Determinants Influencing Purchasing Behavior of Korean Cosmetic Purchasing Intention: Case Study of Thai Female Perspective

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Abstract

This study seeks to explore the main factors influencing Thai female consumers purchasing behavior and identify the relationship between consumer behavior and sales objectives of Korean Cosmetic brands I. The data was collected in the form of an online questionnaire which was divided into 5 subsections. This was followed by 1) Demographic data 2) Thai females purchasing behavior of Korean cosmetics 3) Factors influencing the purchase of Korean cosmetics 4) Purchase intention and 5) Suggestions. Four hundred (N = 400) respondents from Thai females were selected for this study. For data analysis, statistical methods which rely mainly on descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression analysis were used. The multiple linear regression model shows the factors determining buying behavior of Thai females. The results show that Product Packaging, Product Quality, and Price weigh heavily on the purchasing intentions of the participants.

Keywords: Purchasing behavior, Purchasing intention, Korean cosmetics, Brand image

Introduction

The Korean cosmetic market has changed remarkably these last few years and has grown into a major competitive market in the world. (Yoon et al., 2020). South Korea is one of the fastest-growing markets in the beauty and personal care industry, reaching nearly a 6% growth rate in 2019 (Genovera, 2019). Korean Cosmetic Agency (2019) identifies the Korean cosmetic industry also became the 9th biggest beauty market in the world, which is quite noticeable for a country of only 57 million inhabitants. Females' dreams to become more beautiful physically and non-physically have driven the demand, a fact particularly true for facial skin (Karya et al., 2021). The creation of new Korean cosmetic brands has enabled the development of the cosmetic production base. Presently, many domestic companies do not produce cosmetics directly, but manufacture products through original equipment manufacturing (OEM) and original design manufacturing (ODM) (Yoon et al., 2020).

Karya et al. (2021) demonstrate that consumers of Korean cosmetics initially saw Korean films or dramas triggering some interest, in addition to online reviews and testimonials on various blogs and YouTube. Moreover, consumers buying a cosmetic product can also be influenced by the brand image of a product and the quality of the product. Recently, Korean cosmetic brands not only appeared in Thailand but also penetrated new markets in America and Europe. Nowadays, South Korean cosmetic products are sold in every corner of the world and are slowly becoming increasingly popular among female consumers (Bailleux & Menache, 2021). On top of that, these customers prefer to buy their cosmetics in a shop rather than online, which also influences their purchasing decisions (Jeong et al., 2017).

Korea is the leading supplier of cosmetics in Asia and is extremely popular in Southeast Asia. The greatest strengths of Korean cosmetics lie in the use of natural ingredients, the light and thick textures of the products which are adapted to the consumers' needs as well as the reasonable pricing of most products (Le et al., 2020). Some brands such as Innisfree, Nature Republic, Nu Skin, and Sephora use natural ingredients while some others such as The Face Shop, Missha, Oriflame, and Etude House use rather chemical ingredients (Genovera, 2019). However, the use of organic and natural ingredients in cosmetics impacts greatly consumers' purchase intentions. The Korean government fully supports the cosmetics industry, which is why the price of the cosmetics itself is affordable as the government gives financial support to carry out research and improve Korea's industry sales all over the world.

Nowadays, Korean brands are already present throughout the world and have a great influence in Thailand. Korean cosmetic brands are top ranked which directly affects the behavior of females to purchase more cosmetics. According to the results, it was found that brand and marketing strategies influence Thai females' decisions to purchase Korean cosmetics. However, the researcher found out that Thai female customers usually have a

positive attitude toward Korean cosmetics because Korean brands are perceived as more reliable and popular than in Thailand (Boonmee, 2015).

