

An Empirical Study on the Factors Influencing Consumers' Purchase Intention of Cosmetic Products

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ABSTRACT

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The cosmetics industry is one of the world's fast-growing sectors. With more and more new cosmetic companies joining the market this beauty industry is booming, resulting in a highly competitive environment. Furthermore, Consumers with rapidly shifting preferences and expectations have created challenges on the market, resulting in a shorter product's life cycle, impasse innumerable skin care giants and novice companies. As such, to stay and retain new customers, it is important for the cosmetic companies to continually grow their business activities. In order to achieve that, cosmetic companies need to understand and satisfy their customers by creating values and meet their demands. The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of brand image, perceive product price and perceived quality on intention to purchase cosmetic products. A total of 139 questionnaires were collected from consumers in the Kelang Valley who have experienced purchasing and using cosmetic products. This finding might benefit cosmetics firms and marketers to better understand important factors underlying cosmetics purchase intention among Malaysian consumers in order to better compete in the global as well as the local market.

Contribution/Originality: The paper's primary contribution is finding crucial information on the current market situation and development in purchase intentions among consumers within the Malaysian cosmetics industry. The findings would benefit

cosmetic industry players in Malaysia; manufacturers, marketers, investors, and retailers.

1. Introduction

Cosmetic is a multi-billion-dollars industry which includes a number of products ranging from cleanser, toners, serum, moisturizers to foundations, powders, lipsticks, eye liners, eye shadows, blushers and mascaras ([Chin & Harizan, 2017](#)). The list keeps growing as newer and better products are increasingly available in the market. Furthermore, the cosmetic industry has expanded beyond a market solely for women, to include men and children. According to [Euromonitor International \(2016\)](#), in 2016 the total global value for the overall beauty industry amounted to \$444 billion, where skin care products dominated the market with a market size of about \$120 billion. [Allied Market Research \(2017\)](#) further reported that, with a CAGR of 4.7 percent from 2016 to 2022, the global skin care market is expected to reach \$179 billion by 2022. It should also be pointed out that the Malaysian cosmetics and toiletries industry is currently experiencing rapid growth. In Malaysia, the beauty and health market are growing fast ([Hassali, Al-Tamimi, Dawood, Verma, & Saleem, 2015](#)). Malaysian consumers tend to obtain beauty products from top name brands that are marketed especially those that enhance youthful appearance. Among the sale of cosmetics and toiletries, skincare products represented more than USD 229 million in 2013, followed by eye cosmetic of USD 20.6 million, powder make-up, lip make-up preparation, manicure and pedicure. Studies on cosmetics purchasing behaviour had gained interest among consumer researchers due to huge market with rapid expansion growth. Furthermore, the cosmetic industry has expanded beyond the women market and to include men and children, which is still under researched. The research aims to examine the customer's willingness to buy a certain product or service is known as customer purchase intention. Purchase intention is a dependent variable that depends on several external and internal factors. This study is focus primarily in examining the relationships between brand images, perceived product price and perceived quality towards cosmetic products from the case study of Malaysian consumers in the Kelang Valley.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Purchase intention of cosmetic products

According to [U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA, 2016\)](#), the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act defines cosmetics by their intended use, as articles intended to be rubbed, poured, sprinkled, or sprayed on, introduced into, or otherwise applied to the human body for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering the appearance. Among products which are included in this definition are skin moisturizers, perfumes, lipsticks, fingernail polishes, eye and facial makeup preparations, cleansing shampoos, permanent waves, hair colours, and deodorants, as well as any substance intended for use as a component of a cosmetic product. To address the following, [Azmi Hassali et al. \(2015\)](#) defines cosmetics as any substance or preparation intended to be placed in contact with the external parts of the human body or with the teeth and the mucous membranes of the oral cavity with a view exclusively or mainly for cleaning them, perfuming them, or changing their appearance. Purchase intention is a decision plan to buy a particular product or brand created through a decision process ([Shah et al., 2012](#)). Since it is very important for marketing professionals and cosmetics manufacturers to understand and satisfy their target consumers' needs and wants. Therefore, it is important to know the

expectations of targeted consumer by evaluating their purchase intention on cosmetic products. Consumers who have higher purchase motivation and desires of a product may increase their purchase intention. It means the possibility of a consumer who wants to purchase a product (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). It also plays an important role in consumer's buying decision-making process. In people who desire a product or have some special motivation could increase their intentions to choose a product and make a purchasing decision. Consumers consider some aspects when they are choosing a cosmetic product, such as brand, price, and quality base on their preferences. These aspects will affect their perceptions of the product and then they decide whether to buy it. Consumer's overall perception of a product is called perceived value. It means consumer's perceived value truly influences purchase intention and perceived value can also help manufacturers adjust their product to increase consumer's purchase intention.

