Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior to Purchase Vegan Cosmetics in Vietnam

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Abstract

The research aims to examine the factors that significantly influenced consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics in Vietnam, including Reference Group, Consumer Perception, Salesperson Attitude, Product Quality, Price, Place, Promotion, and Brand. Data was collected through self-administered close-ended questionnaire from a sample of 480 consumers in Vietnam. For analysis purpose, SPSS 22 were used to confirm the validity concerns and determine the proposed relationship among selected variables. The output reveals that product quality is the strongest influencers of consumer behaviour to purchase vegan cosmetics, followed by Reference Group, Salesman Attitude, Place, Price, Promotion, Brand and Consumer Perception. This study provides a 'snapshot' to the government and cosmetics businesses about the determinants of consumer behaviour to purchase vegan cosmetics in Vietnam.

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1. Introduction

Vietnam's cosmetics market was rather young, yet was one of the most dynamic in the region. As living standards in Vietnam are growing, Vietnamese consumers are becoming more aware of personal care and beauty products besides satisfying basic needs. According to Mintel, a global market research company based in London, the Vietnamese cosmetics market was worth \$2.3 billion by the end of 2018. This is a potential market, as the middle class in Vietnam in 2030 is expected to increase by about 23.2 million people. With the revenue of the cosmetics market continuously increasing over the past two decades, Vietnam has become an attractive destination for many foreign cosmetic brands.

Growing consumer knowledge of health and wellness has led to a movement towards using safer ingredients in their cosmetics. There is a huge market for cosmetics made without using any animal products and without subjecting any animals to testing. The expansion of organically derived products is being fueled by consumers' shifting attitudes about vegan products as well as an increase in the use of environmentally friendly items. Manufacturing goods with natural ingredients helps reduce pollution and dependence on petroleum-based goods. The need for chemical-free, animal-tested skin free and hair care products is on the rise, and consumer attitudes toward natural personal care are shifting, which has fueled the growth of vegan cosmetics. Despite making a lot of effort, vegan cosmetics still do not have a foothold in the Vietnamese cosmetics market with the fierce competition from other kinds of cosmetics. Therefore, if the vegan cosmetics industry desires to strengthen its brand position, companies need to pay attention to factors affecting consumer behaviour to purchase vegan cosmetics in Vietnam in order to build creative and efficient marketing strategies.

Abundant international studies have been detected to examine determinants or factors influencing consumers' purchasing decisions toward green products. According to Kotler (2007), four main groups of factors include cultural, social, personal, and psychological elements. Similarly, Kokoi (2011) attempted to conduct a study investigating important factors that affect the buying behavior of Finnish women related to facial skin care products. The result showed that cultural factors, social factors, and personal factors are the three most influential factors in the facial skin care products' buying behavior of Finnish women. Macharia (2019) with the same research topic on the determinants of buying behavior of cosmetics, concluded a slightly different result with two additional factors called marketing mix and price. In addition, in India, the same topic was also conducted by Lakshmi & Babu (2019); however, the result indicated that psychological factors also have a significant influence on cosmetics buying behavior toward Natural Cosmetics. This research represented a thorough understanding of three main factors: Attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The research conducted by Gundala & Singh (2021) bore a resemblance to Zhang & Zhou's research when both studies suggest that the top two factors directly influencing consumers' buying decisions are subjective norms and society. On the other hand,

they proposed several new suggestions when they supposed that health consciousness, knowledge, and price also play a vital role in purchasing behavior.

In Vietnam, there was currently little research on the topic: "Determinants of consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics in Vietnam". Therefore, the research below was thus believed to be some of the few pieces of research in Vietnam on this issue. Nguyen Ngoc Dan Thuy (2014) offered a theoretical understanding of the factors affecting consumers' behaviour toward Dermalogica cosmetics in Ho Chi Minh City. The research model included the following determinants: safeness, nature, appearance, brand, price, location, and promotion, as well as human and psychological aspects. Nguyen Trung Tien et al. (2020) carried out research that investigated the factors affecting consumers' decisions to buy organic food including: health consciousness, social standards, safety concerns, product quality, product price, and safety concerns remaining the most influential factors. Pham Nhat Vi (2020) conducted research in eight provinces in Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Vietnam and proved that product cost was the most influential determinant of consumers' buying vegan cosmetics behaviour. Besides, Nguyen Hoai Tu Nguyen & Nguyen Thi Bich Ngoc (2021) conducted a survey in Ho Chi Minh City to discover factors influencing the cosmetics purchase intention of gen Z female consumers. This research shared several similar factors with that of Pham Nhat Vi (2020). However, Pham Nhat Vi (2020) suggested a special factor – salesperson attitude, which was also a new determinant in researching consumers' behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics in the Vietnam context.