Nowadays, Thai females are more interested in beauty than in the past. They feel the need to get as beautiful as South Korean females, which is why many cosmetics are imported from Korea. Korean cosmetics brands are very popular in Thailand and have now become the top-ranking supplier in the cosmetic market. Therefore, it has become essential to explore and identify the factors influencing buying behavior of Thai females and to identify the relationship between purchasing behavior and purchasing intention as it will help shed light on the expectations of female consumers in their use of Korean cosmetics. The results of this research should benefit cosmetic business operators and those interested in business operations that must be imported from abroad, as well as being used as a guideline to study consumer behavior.

Objective

1. To explore the factors influencing buying behavior of Thai females
2. To identify the relationship between purchasing behavior and purchasing intention

Literature Review

1. Brand Image

Bailleux & Menache (2021) presents three positive factors explaining the growth of Korean cosmetic in the world. First relates to the Korean beauty culture and the innovation ability of Korean brands, Secondly, the profiles and expectations of the consumers also play an important role. Finally, Korean brand image and marketing strategies are equally important. “Brand” and “image” are related but not identical concepts. “Image” in relation to “brand” is perceived by the target audience as “a generalized portrait” of the branded object. The image-generating qualities are planned actions of the branded object, demonstrating them. The combination of physical characteristics, as well as social and psychological implications, is a solid basis for the creation, of a number of the following brand image definitions. The brand image is formed spontaneously or created purposefully (Kalieva, 2015).

Based on these findings, the concept of brand image is as follows: brand image is the tangible and intangible attributes based on the association formed by the consumer's mind. The means and intensity depend on the user's personality, his attitude toward the brand, social interaction, and brand communication. In addition to that, the existing branding literature points out that products with a strong brand image can reduce consumers’ cognitive risk and increase consumers' appraisal of the target product or service (Aghekyan et al., 2012).

2. Korean cosmetics brand

In today’s world, some Korean cosmetics brands are now regarded as the best and most efficient ones. To better grasp the staggering rise of Korean brands, it is necessary to take a look at the historical movements of Korea and analyze how much has been done so far (Korean Cosmetic Agency (2019). Korean cosmetics find their roots in the Ancient Choson dynasty.

Back then, they utilized ornaments and colored them to represent their social status and religious-based symbols. According to Hee-sook (2004), the people within the era of the ancient Choson dynasty glorified fair skin. Individuals in Manchu used to apply lard to their bodies to prevent them from having soft skin and frostbiting. Prevention of frostbite by applying lard during the winter constitutes the origin of Korean cosmetics. Hautala (2020) identifies that Korean beauty is linked to the important cosmetic habits of Korean people, such as the 10-step skincare routine for example. This consists of applying ten products in ten steps: oil cleanser, foam cleanser, toner, essence, emulsion, serum, sheet mask, eye cream, moisturizer, and sunscreen.

3. Thai Female Purchasing Behavior

There are several factors found in the literature that justify the buying behavior of consumers. The main factors influencing the buying behavior of consumers are discussed below.

3.1 Brand

A brand can affect the consumer's awareness which are name, symbol, design, advertising, and sales (Korean Cosmetic Agency, 2019; Shahid, Hussain & Zafar, 2017). Moreover, branding strategy is a process that helps a company or an organization to achieve a competitive image. Branding strategy refers to what the company stands for, the promise made to the customer, and the personality benefits that can be acquired by the purchase of a specific product. While a brand includes a logo, color palette, and slogan these are elements that transmit your brand. Seems like a brand lives in the everyday interaction that the company has with its market. Elements such as logos, color palettes, and slogans are very important components of a brand. Brands live and interact every day with consumers (Shahid, Hussain & Zafar, 2017).

A brand is a powerful tool to attract more consumers to buy particular products. Some may also consider brand equity which can add value to the products. With a well-known brand name, consumers appear to be more likely to purchase products at much higher prices. Having a strong and remarkable brand image could help establish a strong identity in a definite market. Genovera (2019) identifies brand equity as an important part of consumers purchasing decisions. In addition, it also contains several elements that can generate value: (i) brand association, (ii) brand awareness, (iii) perceived quality, and (iv) brand loyalty. Successful branding makes consumers aware of the presence of the brand and in turn, significantly increases the chance of buying the company's products and services.

