

# A Comprehensive Study On Consumer Buying Behaviour in the Shampoo Market

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**Abstract:** *Consumer buying behaviour refers to the process by which individuals select, purchase, use, and evaluate products to satisfy their needs and wants. In today's competitive business environment, understanding consumer behaviour has become essential for marketers to design effective product offerings and communication strategies. This is particularly true in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector, where frequently purchased products such as shampoos are influenced by a mix of functional performance, sensory appeal, brand trust, and price.*

**Keywords:** *Consumer*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Indian shampoo market is a key segment of the FMCG industry, driven by rising disposable incomes, increasing awareness of personal grooming, and rapid digitalisation of retail channels. Recent industry trends indicate growing consumer preference for specialised shampoos such as anti-dandruff, hair fall control, nourishment, herbal, and premium variants. Consumers are increasingly conscious about ingredients, scalp health, and long-term hair care benefits rather than basic cleansing alone.

Market reports and industry news highlight a strong shift toward natural, herbal, and sulfate-free shampoos, along with rising demand for premium and salon-inspired products. At the same time, while e-commerce platforms are expanding rapidly, traditional kirana stores and supermarkets continue to dominate shampoo sales due to accessibility and convenience. This reflects a hybrid buying behaviour where consumers explore brands digitally but often purchase offline.

This study aims to analyse consumer buying behaviour in the shampoo market using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. The research focuses on understanding brand preference, reasons for brand selection, purchase channels, packaging size preferences, influence of advertisements and promotions, and willingness to pay for better quality. The findings of this study are expected to provide meaningful insights into current consumer trends and support better marketing decision-making in the FMCG sector.

### Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

- To study the consumer buying behaviour in the shampoo market.
- To identify the most preferred shampoo brands among consumers.



- To analyse the key factors influencing shampoo brand selection.
- To examine preferred purchase locations and packaging sizes.
- To understand the influence of advertisements and promotional offers on buying decisions.
- To analyse consumer brand loyalty and willingness to pay a premium for better quality.

### **Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study is limited to understanding the buying behaviour of shampoo users based on primary data collected through a questionnaire. The study covers aspects such as brand preference, reasons for selection, purchase channels, packaging preferences, advertisement influence, promotional impact, and price sensitivity. The research provides insights relevant to FMCG companies, marketers, and retailers operating in the shampoo market. However, the findings are based on the responses collected and may vary with changes in consumer demographics, location, and market conditions.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Despite careful data collection and analysis, the study has certain limitations:

- The study is based on a limited sample size, which may not fully represent the entire population.
- Convenience sampling was used, which may lead to response bias.
- The data collected is based on self-reported responses, which may be influenced by personal opinions and perceptions.
- The study focuses only on shampoo products and does not include other hair care products such as conditioners or oils.
- Time constraints restricted the scope of deeper comparative analysis.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Consumer buying behaviour has been widely studied in marketing literature, particularly in the FMCG and personal care sectors. According to Kotler and Armstrong, consumer behaviour is influenced by psychological, personal, social, and cultural factors, all of which play a crucial role in habitual purchase categories such as shampoos. FMCG products generally involve low involvement, but strong brand recall and past experience guide repeat purchases.

Recent industry studies indicate a shift in consumer preference toward performance-based and wellness-oriented hair care products. Market reports published in 2024–25 highlight increasing demand for shampoos offering benefits such as hair nourishment, smoothness, scalp care, and damage repair. Consumers today are more informed about ingredients and are actively choosing sulfate-free, paraben-free, and herbal formulations.

Research by Nielsen and other FMCG tracking agencies shows that while price sensitivity remains important in India, brand trust and perceived quality significantly influence shampoo selection, especially among urban and young consumers. Studies also reveal that promotional offers support trial but do not guarantee long-term brand switching.

Recent news and market analysis further suggest that digital advertising, influencer marketing, and online reviews are shaping awareness and brand perception, although final purchase decisions are still strongly influenced by personal experience and availability at nearby retail outlets. These findings are consistent with the primary data collected in this study.

## **III. INDUSTRY PROFILE**

The Indian shampoo market forms a significant part of the FMCG personal care segment and has shown steady growth over recent years. The market is driven by rising disposable incomes, increasing focus on grooming and hygiene, and growing awareness about hair and scalp health. Consumers are shifting from basic cleansing shampoos to specialised products offering targeted benefits.