Being aware of the importance and urgency of the above-mentioned issue, the authors have chosen the topic "*Factors influencing Consumer Behavior to Purchase Vegan Cosmetics in Vietnam*" as the subject for the research. This research was implemented with the aims at (i) investigating determinants of consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics in Vietnam and (ii) examining how influential the determinants are on consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics in Vietnam.

2. Research Methodology

On the basis of previous international and domestic studies, the author selected 08 determinants of consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics in Vietnam and proposed a research model with the following variables:

Independent variables: Reference Group, Consumer Perception, Salesperson Attitude, Product Quality, Price, Place, Promotion, and Brand.

Dependent variables: Consumer behavior to purchase Vegan cosmetics in Vietnam.



Figure 1. Research Model

The research was conducted to test the following hypothesis:

H1: Reference group is positively correlated with consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics.

H2: Consumer perception is positively correlated with consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics.

H3: Salesperson attitude is positively correlated with consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics.

H4: Product quality is positively correlated with consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics.

H5: Price is positively correlated with consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics.

H6: Place is positively correlated with consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics.

H7: Promotion is positively correlated with consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics.

H8: Brand is positively correlated with consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics.

2.1 Qualitative research methods: Expert opinion method

After adjusting the questionnaire, the author consulted 05 experts who are lecturers from different universities in Hanoi for a more comprehensive evaluation. The experts' opinions assessment, and recommendations are a solid

to help the researchers finalize the questionnaire before the official survey.

2.2 Quantitative research methods: Questionnaire

Ouestionnaire development

In order to examine the developed hypotheses from the literature review, the author developed the questionnaire with three main parts: (i) demographic information of the sample, (ii) questions measuring the independent variables and (iii) questions measuring consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics in Vietnam.

Data collection

Data was collected in February 2023 with questionnaires distributed to customers in three regions (the North, Central and South) of Vietnam via Facebook pages, emails, and messages. A total of 480 questionnaires were administered, and 388 completed questionnaires were processed for analysis.

The author administered a structured questionnaire of 35 questions to survey customers' buying behavior of vegan cosmetics in Vietnam. The questionnaire was organized into three sections. Section A consisted of the personal data of the respondents. Section B tapped the 08 independent variables which were filtered down from the literature. Section C was designed to measure customers' buying behavior toward vegan cosmetics in Vietnam. To evaluate the impact of 08 factors on customers' buying behavior of vegan cosmetics, the research team selected the Likert scale with 5 levels of impact as follows: (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly agree.

Data analysis procedure

In this study, consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics in Vietnam is the independent variable and 08 dependent variables include reference group, perception, attitude, product quality, price, place, promotion, and brand. Data was analyzed using SPSS22. Descriptive statistics are generated to gain demographic information of the sample. Cronbach's Alpha was employed to measure the reliability of the scale. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was based to reshape the structure of the scale, examine the convergent validity and the discriminant validity. Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to calculate the total variance in consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics in Vietnam that can be explained by the 08 factors.

3. Results & Discussion

Demographic information

Samples were collected by convenient methods in the form of survey questionnaires. The demographic information is summarized in the following table.

| Gender | Male | 31% |
|---------|-------------------|-------|
| | Female | 67% |
| | Prefer not to say | 2% |
| Age | 18 - 30 | 64% |
| _ | 31 - 40 | 17% |
| | 41 -50 | 17% |
| | >50 | 1.9% |
| Living | North | 36.2% |
| place | Central | 19.9% |
| | South | 43.9% |
| Monthly | <\$200 | 22.1% |
| income | \$200 - \$400 | 53.8% |
| | \$400 - \$600 | 11.4% |
| | >\$600 | 12.8% |