3.2 Promotion

Promotion contributes to advertising the product quality which in turn impacts purchase intention. Promotion is able to influence product evaluation and product selection processes. Marketing actions, such as incentives to purchase and communication, will affect consumer effectiveness, which in turn will affect product evaluation and product selection decisions. In-store surprise coupons lead to increased effective circumstances, which results in better store

evaluations and more unplanned purchases. In addition, the lottery can also generate strong and positive affective reactions in the minds of consumers, which may lead to the use of simple decision rules in evaluating product quality (Yoon et al., 2020; Le et al., 2020; Shalehah et al., 2019).

3.3 Product Packaging

Product packaging has an effect on purchase intention. Packaging is not only a means to ensure safe and efficient logistics delivery to customers with minimum costs but also one of the most important marketing tools for communicating brand messages to consumers. As a result, product packaging is a means for producers to communicate subliminally with their consumers for product evaluation, brand differentiation and identity, and consumer brand influence. Because product packaging influences most buyers when important purchasing decisions occur.

Research has already been conducted on the effects of packaging on purchase intentions. Consumers focused more on the visual packaging features and suggested that visual packaging attributes include colors, graphics and image forms, typography, and illustrations. Previous studies have further suggested that visual package elements play a large role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions of products (Karya et al., 2021; Le et al., 2020; Hautala, 2020).

3.4 Product Quality

Product quality has a substantial impact on purchase intention. The perception of product quality is very important in most purchase transactions, and the effect of perceived quality on brand evaluation has been well documented. Previous research suggests that brand preference increases with the increasing perception of product quality. Thus, product quality is potentially an important factor that influences perceptions of brand preference. Product quality influences heavily the way customers view product brand equity and overall excellence compared to available alternatives ((Yoon et al., 2020; Le et al., 2020; Shalehah et al., 2019)

3.5 Price

Price perception greatly affects a consumer's decision to purchase a product. The perception of price gives a lot of information about a product and provides incentives for the consumers. Hence, price is an important factor in the purchasing decision, especially for products that are frequently purchased, and in turn, influences the choices of which store, product, and brand to patronize. Consumers are very rational when it comes to judging what benefits they wish to get from buying products or services (Karya et al., 2021; Le et al., 2020). Moreover, Hsu & Pham (2015) identifies that consumer always obtains price information by receiving and converting the information into their memory as magnitude representations.

3.6 Store Environment

The store environment is a critical aspect of marketing and refers to the physical environment of a store, such as the music, lighting, store layout, and arrangement of merchandise. Aspects of the store environment have been found to have a significant influence

on a store's financial performance. Likewise, the store environment can elicit a wide range of behaviors from people within the store, where certain elements can influence customers to stay in the store longer, increasing the probability that they may buy an item. Conversely, store elements can also have a negative effect on consumer behavior by influencing them to leave the premises prematurely (Jeong et al., 2017).

4. Purchase intention and loyalty

Purchase intention has been derived from the term intention and is mostly used to know the intention of consumers when they make a purchase decision. The purchasing intention of a consumer can be defined as "the consumer's self-instruction to purchase the product" (Karya et al., 2021). The intention is basically the intellectual depiction of a person's willingness to accomplish a given behavior. Additionally, if customers are keen and content to purchase a certain product, it means they have purchase intention (Shalehah et al., 2019).

If consumers are loyal to a brand, then the price will not impact their buying behavior in the sense that they are ready to pay the price for their favorite brand. Furthermore, consumers have confidence that the brand they like provides more benefits to them than the cost incurred. The study shows that retailers enhance the intention of consumers for purchasing organic care products by using efficient marketing strategies like emphasizing natural beauty, product safety, and reasonable prices (Hameed & Kanwal, 2018). It is difficult to comprehend the implication of marketing strategies without a prior understanding of consumer behavior. This study shows that the consumer displays different behaviors toward organic personal care products in different value systems. These values affect the consumer's attitude toward buying organic products and he/she will look for those products which satisfy their values (Aghekyan et al., 2012).

