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## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

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# The Pink Tax and Gender-Based Pricing: Financial Implications, Consumer Behavior, and Leadership for Market Equity

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**ABSTRACT:** The Pink Tax is a term that was created to describe gender-based price discrimination in which things marketed to women are typically more expensive than comparable products for men. Through the examination of the Pink Tax, its consequences for consumers, and the marketing strategies that maintain pricing bias, this study will explore the costs of the Pink Tax. The research, grouping product categories and consumer behaviours, aims to identify unethical pricing practices and reveal areas that need regulatory action.

This shows the gravity of the situation and the concern through this Pink Tax that transcended around 2023, the study highlighted the products affected by this Tax are personal care products, clothing, and essential goods. It will mainly focus on its financial cost to women, safety knowledge of consumers, and price equity solutions.

A mixed-method approach was used, integrating qualitative customer impression surveys with quantitative pricing comparisons across many brands. Price trends and behavioural patterns that contributed to this occurrence were found using statistical methods including regression models and correlation analysis.

The findings highlight the need for more openness, consumer activism, and regulatory monitoring by revealing a notable cost gap in gendered pricing. Future studies should examine international laws and corporate responsibility to create a just market free from financial discrimination based on gender.

**KEYWORDS:** Pink Tax, Consumer pricing, Consumer behaviour, fair market pricing, Gender-based pricing.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The gender-based pricing gap known as the "Pink Tax" occurs when goods and services targeted at women are more expensive than equivalent options targeted at males. Personal care, apparel, and even professional services like dry cleaning and haircuts are all affected by this economic- phenomena. Although the word "tax" suggests a levy imposed by the government, the Pink Tax is a systemic problem caused by company pricing practices and customer perception rather than an actual tax.

While having little to no practical differences, research has repeatedly demonstrated that women's items are more expensive than men's. According to seminal research conducted in 2015 by the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs, women's products were, on average, 7% more expensive than men's in a number of categories. The gap is even more pronounced in the personal care sector, where women spend 13% more on hygiene goods than men do. Similar patterns have been noted in India, where women spend more on financial services, deodorants, and razors.

Researchers believe that long-standing gender stereotypes and marketing strategies that portray women as less price-sensitive and more brand-loyal customers are to blame for this pricing discrepancy. Kotler & Keller (2022) claim that companies use gender-based pricing tactics to increase revenue by taking advantage of the pressure society puts on



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women to uphold particular standards of hygiene and attractiveness. However, some contend that the greater production expenses of packaging, scents, and other aesthetic elements may be the reason why women's goods are more expensive. The Pink Tax still exists worldwide, despite the fact that certain nations, like as Canada and France, have taken steps to stop gendered price discrimination. A mix of business accountability, consumer awareness, and legislative actions are needed to address this problem.

### II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Pink Tax presents a systemic issue that disproportionately impacts women, particularly those from lower-income groups.

According to research, women spend thousands of rupees more than men do over the course of their lifetimes for functionally equivalent products and services, which adds to the overall financial disparity. The main issue is that these pricing differences persist even when there are no appreciable differences in the components, materials, or functions of the items

This problem affects professional services as well as consumer items. For example, dry cleaners frequently charge women more to launder their shirts than men do, claiming that the fabric or pressing methods used differ. Similar to this, a lot of hair salons and medical facilities charge different prices depending on a person's gender, which makes it harder for women to afford their services.

Despite increased knowledge, there is little opposition to gendered pricing practices since most customers are still ignorant of the Pink Tax's long-term financial effects. Furthermore, businesses are able to continue charging women greater prices without fear of legal action due to lax regulatory control.

Analyzing the financial impact of the Pink Tax, investigating consumer behavior with regard to gender-based pricing, and offering practical solutions for businesses and governments are the goals of this study.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

- MGeetha, B. (2018, November 1). Ladies, beware the hidden pink tax.
- Maiti, M. (2023, March 10). What Is Pink Tax, Is It Unfair For Women In India? <https://www.outlookindia.com>
- Kayleigh Barnes and Jakob Brounstein (2022) in their research 'The Pink Tax: Why Do Women Pay More?' suggests that public discourse on the pink tax, which often cites cherry picked examples of price differences for gendered products, fails to capture differences in actual consumption choices between men and women that result from differential sorting.
- Svasti Pant UnPinking Discrimination (2021) conducted research on 'Exploring the Pink Tax and its Implications' and found that Pink Tax is widely prevalent in product sectors like personal care and clothing as well as services like beauty, dry cleaning and transportation.

#### Objectives

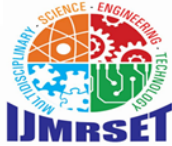
- To evaluate how common the Pink Tax is in various goods and service categories (including professional services, apparel, and personal care).
- To assess the financial impact of the Pink Tax on women consumers, with a focus on emerging markets like India.
- To find out how consumers behave and their knowledge of gender-based price differences.
- to evaluate how well the Pink Tax is being addressed by current corporate initiatives and legislative actions.

#### Hypothesis

H1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between customer awareness and their willingness to support those brands that promote these gender-based products.