2.2. Brand Image

The Brand Image is considered as a name and symbol of a company. Brand Image plays an important role in creating a positive image among customers. Brand name has the ability to create loyal customers as well as to retain market share of the company. Loyal customers always remain faithful or loyal to a brand, they repurchase it and through word of mouth they recommend it to others (Pan et al., 2012). Brand loyalty customer's willingness to spend high amount for their favorite brand against its alternatives. Kumar and Shah (2004) in their study show that loyal customers are great asset to a firm as they bring profitability and growth to a company. Brand image can be defined as perceptions that consumers associate with a particular brand (Keller, 1993). Brand image are among useful factors in consumer's evaluation before purchasing a product (Zeithaml, 1988). Brand image not only influences the way consumers view a product, but also lowering purchase risks (Loudon & Della Bitta, 1988). Eze, Tan, and Yeo (2012) found that brand image has a significant influence on intention to purchase cosmetic products.

H1: Brand image has significantly influenced on consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products.

2.3. Perceived Product Price

Keller and Lehmann (2013), state that before making actual purchase, customers make a comparison and evaluate price with alternative brands because customers have a tremendous belief or faith in the value or benefit, they get from their favorite brand. Comparing price with value and perceived cost is the best method to build customer satisfaction (Monroe, 2012). It is observed that consumers are willing to purchase a product if the perceived benefits are higher than perceived cost. Lifelong duration of customers with a brand makes them more prices tolerant and they do not show any interest in making price comparison with the alternatives (Murphy & Narkiewicz, 2012). Foster and Cadogan (2000), perceived product price can be defined as "a consumer's assessment and associated emotions of whether the difference between a seller's price and the price of a comparative other party is reasonable, acceptable, or justifiable". It has also been found that price contributes to the formation of price perception, this positively influence purchase intention of a cosmetic brand.

H2: Perceived product price has significantly influenced on consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products.

2.4. Perceived Quality

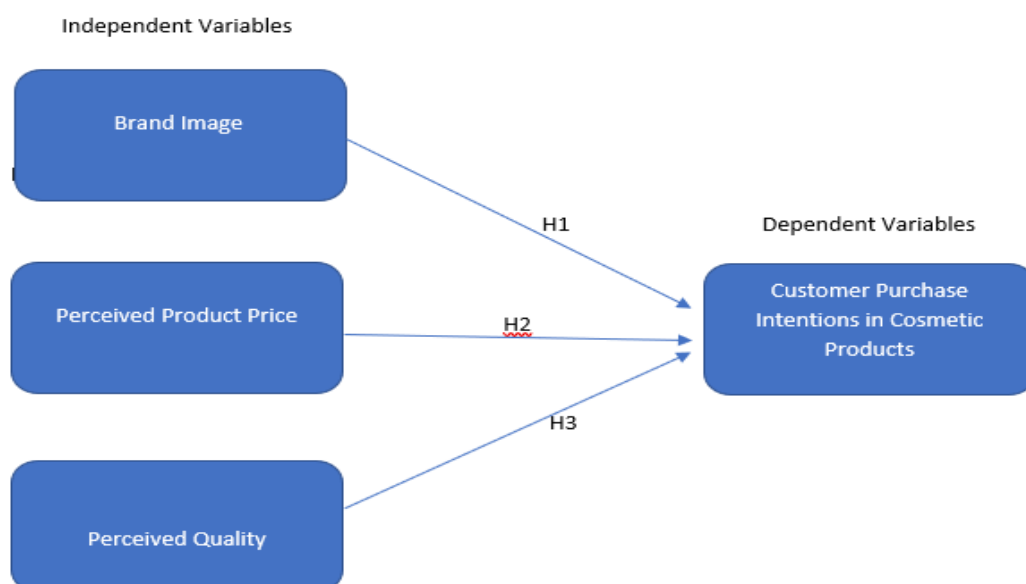
Quality product plays a significant role in assessing purchase intention. It can be termed as a process of continuous improvement because the product performance and satisfaction of customers will increase due to continuous changes. Zeeshan (2013), state that quality is an important tool for creating competitive advantage. Perceived quality can be defined as a consumer's evaluation of a brand's overall excellence based on intrinsic (performance and durability) and extrinsic cues (brand name) (Asshidin, Abidin, & Borhan, 2016) which provide values to consumers, a reason to buy and differentiate the brand from competing brands. Perceived quality of a product was found to have a significant positive influence on purchase intention (Saleem et al., 2015). Besides, Asshidin, Abidin, and Borhan (2016) also found that perceived quality significantly affects consumer's purchase intention towards American and local products in a positive direction.

