



PROPOSAL

for

A STUDY ON FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER PURCHASING INTENTION IN SEPHORA GURNEY PARAGON PENANG, MALAYSIA

PREPARE BY: AW YANG PEY CHEE

(2072017070091)

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SUPERVISOR: MR. ERIC KONG

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1.0 Introduction

According to George (2002), beauty is the quality of the presentative outlook that pleasing a person when looking on another person. Liubov (2016) has stated that the sense of human on the beauty concept is kept changing along with the cultural value since the nineteenth century, especially for women perception. In the same time, the globalization and civilization also make the beauty industry able to grow steadily with the annual growth rates ranging from around 3% to 5.5% (Aleksandra and Mirosław, 2013). The product category that included in the beauty industry are skincare, haircare, cosmetics, fragrances, toiletries and more. However, the beauty store like Sephora unsuccessfully understand the target consumer in Japan and have to withdraw out from Japan market in January 2002 (Paul, 2010). Therefore, to prevent this issue happen again, the objective of this research is to investigate and analyse the factor that influences the purchasing intention of the consumer on Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia. There are five independent variables involved in this research which are Promotion, Price, Product Quality, Technology, and Service Quality.

1.1 Background of the Study/Overview of the Study

The beauty products such as skincare, haircare, body care and more widely used in human daily life with the purpose of improving a person's appearance. Consumer's high demand for beauty products makes the beauty industry able to grow rapidly, especially in the developed or developing country like Malaysia. As reported in Swee et al. (2016) on the year 2015, total trade volume for personal care and cosmetics products in Malaysia reached US\$2.24 billion and 50% of them (US\$1.13 billion) is imported from foreign countries like the United States, China, Thailand, France, and more. This opportunity makes Sephora decided to expand it developments by entering Malaysia markets (Sharon, 2017).

Next, Sephora was founded by Dominique Mandonnaud in France at the year 1970 and known as an international chain of beauty retailer company with the ownership of LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton (Sephora, 2019). With the objective "Creating the Sephora Experience", Sephora mainly focus on offering unique shopping experience to the customer with the advantage of technology in their innovation Beauty Insider program (Elif, 2015). There are around 15,000 products sold by Sephora with various types of categories like skincare, fragrance, body care, hair care, makeup, smile care and Sephora's own private label, Sephora Collection in order to fit the consumer's needs. A lot of well-known brands such as Tarte, Marc Jacobs Beauty, Lancôme, Urban Decay, Clinique and more can be found at all of the Sephora beauty store. Now, Sephora has operated more than 2,600 stores globally across 34 countries and the outlet in Malaysia had achieved a 17 unit of stores within Malaysia's state (Christopher, 2018).

1.2 Problem Statement

Globalization makes consumer able to reach the products that they wished to purchase from every time and everywhere. This leads to the rise of consumer's demand, 40% from RM1.4 billion at year 1995 to RM1.9 billion at year 2007 on the importation of beauty and personal care from foreign countries such as South Korea, Japan, Spain, Italy, Australia and New Zealand into Malaysia market whereby create competition among Sephora with other retailer store (Hassali et al., 2015). The competitive situation makes Sephora aware of keeping up to date on consumer's purchasing behaviour in order to achieve more customer and keep survive in Malaysia market in the long run.

Furthermore, Sephora has failure before in Japan in the year 2001 with the announcement, "The continuing economic downturn caused us to reevaluate our expansion plans, and ultimately, to close down our existing stores" by the president and representative director of Sephora Japan, Mr Jeff Doggett (Frontier, 2001). Thus, Sephora Japan is losing over \$50 million due to the economic conditions that mentioned in the announcement and the poor performance on failing to understand the targeted consumer (Weil and Hirano, 2001). As a prove stated in Carter (2008), Sephora's self-service did not fit with the expectation of the retail experience and the limitation of product choices brings dissatisfaction to the Japanese customer.

Hence, it is hard on studying, analysing and interpreting the consumers' purchase intention while consumer's perception and the trend of beauty keep changing from time to time (Marisa, 2014). Sephora USA had conducted an online consumer satisfaction survey platform powered by Medallia at their Sephora.com website with the weekly lucky draw strategy, either one of the respondents able to win \$250 Sephora Gift Card from them without any purchase (Sephora, 2019). This method showing the effort of Sephora USA on getting feedback on the consumer's view and improve the products and services provided. However, this strategy has never been introduced to other countries especially on Malaysian. Therefore, this research is for the purpose of figuring out the consumer purchase intention on the Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.