Table 1. Consumers' demographic information

Evaluating of scale reliability by Cronbach's Alpha

Overall, the research uses 09 conceptual scales of which 08 scales are for factors affecting consumer behavior to purchase Vegan cosmetics in Vietnam and 01 is for consumer behavior. The analysis results show that the corrected item-total correlation coefficients all are greater than 0.3 and the Cronbach's alpha of the scales all are greater than 0.6. The scales all passed the tests of reliability and would be included in the exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

| Factors | Cronbach Alpha |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Reference group | .836 |
| Perception | .822 |
| Salesperson Attitude | .757 |
| Product quality | .882 |
| Price | .859 |
| Place | .867 |
| Promotion | .824 |
| Brand | .772 |

Table 2. Summary of the results of the scale reliability analysis

Analysis of the scale validity

EFA analysis with observable variables of the scales of determinants of customers' behavior to purchase Vegan cosmetics in Vietnam.

| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Sampling Adequa | .874 | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|--|--|--|--|
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | | | | | | |
| | df | 378 | | | | |
| | Sig. | .000 | | | | |

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

From the research results, it can be seen clearly that to check whether the study is large enough and eligible for factor analysis, the author has conducted Kaiser Meyer - Olkin test and Bartlett's Test. With the test result KMO = 0.874 greater than 0.5 (satisfying $0.5 \le \text{KMO} \le 1$) and Sig value. = 0.000, so it can be assured that the data is suitable for factor analysis and the observed variables have a correlation relationship in the population.

The results of determinants' analysis indicate that all observed variables have Factor loading > 0.5, the total variance extracted is 71.878% greater than 50%, showing that these 08 factors explain 71.878% of the variation of the data. Eight groups of factors were extracted after performing exploratory factor analysis, each group has a good correlation with the other.

EFA analysis for Consumer behavior

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's Test

| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | .739 |
|--|---------|
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi- Square | 572.900 |
| df | 3 |
| Sig. | .000 |

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| | Table 5: Total Variance Explained | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|--|------------------|-----------------|-------|------------------|-----------------|--|--|--|--|
| | Initial Eigenvalues Extraction Sums of Squared Loading | | | | | | | | | |
| Component | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | | | | |
| 1 | 2.382 | 79.414 | 79.414 | 2.382 | 79.414 | 79.414 | | | | |
| 2 | .331 | 11.041 | 90.455 | | | | | | | |
| 3 | .286 | 9.545 | 100.000 | | | | | | | |

| Table 6: Component Matrix | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | Component | | | | | | |
| | 1 | | | | | | |
| CB1 | .898 | | | | | | |
| CB3 | .894 | | | | | | |
| CB2 | .882 | | | | | | |

Based on the rotation matrix, the authors have the results of EFA for the scale of factors affecting behavior. It is shown that all observed variables have Factor loading > 0.5, the total variance extracted is 79.414% greater than 50%, showing that this factor explains 79.414% of the variation of the data. Eight groups of factors were extracted after performing EFA, each group has good correlation with each other. The factor Consumer behavior has an Eigenvalue of 2.382, which is greater than 1. This factor explains 2.382% of the variation of the data and has a factor loading factor for all observed variables greater than 0.5. In conclusion, based on the results of EFA analysis, the extracted factors of the main research hypotheses are satisfactory.

Linear regression equation

After performing exploratory factor analysis and grouping variables by each factor, the study continued to run regression analysis. For its regression analysis, the study employs a multivariate regression model (multiple regression model). The study measures the impact of factors on customer behavior using regression analysis based on measuring the influence of extracted factors.

The factors that emerged from the observed variables in the EFA factor analysis serve as the independent variables in the regression analysis model, and the dependent variable in the model is "Behavior". The regression model is as follows:

$CB = \beta 0 + \beta 1RG + \beta 2CP + \beta 3SA + \beta 4PQ + \beta 5PM + \beta 6BR + \beta 7PR + \beta 8PL$

The model summary demonstrates that the initial model reported an *R*-square value of 0.683 and an adjusted R Square value of 0.676. The adjusted *R*-square shows how well a model fits the data; in this case, it indicates that the 08 independent variables explained 67.6% of the variance in "customer behaviour."