**Brand Profile: Dove**



Dove is a leading personal care brand owned by Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL). In India, Dove shampoos are positioned around nourishment, moisture retention, and damage repair. The brand focuses on providing gentle yet effective hair care solutions suitable for daily use. Dove's strong distribution network, wide product range, and consistent advertising have helped it build strong brand trust and market leadership.

**Brand Profile: Head & Shoulders**



Head & Shoulders is a global anti-dandruff shampoo brand owned by Procter & Gamble (P&G). The brand is known for its problem-solution approach, particularly in dandruff control and scalp health. Head & Shoulders has built a strong market presence in India through functional positioning, celebrity endorsements, and continuous product innovation.

**Industry Trends**

Recent trends in the shampoo industry include increasing demand for natural and herbal products, premiumisation, and growth of online retail channels. While kirana stores and supermarkets continue to dominate sales, e-commerce platforms are gaining importance for premium and niche products. These trends reflect evolving consumer preferences and changing buying behaviour.

**IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

The research design adopted for this study is descriptive in nature, aimed at understanding consumer buying behaviour in the shampoo market.

**Source of Data**

The study is based on primary data collected directly from consumers using a structured questionnaire designed through Google Forms. Secondary data was collected from textbooks, research articles, industry reports, and online sources.

**Sample Size and Sampling Method**

A total of more than 110 respondents participated in the survey. Convenience sampling method was used due to time and accessibility constraints.

**Data Collection Tool**

A structured questionnaire consisting of multiple-choice and rating-scale questions was used to collect data related to brand preference, reasons for selection, purchase location, packaging preference, advertisement influence, promotional impact, and price sensitivity.

**Tools for Data Analysis**

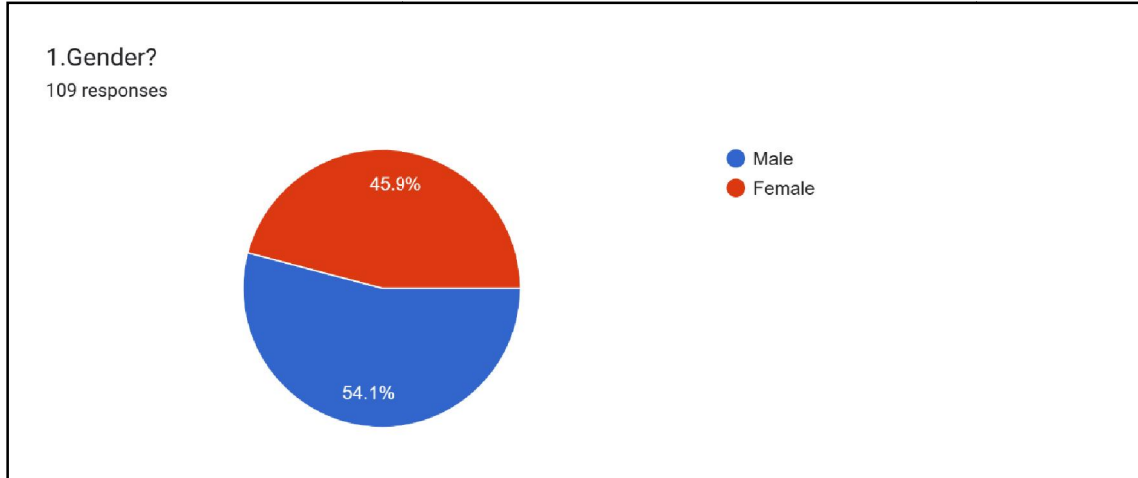
The collected data was analysed using percentage analysis and graphical representation such as bar charts and pie charts. Interpretations were drawn based on observed trends and patterns.