1.3 Importance of the Study

Consumer behaviour is the psychology part whereby showing the consumers' search, consumption, purchase, and evaluation on certain products or services from a brand that expected to satisfy consumers' needs (Kailash and Srivastava, 2010). Company tend to deeply recognize the targeting customers, the preferable, purpose of buying, the role of decision-maker and influencer plus the way on using the product and service in order to satisfy them and fit their demand (Poh, 2013).

However, it is hard to investigate the variables that influence the consumption of consumer on products or services unless conducting a questionnaire or market research in the country. Therefore, the research regarding to purchasing intention should be considered from the company's point of view. By this, Sephora able to success their brand in Malaysia market meanwhile leading customer to be loyal and repurchase the products next time. There was certain factor involved in this research in order to influence consumers' purchasing intention on Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of this research is design to study on independent variables that affect purchasing intention on Sephora in Penang's market instead of Sephora store from worldwide. The goal of this study is not to understand the beauty store market in Penang but to specifically identify factors that make a consumer decide to purchase at Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia. In order to make sure data accuracy and straight to the point, the particular questionnaire will be distributed to those consumers from Penang area with different gender, race, religion, employment status and income that purchase or experience the service at Sephora beauty store located at Gurney Paragon Penang, Malaysia through the social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, WeChat and etc. Meanwhile the questionnaire will be create with the Google Form and the targeted sample size will be around 100 people to 200 people.

2.0 Research Goals

2.1 Research Objectives

General Objective

The general objective for this research is to investigate the significant influence of the selected independent variables on the purchasing intention on Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.

Specific Objective

1. To investigate the effect of promotion influencing consumer purchasing intention in Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.
2. To investigate the effect of price influencing consumer purchasing intention in Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.
3. To investigate the effect of product quality influencing consumer purchasing intention in Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.
4. To investigate the effect of technology influencing consumer purchasing intention in Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.
5. To investigate the effect of service quality influencing consumer purchasing intention in Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.

2.2 Research Questions

1. What is the effect of promotion on consumer purchasing intention in Sephora Paragon, Penang, Malaysia?
2. What is the effect of price on consumer purchasing intention in Sephora Paragon, Penang, Malaysia?
3. What is the effect of product quality on consumer purchasing intention in Sephora Paragon, Penang, Malaysia?
4. What is the effect of technology on consumer purchasing intention in Sephora Paragon, Penang, Malaysia?
5. What is the effect of service quality on consumer purchasing intention in Sephora Paragon, Penang, Malaysia?

2.3 Hypotheses

- Set One** H_0 : All coefficients are zero.
 H_1 : At least one of the coefficients is not zero.
- Set Two** H_0 : The promotion has no significant influence on the purchasing intention of the consumer on Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.
 H_1 : The promotion has a significant influence on the purchasing intention of the consumer on Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.
- Set Three** H_0 : Price strategy has no significant influence on the purchasing intention of the consumer on Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.
 H_1 : Price strategy has a significant influence on the purchasing intention of the consumer on Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.
- Set Four** H_0 : Product quality has no significant influence on the purchasing intention of the consumer on Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.
 H_1 : Product quality has a significant influence on the purchasing intention of the consumer on Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.
- Set Five** H_0 : Technology has no significant influence on the purchasing intention of the consumer on Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.
 H_1 : Technology factor has a significant influence on the purchasing intention of the consumer on Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.
- Set Six** H_0 : Service quality has no significant influence on the purchasing intention of the consumer on Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.
 H_1 : Service quality has a significant influence on the purchasing intention of the consumer on Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia.