H3: Perceived quality has significantly influence on consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products.

3. Methodology

With regard to the methodology, a total of 250 cosmetic users or consumers in Kelang Valley Malaysia, were recruited to examine the purchase intention of skincare products. The study has also employed non-probability convenience sampling and data was collected using questionnaires that comprised of close-ended questions. Convenience sampling was especially selected because they are easily accessible to researchers (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). There are three independent variables; brand image, perceived product price, and perceived quality and a dependent variable i.e. consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products which are involved in the study (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Research Framework



Measurement scales for all variables except demographics were adapted from previous studies. Items representing brand image were originated from the study of Eze, Tan, and Yeo (2012), items representing perceived product price were originated from the study of Samuel and Chandra (2014), items measuring perceived quality were originated from the

study of [Asshidin et al. \(2016\)](#) and items representing intention to purchase were originated from the study of [Eze, Tan, and Yeo \(2012\)](#). All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). Data was recorded and analysed using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 22. Respondents' demographic profiles were analysed by applying frequency analysis while mean and standard deviation for other variables were computed in a descriptive analysis. A reliability analysis was performed to ensure consistency reliability of the scales. A correlation analysis was run to investigate the relationship between variables. Finally, a multiple regression analysis was run to test the hypotheses by examining the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

4. Result

Out of 250 questionnaires distributed, only 139 were returned with a response rate of 55.60%. The profile of the respondents is shown in [Table 1](#). Female outnumbered male respondents by 31.00%. The majority of respondents were Chinese (54.00%), single (58.3%), working experience at least 2 to 5 years (37.40%), and having personal monthly income below RM5,000 (49.6%).

Table 1: Demographic profiles of respondents

Item	Total	Frequency (%)
Race		
Chinese	75	54
Malay	38	27.3
India	17	12.2
Other	9	6.5
Gender		
Male	48	34.5
Female	91	65.5
Marital Status		
Single	81	58.3
Married	58	41.7
How long have you been working in your company?		
Less than a year		
1-2 years	25	18
2-5 years	32	23
6-10 years	52	37.4
More than 10 years	20	14.4
	10	7.2
Monthly Income		
Below RM5,000	69	49.6
RM5,001-RM10,000	37	26.6
RM10,001-RM20,000	21	15.1
Above RM20,000	12	8.6

Alpha coefficient for all variables were above 0.7 (see [Table 2](#)), indicating acceptable and good internal consistency reliability for all variables ([Sekaran, 2003](#)).

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

	Number of Item	Cronbach Alpha
Brand Image	5	0.793
Perceived product price	6	0.9
Perceived product quality	6	0.929
Customer purchase intension	6	0.798

In Table 3, the highest mean score was perceived product quality while the lowest mean is brand image. Skewness and kurtosis for all variables were in the range between -1.00 and + 1.50, indicating an acceptable normal distribution of data (George & Mallery, 2003). However, for certain responses skewness & kurtosis values are found to be in range between -2 to + 2 which is still acceptable.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Brand Image	3.2187	0.94144	-0.356	-0.149
Perceived product price	3.5659	1.0365	-0.643	-0.185
Perceived product quality	4.1978	0.86778	-1.171	1.438
Customer purchase intension	3.8201	0.80259	-0.659	0.808

Table 4 shows inter-correlations between variables. There is a significant positive correlation between Brand image, Perceived product price and Perceived product quality with customer purchase intention. This indicates that as Brand image, perceived product price and perceived product quality increase, purchase intention tends to increase as well. As the value for both significant positive correlations are closer to 0.