The model summary table below shows the outcomes of creating a multivariate regression model using SPSS software:

| Model | | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin- Watson |
|-------|------|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | .826 | .683 | .676 | .402124 | 1.683 |

Table 7. Model Summary

It can be seen that the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is statistically significant, which is also confirmed in the ANOVA table. ANOVA analysis findings revealed the Sig value. = 0.000 is extremely small and is smaller than 0.05, allowing the null hypothesis H0 to be rejected. As a result, the obtained regression model is excellent because the sum of squares of the estimated errors is very small when compared to the total degree of data variability. Customer behavior is the dependent variable, and the interaction of independent variables effectively explains changes in this variable.

| | Table | e 8. Ver | ify t | he moo | lel's fit | | Tab | le 9. I | Mul | tiva | riate 1 | egr | ess | ion | ana | lysis | resi |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|------|-----|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| | | | ANOV | A | | | | | 1 | dardized icients | Standardized Coefficients | | Sig. | Confi | .0% idence al for B | Colline Statis | |
| | Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | | Model | B Std. Error | | Beta | eta t | | Lower Bound | Higher Bound | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | Regression Residual Total | 132.153 61.322 193.475 | 8 379 387 | 16.519 .162 | 102.096 | .000 | | 1 (Constant) | -661 | .194 | | -3.414 | .001 | -1.042 | 280 | | |
| | TOIdi | 199.419 | 307 | | | | , | RG CP | .171 .079 | .034 .039 | .188 .067 | 5.030 2.033 | .000 .043 | .104 .003 | .238 .155 | .601 .765 | 1.665 1.307 |
| | | | | | | | | SA PQ PM | .183 .235 .113 | .038 .030 .039 | .159 .293 .115 | 4.859 7.891 2.900 | .000 .000 .004 | .109 .177 .036 | .258 .294 .190 | .786 .607 .529 | 1.272 1.647 1.890 |
| | | | | | | | | BM PR | .068 .135 | .031 .037 | .068 .149 | 2.178 3.610 | .030 .000 | .007 .062 | .130 .209 | .861 .491 | 1.161 2.039 |
| | | | | | | | (| PL | .161 | .045 | .151 | 3.614 | .000 | .073 | .249 | .480 | 2.085 |

Regression analysis using the t-test reveals that all independent variables have a Sig value less than 0.05. All of these elements play a significant role in the model and have an effect on consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics. The fact that B > 0 indicates a positive relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable which is consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics.

The following is a rewrite of the model's general regression equation:

Consumer behavior = 0.188 x Reference Group + 0.067 x Consumer Perception + 0.159 x Salesperson Attitude + 0.293 x Product Quality + 0.115 x Promotion + 0.068x Brand + 0.149 x Price + 0.151 x Place.

The impact of variables on the purchasing decision is determined through the standardized beta coefficient as follows:

Table 10. Normalized beta coefficients of the factors in the model

| Number | Factors | Normalized The Standardized Beta Coefficients | Level of influence | | |
|--------|---------|--|-----------------------|--|--|
| 1 | RG | 0.188 | 2 | | |
| 2 | СР | 0.067 | 8 | | |
| 3 | SA | 0.159 | 3 | | |
| 4 | PQ | 0.293 | 1 | | |
| 5 | PM | 0.115 | 6 | | |
| 6 | BR | 0.068 | 7 | | |
| 7 | PR | 0.149 | 5 | | |
| 8 | PL | 0.151 | 4 | | |

As can be seen from the table, Product quality is the factor that has the strongest influence on customers' purchasing behavior ($\beta = 0.293$), followed by Reference group ($\beta = 0.188$), Salesman attitude ($\beta = 0.159$), Place ($\beta = 0.151$), Price ($\beta = 0.149$), Promotion ($\beta = 0.115$), and Brand ($\beta = 0.068$). Consumer perception is the factor that has the most negligible impact on consumers' behavior to buy vegan cosmetics ($\beta = 0.067$).

Discussion

The study sought to identify the determinants of consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics in Vietnam. Overall, the results show that vegan cosmetics purchasing behavior was positively influenced by the reference group, consumer perception, salesperson attitude, product quality, price, place, promotion, and brand.

Firstly, product quality is the most significant driver of customer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics in Vietnam, which is in line with the earlier work of Dickieson and Arkus (2009) in the context of vegan food. According to Kuo & Wu (2018), quality of the product is important to consumers because if the organisation can meet the consumer standard so that in the future, they will repurchase even though the prices increase.