**V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

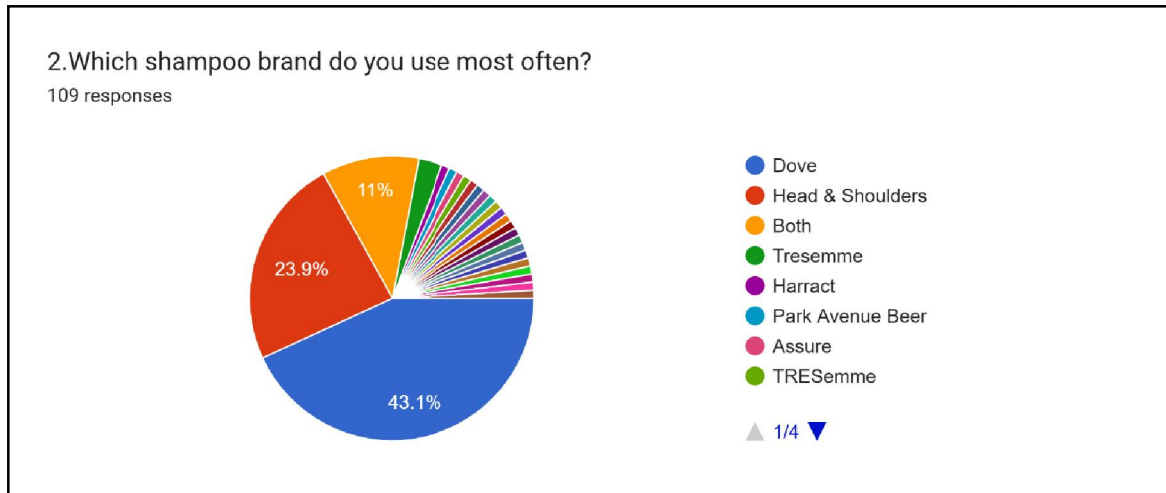
**Gender Distribution**

The survey sample comprises 54.1% male and 45.9% female respondents, indicating a fairly balanced gender representation. This demographic split suggests that shampoo marketing and product development should cater to both genders, with slight emphasis on male preferences due to their marginal majority.



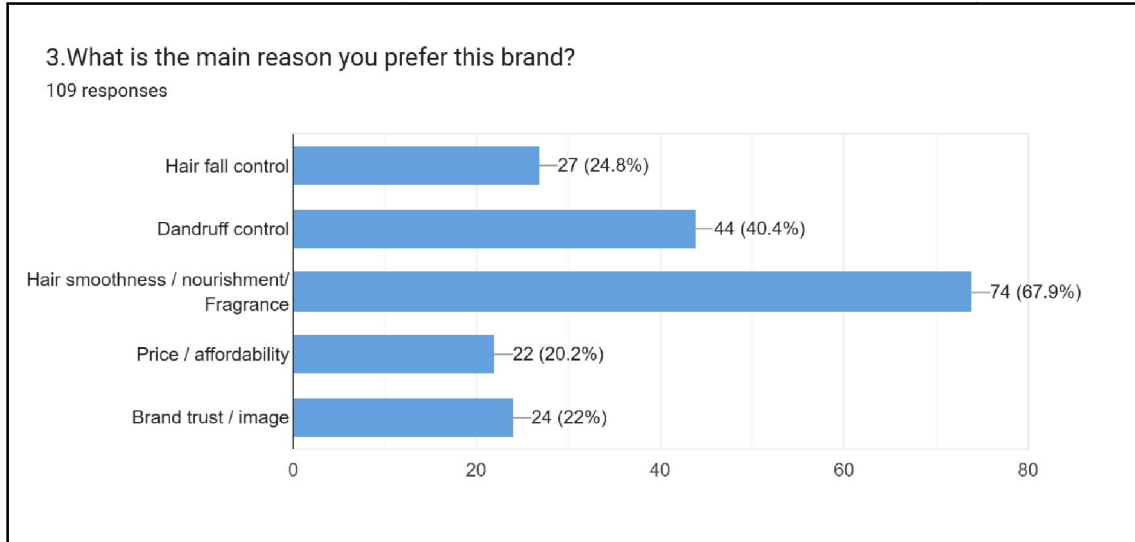
**Most Used Shampoo Brands**

Dove emerged as the most preferred shampoo brand among respondents, capturing 43.1% of the market share, followed by Head & Shoulders at 23.9%. The dominance of Dove highlights its strong brand equity and consumer trust, while Head & Shoulders maintains relevance due to its functional benefits like dandruff control.