Table 4: Inter-correlations of variables

		Customer Purchase Intentions In Cosmetic Products	Brand Image	Perceived Product Price	Perceived Product Quality
Customer Purchase Intentions In Cosmetic Products	Pearson	1	.457**	.600**	.795**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139
Brand Image	Pearson	.457**	1	.046	.461**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.593	.000
	N	139	139	139	139
Perceived Product Price	Pearson	.600**	.046	1	.574**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	139	139	139	139

Perceived Product Quality	Pearson Correlation	.795**	.461**	.574**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	139	139	139	139

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows the correlation analysis reveals that brand image, perceived product price and perceived product quality have strong significant positive correlation with the customer purchase intention.

Table 5: Simplified Correlation Value

Perceived Value	Correlation (r)	Significance (p<0.05)
Brand image ↔ CPI	Strong, Positive (0.457)	0.000
Perceived Product Price ↔ CPI	Strong, Positive (0.600)	0.000
Perceived Product Quality ↔ CPI	Strong, Positive (0.795)	0.000

The multiple regression analysis was carried out to test the hypotheses. In Table 6, R² value was 0.689, indicating that 68.9% variation in the purchase intention of cosmetic products was explained by Brand image, Perceived Product Price and Perceived Product Quality. Durbin-Watson test was within 1.5 to 2.5 range, indicating that there is no auto-correlation error and thus, no overlapping statements among items in the independent variables.

Table 6: Multiple regression analysis

	Std Beta
Brand Image	0.191
Perceived product price	0.276
Perceived product quality	0.549
Customer purchase intension	
R ²	0.689
Adjusted R ²	0.683
Durbin-Watson	2.254

*p<0.10, ** p<0.05

(Dependent variable: Purchase Intention of Cosmetic Products)

The graph is normally distributed and linearity can be concluded from residual plots between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Looking at the scatterplot, it was believed that there was no significant issue of heteroscedasticity.

Tolerance values for all predictors were more than 0.10 while VIF values for all predictors were less than 10 (see table 7), indicating no multi-collinearity error. Therefore, the model is fit.

Table 7: Collinearity statistics for the relationship between variables

	Tolerance	VIF
Brand Image	0.716	1.397
Perceived product price	0.610	1.639
Perceived product quality	0.481	2.078

Based on the results of multiple regression analysis, it can be concluded that Brand image, Perceived Product Price and Perceived Product Quality has a significant positive influence on purchase intention of cosmetics products ($\beta=0.191$, $p<0.10$), ($\beta=0.276$, $p<0.10$), ($\beta=0.549$, $p<0.10$). Therefore, H1, H2 and H3 are supported.

5. Discussion

The expansion of the cosmetic industry that included men and children has triggered the need to examine factors relating to the purchase intentions of cosmetic products among consumers in Malaysia. In this study, the relationships between brand image, perceived product price, perceived product quality and intention to purchase cosmetic products among consumers are examined. It was discovered that all variables tested have a positive effect on purchase intention. From the findings, H1 is supported due to the results revealed that brand image has a positive influence on consumers' purchase intention and this particular finding is consistent with other research which previously confirmed the association between brand image and purchase intention (Njuguna, 2014; Hakala et al., 2012; Malik et al., 2013). According to Rossiter and Percy (1987), both communication and transaction will not occur if there is no brand awareness. It has also been reported that brand image will influence purchase intention as it raises the chance for the brand to be included in the consideration set (Keller, 1993). When consumers have awareness about a brand, they can easily recall some of the characteristics of the brand. Accordingly, during the decision-making process on purchasing certain product category, the ability to recall the brand as the member of the product category will increase the probability for it to be included in the consideration set. Brand image can also be used as a heuristic in making a purchase decision; a popular brand is more likely to be recognised and distinguished from competitors and will have higher purchase intention compared to the brand with low awareness (Aaker, 1991; Dodds et al., 1991; Percy & Rossiter, 1992). Furthermore, brand image impacts customer decision making by affecting the perception of quality (MacDonald & Sharp, 2000). Marketing communication tools can generate brand image effectively as they provide assurance of product quality and credibility which subsequently helps diminish product evaluation and selection risks when purchasing a product (Aaker, 1996; Buil et al., 2013; Keller & Lehmann, 2003; Rubio et al., 2014). Hence, it can be deduced that brand image is a factor that has a significant influence on consumers' purchase intention.