H2: (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a positive correlation between the belief in the gender-based pricing discrimination and likelihood of avoiding products.

H0: (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant relation between the purchasing decision and consumer awareness.



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### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Key aspects of this study are firstly to inspect the prevalence and consequences of the Pink Tax, secondly to estimate consumers' familiarity with gender-motivated charging and then finally to come up with practical measures for businesses and policymakers. The research takes on both a descriptive and analytical approach incorporating both qualitative and quantitative techniques. A postal questionnaire was used to gather first-hand information from the consumers that would reflect on their perceptions, experiences, and spending behaviors associated with the implementation of the Pink Tax. Moreover, a comparative price analysis was done to find out the price differences between the same type of products marketed for men and women.

The research incorporated a correlational research design to examine the link between main variables such as consumer familiarity, purchasing decisions, and the willingness to endorse gender-neutral pricing strategies. Statistical methods such as correlation and regression analysis helped to single out key patterns in consumer behavior and pricing structures. The target population for this study consists of consumers who buy personal care products, clothing, and other daily needs, while the distortion in the prices of the products depending on the gender is occurring in the market. The sample consists of both male and female consumers of different age groups and various income levels so that we could observe their different perceptions and impacts.

#### Limitations:

- The paper is based on voluntary survey data. The results of the data will not fully cover the entire array of consumer demographics.
- Consumer perceptions and experiences are characterized by aspects of subjectivity and personal biases obviously that are potentially vital to the formation of viewpoints.
- The research focuses primarily on personal care and clothing where the other industries are not included--for example, healthcare and finance.
- Market forces, inflation, and promotions lead to the price of a product going up and down hence making it impossible to come up with a precise and identical pattern of the Pink Tax.

### V. DATA ANALYSIS

Table-1

1. Have you ever heard of the term "pink tax" before?	Responses	percentage
	Yes	68.6%
	No	23.8%
	May be	7.6%

The survey showed that the "pink tax" is a well-known topic with about 68.6% of people identifying it. Nonetheless, 23.8% of them have not even heard of it, which reveals a deficiency in public knowledge. Besides, 7.6% were not sure of the term, thus only partial comprehension but no clear understanding. This illustrates the urgent need for more awareness and training throughout the society on issues related to gender-based pricing disparities.

Table-2

2. Do you believe that products marketed towards women are generally priced higher than similar products marketed towards men?	Responses	percentage
	Strongly agree	30.1%



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	Agree	21.4%
	Neutral	21.4%
	Disagree	16.5%
	Strongly disagree	10.7%

On a survey conducted, 51.5% of the total respondents have the view that goods targeted at girls are priced more than for boys, with 30.1% strongly agreeing and 21.4% agreeing. Contrary to that, 21.4% remain neutral, showing no inclination or awareness among us. On the other hand, the smaller percentage of the respondents (27.2%) holds the opposite opinion, with 16.5% disagreeing and 10.7% strongly disagreeing, implying the existence of different standpoints on price differences based on gender.

Table-3

3. Have you personally experienced paying more for a product or service simply because it was marketed towards women?	Responses	Percentage
	Yes	51.5%
	No	22.3%
	May be	26.2%

The survey that is conducted depicts the case where 51.5% of the participants paid more to avail of the products or services offered now women, but 22.3% had the opposite case. Moreover, 26.2% face the question, which means there are people that do not only see the difference based on gender in the prices of the products but also do not understand the negative effects it can have on their expenses.

Table-4

4.. In your opinion, what are some reasons why the "pink tax" may exist?	Responses	Percentage
	Gender based pricing discrimination	26%
	Marketing and branding strategies	38.5%
	Societal expectations and norms	14.4%
	Lack of consumer awareness and advocacy	21.2%

The survey suggests that marketing and branding strategies are the main drivers for the Pink Tax, with 38.5% of the respondents granting it to be attributed to this, followed by 26% who think it is due to gender-based pricing discrimination. Also, 21.2% of the respondents seeing a lack of consumer awareness and advocacy cite this as another factor while 14.4% of them mention that it is due to societal expectations and norms.



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Table-5

5.How do you think the “Pink Tax” affects consumer behaviour and purchasing decision?	Responses	Percentage
	Doesn't affect my purchasing decision	21.9%
	Influences my purchase in decision	27.6%
	Encourages me to seek out alternative more affordable options	32.4%
	Makes me more conscious of supporting brands that promote gender equality	18.1%

According to the poll, 27.6% of participants believe the Pink Tax affects their decision to buy, and 32.4% of respondents say it makes them look for less expensive options. Furthermore, 18.1% of respondents say they prefer to support brands that are gender-equal, while 21.9% say their decisions are unaffected. These results show that although many people change their purchasing habits in reaction to the Pink Tax, some people are not impacted.