In conclusion, it can be argued that purchase intention depends on the consumer's ability to pay for a particular product. When consumers have enough money, they don't regard the price as an obstacle. When consumers have more purchase intention, they will be more loyal to a brand and will be more likely to consider a particular brand while making purchase decisions. The purchasing behavior of consumers is subsequently affected by peer pressure. Value Consciousness refers to buying a less expensive product by sacrificing a little quality. This behavior of the consumer affects the purchase of counterfeits (Hameed & Kanwal, 2018).

5. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The exploring female purchasing behavior attributes of purchase intention were developed and presented in Figure 1.

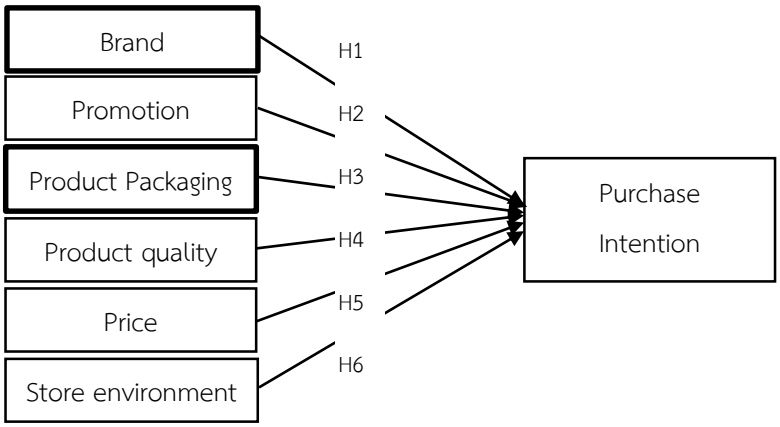


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

H1: Brand has a positive effect on purchasing intention.
H2: Promotion has a positive effect on purchasing intention.
H3: Product Packaging has a positive effect on purchasing intention.
H4: Product quality has a positive effect on purchasing intention.
H5: Price has a positive effect on purchasing intention.
H6: Store environment has a positive effect on purchasing intention.

Methodology

Current research is descriptive in nature and explains or describes some phenomenon in any specific situation. A descriptive quantitative method was used to determine the different aspects of female purchasing behavior attributes. The structured questionnaire was used for the quantitative research method. This is the preferred method of the researchers to find out the different aspects of respondents' behavior. Our research uses quantitative methods. By paying attention to the data that can be enumerated or measured into numbers, and using statistical methods to analyze data the results of the data analysis, we may deduct what is more, less, or less related or not related to anything and differentiate things.

For this study, female perspectives regarding to Korean cosmetics were collected in order to study the impact of determinants to purchase intention. The sample was randomly selected in Bangkok and metropolitan because the population in the area has high possibility to purchase Korean cosmetic products rather than in other regions. The study focuses on females because they are usually more interested in buying cosmetic products than males.

With the size of the population is undefinable, the sample size is calculated at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error equal to 385 samples. The appropriate sample should be at least 385 samples. The study collected 400 samples.

The structured questionnaire technique was used to collect the data. The questionnaire was beginning with a confirmation statement to ensure that they are willing to respond the questions. The instrument consists of 4 parts: Demographic information, General cosmetics purchasing behavior, Determinants influencing Korean cosmetic purchasing behavior, and Suggestions. Therefore, respondents were requested to evaluate their opinion regarding Korean cosmetic purchasing behavior and intention by using a 5-point Likert scale. The pilot test and reliability were investigated; the values of their reliability were between 0.665 – 0.881.

