting the skin from the harmful effects of UV rays, reducing the risk of skin cancer, sunburn, hyperpigmentation or photo-ageing. These are cosmetic products of particular importance for health, thanks to their UV filters they protect the skin from the effects of overexposure to the sun's rays. In connection with the development of the market of sunscreen products, the growing interest of consumers in natural cosmetics, as well as taking into account scientific reports on the negative impact of selected UV filters on the human body and the environment, there is a need for systematic analysis of consumer attitudes, behaviour and preferences regarding natural sunscreen products (NPP) and the improvement and adaptation of sunscreen cosmetics to the needs and expectations of buyers.

Hence, the scientific objective of the study was to analyse the attitudes, behaviour and preferences of consumers in the context of the potential for the development of natural sunscreen products in Poland and the improvement of this product category.

Five research stages were planned: investigation of the availability of TPP (traditional sunscreen products) and NPP on the e-commerce market in Poland through an analysis of the assortment of sunscreen products including identification of brands offering TPP and NPP in selected outlets in Poland; assessment of consumer knowledge of NPP and its impact on purchasing decisions; identification of consumer attitudes and behaviours towards NPP; identification of consumer preferences towards NPP; identification of attitudes and behaviours of sunscreen cosmetics producers in Poland towards NPP and prospects for expanding their product range with this product category.

The following research hypotheses were adopted in order to achieve the stated aim of the study:

H1. The level of consumers' knowledge of natural sunscreen products is low, which influences their purchasing decisions.

H2. Consumers show positive attitude towards natural radioprotective products, but this does not result in increased interest in this category of cosmetics.

H3. Consumers prefer natural sunscreen products with a high sun protection factor and free of potentially harmful ingredients.

H4. Sunscreen cosmetics manufacturers in Poland are interested in increasing their product range with natural sunscreen products.

Both quantitative (survey research) and qualitative (questionnaire interview) survey research methods were used to verify the research hypotheses.

The results of the study confirmed the low level of consumers' knowledge and self-assessment of their knowledge of natural sunscreen products and its influence on their purchase decisions. It was also found that consumers have positive attitude towards NPP, which influences their purchase intentions and behaviour, as well as their overall interest in this product category. The hypothesis that consumers prefer natural sunscreen products with a high sun protection factor and free of potentially harmful ingredients was positively verified. Interviews conducted with manufacturers of sunscreen products in Poland revealed that they are interested in expanding their product range with NPP. All co-interviewees expressed a positive attitude towards this product category.

As a result of the critical analysis of the literature and taking into account the results of the empirical study, the following final conclusions and recommendations were formulated:

1. There is a need for a standardised definition of 'natural cosmetic' and for information and education campaigns on natural radioprotective products.
2. Increase in the level of knowledge about NPP can increase consumer interest in this product category and the likelihood of purchasing them.
3. The results of the study are significant for the producers of sunscreen products in Poland, they confirm the positive attitudes and consumer interest in NPP and indicate the need to improve sunscreen cosmetics and/or modify existing products and expand the range with NPP.
4. Knowledge of consumer preferences can be used to design new products or modify existing ones to meet consumer needs and expectations.
5. As purchasers are an important participants in market exchange, analysis of their attitudes, behaviour and preferences can be crucial in planning future activities of sunscreen product manufacturers, setting marketing targets and developing a strategic marketing plan.

6. Due to the highly variable environment and the complexity of market conditions and dependencies, a systematic analysis of the situation should be performed in order to obtain up-to-date data and information on market trends and buyers' needs.

The result of the research is the acquisition of information which is an essential part of marketing research. As a result of the research, new knowledge has been gained about the direction of changes in demand, enabling sunscreen product manufacturers to verify and possibly modify their marketing strategies. The study and analysis of changing consumer preferences enables the identification of changes in the environment, improvement and shaping of the quality of the products offered. It makes it possible to better adapt the supply and quality of products to the needs and expectations of buyers. The results of the research can provide guidance for manufacturers to create a product desired by consumers, and can be crucial in the process of designing, modifying or improving sunscreen products. This thesis is a contribution to the development of science on the potential for the development of natural sunscreen products in Poland and marketing management.