Table-6

How likely are you to support brands that actively promote gender-neutral pricing strategies and combat the “Pink Tax	Responses	Percentage
	Very likely	37.1%
	Likely	29.5%
	Neutral	19%
	Very unlikely	7.6%
	Unlikely	6.7%

According to the poll, 19% of participants are neutral, and 66.6% of respondents are inclined or very likely to support companies that advocate gender-neutral pricing. Just 14.3% of respondents said they are reluctant or extremely unlikely to support these brands. This suggests that, despite some consumers' continued opposition or indifference, fair pricing schemes are strongly preferred by consumers.

H1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between customer awareness and their willingness to support those brands that promote these gender-based products.

H2: (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a positive correlation between the belief in the gender-based pricing discrimination and likelihood of avoiding products.

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Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Chi-Square value	P-Value	Significance(P<0.05)
H1	0.020	0.887	Not Significant
H2	1.188	0.276	Not Significant
H0	9.611	0.142	Not Significant



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H1: With a Chi-Square of 0.020 and  $p = 0.887$ , there is no statistical relationship between awareness of the Pink Tax and support for gender-neutral pricing approaches. This indicates that awareness of the Pink Tax does not have a strong impact on consumer inclination toward gender-neutral brands.

H2: Chi-Square 1.188 and  $p = 0.276$  show that belief in gender-based pricing differentials does not have a major effect on consumers' avoidance to buy products positioned for women. Other variables like product need or affordability could play a more predominant role in making a purchase decision.

H0: The Chi-Square of 9.611 and  $p = 0.142$  indicate that consumer awareness of the Pink Tax does not statistically significantly affect purchasing behavior. Although there are consumers who change their shopping behavior, awareness by itself is not a good determining factor.

### VI. DISCUSSIONS

The research into the Pink Tax emphasizes the present-day problem of gendered pricing differences, wherein products and services designed for females are usually overpriced relative to their counterparts for men. The findings support that 68.6% of the surveyed individuals are well aware of the Pink Tax but 51.5% reported having experienced gendered product-related higher payments, which highlights its practical significance. Also, 38.5% of the participants credit this phenomenon to marketing and branding practices, and 26% think that it is due to gender discrimination in pricing.

Regardless of increased awareness, buying habits vary. While 32.4% of survey respondents consciously search for cheaper equivalents, 21.9% responded that Pink Tax has no impact on what they buy. Additionally, 66.6% of those surveyed were inclined to patronize firms advocating for gender-neutral prices, reflecting corporate accountability demand. Statistical analysis for hypothesis testing finds no significant link between awareness and what one buys, indicating mere awareness is not enough to galvanize buyers into action.

These results confirm the problem statement, which stressed that while the financial impact of the Pink Tax weighs heavily, few consumers are aware of its long-term implications, and there is still weak regulatory oversight. The research calls for clearer prices, increased consumer activism, and policy action to eliminate gendered price differentials.  
Implications to stakeholders

**Government and Policymakers:** Consumer education alone is insufficient; tighter regulations and fair pricing laws are required. To alleviate financial constraints, governments can enact legislation and provide tax breaks on critical women's items.

**Corporations and retailers:** With 66.6% of customers favoring gender-neutral pricing, firms may build brand trust and gain a competitive edge by removing gender-based pricing. Marketing strategy should prioritize product value above gender-based distinction.

**Researchers and academics** should do further research to determine why awareness does not have a substantial influence on purchase behavior, as well as to investigate regional variances in gender pricing.

**General public and consumers:** Consumer action is critical in ensuring fair pricing. Educating customers on gender-based price discrepancies can help them make educated decisions and support ethical companies.

### VII. CONCLUSION

This research set out to examine the prevalence and effect of the Pink Tax, evaluate consumer knowledge, and identify possible solutions for resolving gender-based pricing differences. The results verify that 68.6% of participants are familiar with the Pink Tax but that awareness is not, by itself, a strong motivator for purchasing behavior change. 51.5% of participants have directly encountered gender-based pricing, which 38.5% attribute to marketing tactics. Yet, hypothesis testing outcomes indicated no statistically significant correlation between awareness and buying decisions, implying that knowledge is not enough to effect change.

The report emphasizes stricter regulations, corporate accountability, and consumer activism to correct gender-based pricing discrimination. Governments can implement equitable pricing policies and tax exemptions, while companies can build consumer confidence with transparent pricing models. Consumers, on their part, can effect change by favoring gender-neutral products and pushing for policy changes.



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Through determinations of the underlying causes of the Pink Tax and analysis of consumer reactions, this study offers a platform for policy intervention and corporate reform. Whereas awareness is fundamental, the research contends that it is systemic reform—through regulation, fair pricing, and consumer activism—that is necessary to end gender-based price discrimination and promote equitable marketplace practice.

### Scope for Further Research

Future studies can investigate industry-level analyses other than personal care and apparel, i.e., healthcare, financial, and education expenditure-related items where gender-based pricing differences can potentially occur. Region-wise and socio-economic differences in the Pink Tax can also be studied, with a focus on rural and urban areas. Further research should consider the psychological and behavioral aspects related to consumer reaction to gender-based pricing. In addition, longitudinal studies can monitor the evolution of pricing trends over time, while comparative analysis of various regulatory regimes across the globe can assist in formulating effective policy interventions to eradicate gender-based price discrimination.

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