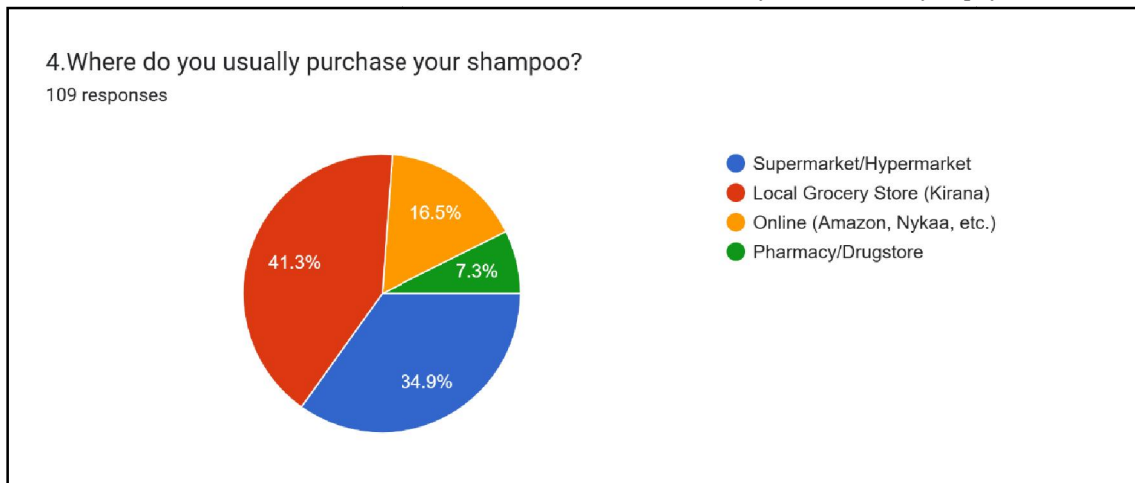
**Reason for Brand Preference**

The leading reason for brand preference was hair smoothness, nourishment, and fragrance, cited by 60.6% of respondents. Dandruff control (40.4%) and hair fall control (24.8%) were also significant factors. This indicates that consumers prioritize sensory and performance benefits over price and brand image when selecting a shampoo.



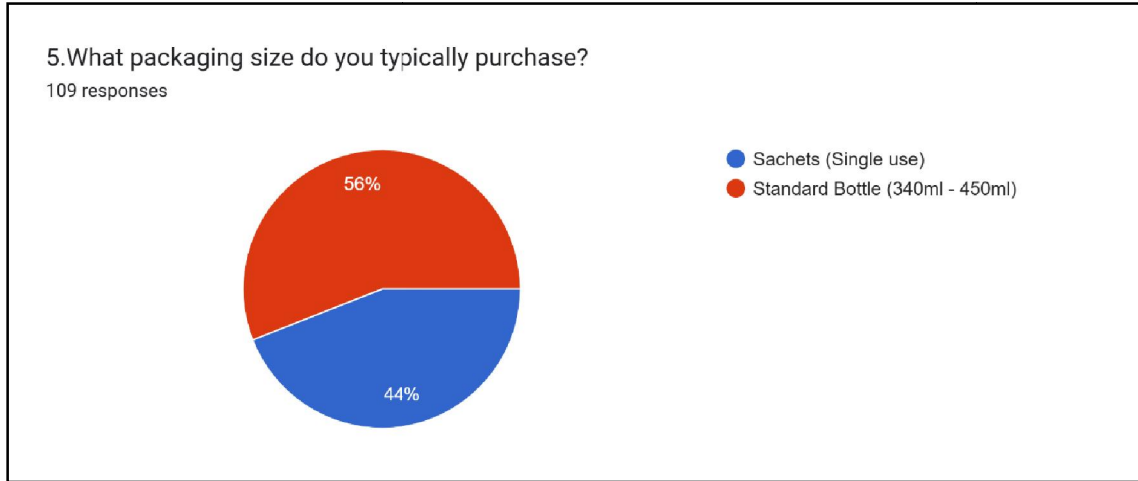
**Purchase Location**

Local grocery stores (Kirana) were the most common purchase point for shampoo (41.3%), followed by supermarkets/hypermarkets (34.9%). Online platforms accounted for 16.5%, and pharmacies just 7.3%. This suggests that offline retail remains dominant, and brands should focus on visibility and availability in physical stores.



**Preferred Packaging Size**

Standard bottles (340ml–450ml) were preferred by 56% of respondents, while 44% opted for single-use sachets. This split reflects diverse consumer needs—bottles appeal to regular users seeking value, whereas sachets cater to budget-conscious or trial-based buyers, emphasizing the need for dual packaging strategies.