Multiple linear regression analysis was implemented to investigate the impact between determinants and purchasing behavior. The assumptions of regression analysis were tested: linearity, homoscedasticity, and normality. The relationship of all determinants and purchasing intention showed a significant linear relationship; the residual plot showed a constant pattern in all determinants; the normal Q-Q plot showed a straight-line form. According to the result of the assumption, multiple linear regression analysis is the appropriate technique to discover the impact between independent variables and dependent variables.

Results

The socio-demographic variables are presented in Table 1. 54.25% of the participants were aged between 20 and 30 years, and 70.75% of the respondents were students. The education level of 95% of respondents was undergraduate while approximately 5% of the respondents were postgraduate. 58% of respondents reported that they had a personal monthly income of fewer than 10,000 baht and 41.75% of respondents purchased cosmetics more than five times a year. 59.50% of the respondents purchasing cosmetics did not spend more than one thousand baht per time.

Table 1 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (N = 400)

socio-demographic variables	Breakdown	Number of respondents	Percentage
Age	Less than 20	137	34.25
	20 – 30 years	217	54.25
	31 – 40 years	33	8.25
	41 – 50 years	12	3.0
	51 – 60 years	1	0.25

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socio-demographic variables	Breakdown	Number of respondents	Percentage
Occupation	Student	283	70.75
	Civil servant	12	3.0
	Business owner	27	6.75
	State enterprise	8	2.0
	Employee	43	10.75
	Other	27	6.75
Education	Bachelor degree/ Undergraduate degree	380	95.0
	Postgraduate degree	20	5.0
Monthly income	Less than 10,000 baht	232	58.0
	10,000 – 20,000 baht	107	26.75
	20,001 – 30,000 baht	33	8.25
	More than 30,000 baht	28	7.0
Frequency to purchase per month	1 time	21	5.25
	2 – 3 times	137	34.25
	4 – 5 times	75	18.75
	More than 5 times	167	41.75
Amount per time	Less than 1,000 baht	238	59.50
	1,000 – 2,000 baht	121	30.25
	2,001 – 3,000 baht	28	7.0
	More than 3,000 baht	13	3.25

The factor influencing purchasing intention in Korean cosmetics of females was analyzed and presented in table 2. The unstandardized estimated multiple regression weights and p-values for all determinants toward purchase intention were given. Four determinants affect significantly on purchasing intention: Brand ($\beta = 0.113$, p-value $= 0.004$), Product Packaging ($\beta = 0.115$, p-value $= 0.001$), Product Quality ($\beta = 0.450$, p-value $= 0.000$), and Price ($\beta = 0.251$, p-value $= 0.000$). They were significant indicators of purchasing intention. Meanwhile, Promotion ($\beta = 0.074$, $p = 0.098$) and Store Environment ($\beta = 0.050$, $p = 0.253$) do not significantly impact on purchasing intention.

Table 2 The result of multiple linear regression about the factor influencing buying behavior female purchasing intention

Impact	Unstandardized	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	P-value
Brand → Purchasing Intention	.113	.039	.114	.004*
Promotion → Purchasing Intention	.046	.044	.044	.298
Product Packaging → Purchasing Intention	.115	.033	.142	.001*
Product Quality → Purchasing Intention	.450	.043	.429	.000*
Price → Purchasing Intention	.251	.043	.246	.000*
Store Environment → Purchasing Intention	.006	.036	.007	.864
Intercept	-0.198	.222		

* Significant level at 0.05

The multiple linear equations were constructed by using the stepwise method whereby the non-significant variables which were the variables that had p-value above 0.05 were discarded. Then the regression analysis was re-implemented in order to obtain the coefficient of the equation for predicting as shown in table 3.