Secondly, the reference group is validated to have substantial effects on the purchasing decision of vegan

cosmetics. The findings match with the studies of Lorek and Fuchs (2013); Ritter et al., (2015). Today, marketers must understand consumers' social environment which influences their final product or brand choice. The social environment includes the influence of reference group such as friends, family, and work associates, among others, that affect consumer behaviour.

Thirdly, the findings of our study reveal the significant direct effect of salesman attitude on buyers' purchasing behavior, which is on par with previous research by Pham Nhat Vi (2020) and research Female Buying Behavior Related to Facial Skin Care Products by Kokoi (2011).

Besides, the place factor is found to have a slight effect on the decision to buy vegan cosmetics, which is similar to some previous research by Nguyen Ngoc Dan Thuy (2014). Place influences buying behavior in many ways. Increasing the likelihood of getting a product means increasing the chances that a buyer can find it and buy it. Products that are sold exclusively in separate places can also attract consumers and motivate them to buy the product.

Moreover, the results also show that the purchasing decision is strongly affected by the price factor. According to Patel (2019), most consumers use price as an indicator of quality in decision-making and as one of the factors influencing the purchase of cosmetic products. This finding is consistent with the previous studies of Muhammad et al. (2019), and Patel (2019), and Nguyen Hoai Tu Nguyen and Nguyen Thi Bich Ngoc (2021), which confirmed that price is one of the strongest influencing factors on consumers' purchase intention.

Price and Place are considered two important factors in the marketing mix strategy of businesses in general and furniture businesses. According to Philip Kotler (2007), the marketing mix helps businesses to influence the purchase intention of customers. In this study, the author also found a relationship between price, place and consumer behaviour to buy vegan cosmetics. This implies that consumers are still interested in the price of vegan cosmetics, and these are decisive factors affecting consumer behaviour to purchase vegan cosmetics.

In addition, the promotion factor is believed to have significant effects on the buying behavior of vegan cosmetics, which is in parallel with previous findings of Patel (2019). Patel (2019) emphasized that promotion is one of the factors affecting the decision to buy cosmetics. Promotions offer customers ideas about new things to buy, promotions create interest in the product, give them information on how to use the product, generate interest in the product, and help customers make purchasing decisions faster.

Additionally, the findings regarding the brand factor were supported by some previous studies with the same results (Nguyen Hoai Tu Nguyen & Nguyen Thi Bich Ngoc, 2021; Nguyen Ngoc Dan Thuy, 2014; Showrav, 2018; Mohammadzadeh, 2015) shows that brand-related factors increase customers' intention to buy cosmetics. According to Anjana (2018), the brand is one of the factors that strongly influence customers' decision to buy cosmetics. This factor is also considered consistent with the characteristics of consumer behavior of Generation Z.

Last but not least, consumer perception is confirmed to be a significant factor affecting the way consumers decided to buy vegan cosmetics, which is in line with the earlier work by Showrav, and Dewan Golam Yazdani (2018). However, the study of Showrav showed a slight difference from our research in terms of the level of influence of consumer perception. In Showrav and Dewan Golam Yazdani's research, consumer perception is found to be the strongest influential factor in Dhaka City; however, our research revealed that consumer perception only has little effect on the purchasing decision of vegan cosmetics. This can be explained by the difference in target research location and audience.

4. Conclusion

The study was conducted to investigate determinants of consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics in Vietnam. The research results have broad significance and have achieved the research objectives. The finding revealed that 08 determinants have positive effects on consumer behaviour to purchase vegan cosmetics.

Like many previous studies, the research is subjected to potential limitations due to a lack of time and experience. To begin with, the results of this research are limited among consumers in three regions in Vietnam. Besides, the sample size of the research is just 388, which indicates that the findings of this research cannot be generalized to all regions in Vietnam. If the research is continued to be carried out with a more representative sampling method, the higher the generalizability, the more accurate the results.

Through this research, a number of practical implications can draw. Being one of the few research studying determinants of consumer behavior to purchase vegan cosmetics in Vietnam, the findings from the research have provided numerous value information for vegan cosmetics companies. The results of this study will help vegan cosmetics companies better understand the buying behavior of consumers and this will be the basis for businesses to build marketing strategies in the future.

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