On the other hand, H2 is supported since perceived product price did impose significant influence on intention to purchase cosmetic products in a negative direction. The findings have supported the earlier study of Petrick (2004a) and Petrick (2004b) since price fairness was deemed important in forming price perception which subsequently influences behavioural intentions. However, the findings had contradicted the earlier study by Samuel and Chandra (2014) whereby price fairness was believed to influence purchase intention of a cosmetic brand in a positive direction. When price increases, the purchase intention will decrease and vice-versa. Higher price will deter consumers from purchasing more cosmetic products and this has suggested a sort of price-sensitive

consumer market in Malaysia irrespective of cosmetic types and brands. Perceived product quality did not seem to impose any significant influence on intention to purchase cosmetic products and thereby, H3 is supported since current study has also discovered that perceived quality has a positive relationship with consumers' purchase intention and this result correlates with that of previous research, i.e. perceived quality has a significant effect on consumers' purchase intention (Saleem et al., 2015; Asshidin et al., 2016; Eze et al., 2012).

Positive perceived quality can impact customers' choices, drive consumer purchase decision, allow firms to set premium price, and enable the differentiation of brand as well as the execution of brand extension. Aaker's (1991) study found that quality is the most critical criterion when making choices. Previous literature also justified that perceived quality is considered as an essential dimension for brand equity across various frameworks (Dyson et al., 1996; Farquhar, 1989; Keller, 1993) as perceived quality strategically affects brand equity by diminishing the perceived risk (Aaker, 1991; Erdem et al., 2004; Keller, 1993). Moreover, Yoo et al. (2000) noted that positive perceived quality will boost brand equity considering that perceived quality is part of the brand equity which causes consumers to choose the particular brand over the competitors' brand. Hence, firms must be able to establish the perceived quality attributes that are significant to both the industry and the consumers. It is also vital for firms to determine the cues and signals that are available for perceived quality as product quality is often judged according to the wide range of information cues that are retrieved from the product.

6. Implications

The research provides crucial information on the current market situation and development in purchase intentions among consumers within the Malaysian cosmetics industry. The findings would benefit cosmetic industry players in Malaysia; manufacturers, marketers, investors, and retailers. The cosmetics firms might focus more on promoting better quality products in order to trigger higher sales volume. As cosmetic consumers in Malaysia are price-sensitive and likely to forego their intention to purchase cosmetic products even among the well-known brands, cosmetic products should also be formulated accordingly and with maximum caution. The findings might also be a reference for those who might consider to invest in the cosmetic industry in Malaysia by understanding local cosmetics current trends in order to design a proper marketing mix that suits Malaysian market. Besides, the findings also provide marketers with some insights to devise new approaches that are aligned with current trends in the cosmetics industry by directly addressing Malaysian consumers' expectations. In short, the study is also useful in providing reliable information on factors affecting purchase intention among cosmetics consumers in Malaysia whereby cosmetics companies and marketers should have better understanding on the driving factors that will help them perform better in the Malaysian market.

7. Conclusion

The rapid growth of the cosmetic market has made the industry one of the world's most profitable industries and has attracted new cosmetic companies to enter the market. In order for cosmetic companies to remain in such a highly competitive environment globally, it is important for companies to grow their business operations constantly so that customers can be retained. Therefore, it is very crucial for the cosmetic companies to study

and understand factors that are related to cosmetics consumers' purchase intention. By investigating the influence of brand image, perceive product price, and perceived product quality on intention to purchase cosmetic products, it is hoped that this study would contribute some insights for researchers, cosmetics firms, cosmetic manufacturer and marketers in relation to the consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products in Malaysia.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this study.

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