Table 3 The result of multiple linear regression for constructing a linear equation

Impact	Unstandardized	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	P-value
Brand → Purchasing Intention	.124	.038	.125	.001*
Product Packaging → Purchasing Intention	.120	.032	.148	.000*
Product Quality → Purchasing Intention	.465	.041	.443	.000*
Price → Purchasing Intention	.253	.042	.247	.000*
Intercept	-0.121	.209		

* Significant level at 0.05

Among those four factors, product quality is identified as the most influential one and followed by price, package, and brand as shown in the order of standardized coefficients magnitude as 0.443, 0.247, 0.148, and 0.125, respectively. In addition, the new equation was constructed:

$$Y = -.121 + .465*X1 + .253*X2 + .124*X3 + .120*X4$$

Where:

Y = Purchasing Intention

X1 = Product Quality

X2 = Price

X3 = Product Package

X4 = Brand

The equation implies:

1. There are four significant variables: product quality, price, product package, and brand have a positive effect on purchase intention. When there is an increment level of perception upon these four variables; the purchase intention level is also increased.
2. When each one-unit increases in product quality, the purchasing intention level also increased by 0.465 in purchasing Intention.
3. When each one-unit increases in price, the level of purchasing intention is also increased by 0.253.
4. When each one-unit increases in product packaging, the level of purchasing intention are also increased by 0.120.
5. When each one-unit increased in brand, the level of purchasing intention is also increased by 0.124.

Discussions

This paper seeks to explore the factor influencing the intention to purchase behavior of Thai females and identify the relationship between 6 determinants and purchasing intention in Korean cosmetic products. In conclusion, it can be argued that brand, product packaging, product quality, and price have a significant positive impact on purchasing intention. The results indicate that female consumers become purchasers when a good brand is created which is consonant with the previous research by Genovera (2019).

There is a significant positive influence between product packaging with female purchasing intention of Korean cosmetics that is consonant with the previous research of Karya et al. (2021). Consumers also focus on visual packaging features such as colors, graphics, image forms, typography, and illustrations. This finding is consonant with the result of Le et

al. (2020) and Hautala (2020) revealed that a positive relationship between product packaging and purchasing intention as visual package elements play an important role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions on products.

Moreover, it has been shown that product quality significantly influences purchasing intention in terms of Korean cosmetics brand image. Shalehah et al. (2019) commented that product quality has the potential to be an important factor that influences perceptions of brand preference. In the cosmetics industry, consumers tend to try the products and experience them first. Moreover, Yoon et al. (2020) and Le et al. (2020) mention that product quality impacts the way in which customers view product brand equity and overall excellence compared to available alternatives. If they can feel good quality, they will automatically be loyal to that brand.

There is a significant positive influence between price with female purchasing intention of Korean cosmetic brand image that is consonant with the previous research of Le et al. (2020). In many fields, price is the most important factor for purchasing intention, especially in the cosmetics product industry. Female consumers are willing to pay more for their cosmetics and their looks as long as it is worth the price. Price perception greatly affects a consumer's decision to purchase a product (Karya et al., 2021; Hsu & Pham, 2015).

Conclusion and suggestions

This research highlights the main tendencies with regard to the factors influencing buying behavior of females purchasing intention using a case study with a particular focus on Korean cosmetics. Based on the findings, brand, product packaging, product quality, and price have a significant influence on purchase intention. All of these factors play important to make female consumers purchase Korean cosmetics. Korean cosmetics firms should improve their brand and explore their product packaging and product quality to make a better brand image. Besides, Korean cosmetic firms need to build a strong brand name and provide attractive prices.

Despite our efforts, there are limitations in results and there is room for further research. research. First, further research could explore and measure the factors that the current scale does not measure through an in-depth study of existing research. Moreover, this paper looked into the relationship between the marketing factors of cosmetic brand shops and the overall brand experience. Finally, further research should examine how these factors are related to the current implementation of firms’ marketing strategies.

New knowledge and the effects on society and communities

1. To understand the factors influencing buying behavior that affects female consumers' purchase intention of Korean cosmetic brand image.
2. To apply the study of factors influencing buying behavior that affects female consumers in other industries such as costume, perfume, and accessories.
3. To educate the concept of factors influencing buying behavior affecting male consumers.

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