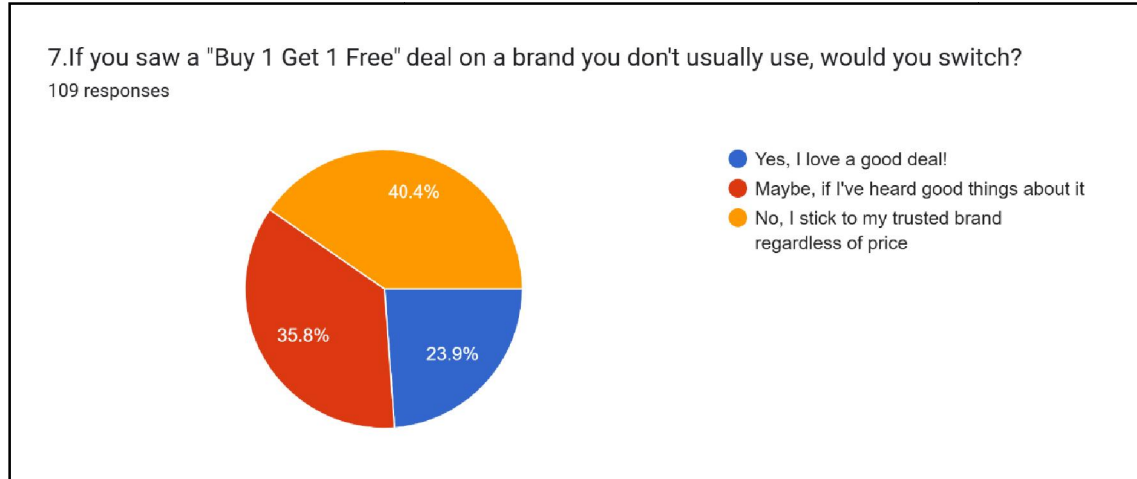
**Influence of Advertisements**

Advertisements had a moderate influence on shampoo purchase decisions, with an average rating of 3.51 out of 5. While ads play a role in shaping consumer awareness and interest, actual purchase decisions are likely driven more by product experience and word-of-mouth.



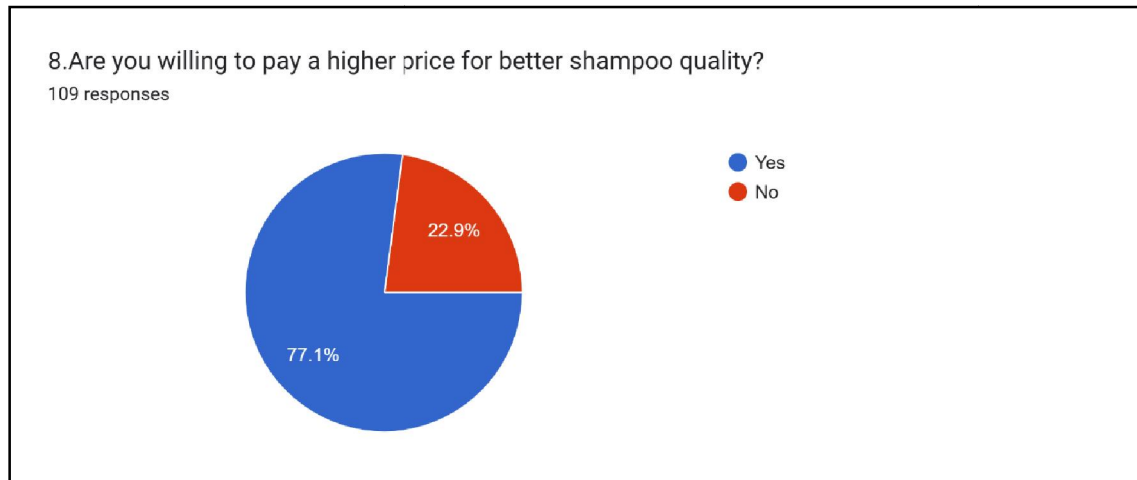
**Reaction to 'Buy 1 Get 1 Free' Offers**

When presented with a promotional deal on an unfamiliar brand, 40.4% of respondents said they would stick to their trusted brand, while 35.8% might consider switching if the brand had a good reputation. Only 23.9% were motivated purely by the deal. This underscores the importance of brand trust over price incentives.



**Willingness to Pay More for Better Quality**

A significant majority (77.1%) of respondents expressed willingness to pay a higher price for better shampoo quality. This indicates that consumers value product efficacy and are open to premium offerings, suggesting potential for brands to introduce higher-end variants with enhanced benefits.



## **VI. CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING FACTORS**

### **6.1 Reasons for Brand Preference**

Based on the primary data collected, the most important reason for shampoo brand preference is hair smoothness, nourishment, and fragrance, cited by 60.6% of respondents. This indicates that consumers place high importance on sensory appeal and visible hair results. Dandruff control was the second most important factor, selected by 40.4% of respondents, highlighting the continued relevance of functional problem-solving benefits. Hair fall control, chosen by 24.8% of respondents, also plays a significant role but is secondary compared to smoothness and nourishment. Overall, the data suggests that consumers prioritise performance and experience over factors such as price and brand image.

### **6.2 Influence of Advertisements on Buying Behaviour**

The influence of advertisements on shampoo purchase decisions was measured on a five-point scale. The average score obtained was 3.51 out of 5, indicating a moderate level of influence. This suggests that advertisements are effective in creating awareness and recall, but they are not the sole drivers of purchase decisions. Consumers rely more on personal experience, recommendations, and product performance before making repeat purchases.

### **6.3 Impact of Promotional Offers on Brand Switching**

When respondents were asked about their reaction to a Buy One Get One Free offer on an unfamiliar brand, 40.4% stated that they would continue to stick to their trusted brand. Around 35.8% indicated that they might consider switching if they had heard positive feedback about the brand, while only 23.9% were influenced purely by the promotional deal. This data clearly shows that brand trust outweighs price promotions and that offers mainly support trial rather than long-term switching.

### **6.4 Willingness to Pay a Premium Price**

The data reveals that 77.1% of respondents are willing to pay a higher price for better shampoo quality, while only 22.9% are not willing to do so. This indicates strong perceived value for quality and performance among consumers. The finding highlights the growing acceptance of premium and value-added shampoo variants, especially among young and urban consumers.

## **VII. BRAND LOYALTY AND PRICE SENSITIVITY**

The study reveals that a significant number of consumers remain loyal to their preferred shampoo brand. Even when promotional offers are available on other brands, many consumers stick to their trusted brand.

However, attractive promotional schemes such as Buy One Get One Free can encourage temporary brand switching. Price sensitivity is higher among students and lower-income groups.

A large number of respondents are willing to pay a higher price for brands they trust, indicating acceptance of premium pricing.

### **Role of Promotion (ATL and BTL Activities)**

Advertisements have a moderate to high influence on shampoo buying behaviour. ATL activities such as television and digital advertising help in creating awareness and brand recall.

BTL activities such as in-store promotions, discounts, and combo offers play a direct role in influencing purchase decisions at the point of sale.

The study suggests that promotions act as a supporting factor rather than the primary decision-maker.

### **Findings**

Based on the detailed analysis of primary data collected from respondents, the following findings were derived:

The survey sample consisted of 54.1% male and 45.9% female respondents, indicating balanced gender representation and universal shampoo usage.



Dove emerged as the most used shampoo brand with 43.1% preference, followed by Head & Shoulders at 23.9%, reflecting strong brand trust and equity.

The most important reason for brand preference was hair smoothness, nourishment, and fragrance (60.6%), followed by dandruff control (40.4%) and hair fall control (24.8%).

Local kirana stores (41.3%) and supermarkets/hypermarkets (34.9%) are the dominant purchase locations, while online platforms account for 16.5%, showing emerging digital adoption.

Standard bottle packaging (56%) is preferred over sachets (44%), indicating regular usage along with continued importance of affordability.

Advertisements have a moderate influence on buying decisions with an average score of 3.51 out of 5.

Despite promotional offers, 40.4% of consumers remain loyal to their trusted brand, highlighting strong brand loyalty.

A significant 77.1% of respondents are willing to pay a premium price for better shampoo quality, indicating scope for premiumisation.

### **IX. CONCLUSION**

The study, based entirely on primary data collected from shampoo users, concludes that consumer buying behaviour in the shampoo market is largely driven by product performance, sensory benefits, and brand trust. The dominance of brands such as Dove and Head & Shoulders demonstrates the importance of consistent quality and functional benefits. While advertisements help in awareness creation, actual purchase decisions are influenced more by personal experience and perceived value. The high willingness to pay for better quality reflects a positive outlook for premium shampoo brands in the Indian market.

### **Suggestions**

Companies should focus on enhancing product benefits such as smoothness, nourishment, and dandruff control, as these are the top decision drivers.

Brand trust should be strengthened through consistent quality and transparent communication.

Promotional offers should be used strategically to encourage trial without weakening brand loyalty.

Strong presence in kirana stores and supermarkets should be maintained, along with growing investment in online channels.

Premium variants with advanced benefits can be introduced, as a large proportion of consumers are willing to pay higher prices for quality.