3.0 Literature Review

3.1 Past Research Findings

The first factor expected to influence consumer purchasing intention is promotion. There is a possibility of promotional activities conducted by the company in the modern marketing environment makes the consumer willing to purchase more during sales. According to Aurangzeb et al. (2014), in the research that was conducted at different areas in Bahawalpur based on the sample size of 200 respondents, there is a positive impact on promotion tools able to motivate and affect consumer purchasing intention. Another research by Beimnet (2017) getting the result of $R = 0.439$ significant at a 95% confidence interval proven that there is a positive correlation between sales promotion and consumer buying behaviour. Same goes for Shekofeh (2017) and Yang (2010), they found a similar result too. However, there is an argument from Nicolau (2013) whereby the influence of promotion on purchasing behaviour depends on the levels of attractiveness which there might have significant or no significant impact on consumer purchasing behaviour.

Next factor expected to influence on consumer purchasing intention is price strategy. Adopting a suitable pricing strategy in marketing is expected to motivate consumers to purchase more stated in Hussain and Eman (2016). The result of Anjana (2018) shows that price has greater impact on consumer buying decision. Refer to Mohamed et al. (2018), the journal is based on the 395 respondents with the result of $\beta = 0.258$ and $t = 5.156$ showing that price have significant influence on consumer buying behaviour. Luminata (2017) and Nguyen and Ayda (2014) getting the same conclusion too.

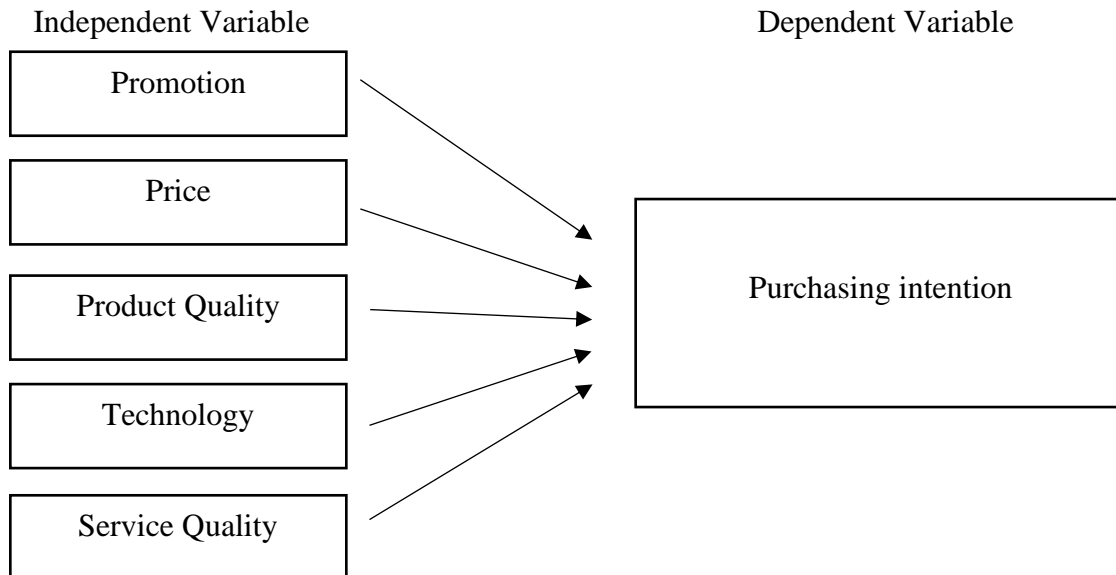
Following the third factor, product quality. Refer to the data collected by Asma et al. (2015) through 122 units of questionnaires, product quality has positive significant influence with consumer purchase intention which the correlation value is 0.663. In addition, another research based on 376 visitors at Electronic City outlet Sudirman Central Business District (SCBD) with the result mediating effect is 0.066 and $P\text{-value} = 0.006$ proven that product quality significantly influences consumer purchasing behaviour (Lily dan Syarif 2017). In the same time Michaela et al. (2017) and Owusu (2013). But Mohd et al (2011) figure out that product quality does not have a significant influence on the consumer purchase intention.

There is another factor influencing consumer behaviour which is technology. A study from Kavya and Manasa (2018) showing that technology advances like e-commerce, social media, and more have an impact on purchase behaviour of a consumer. It was founded by Bhavik (2016) technology is potentially affect the way on consumers' buying behaviour. There is a research conducted by Areeba, Mudassir and Talha (2017) based on 220 respondents in Pakistan market, shows that technology like social media in the marketing field significantly influence purchasing intention with the result of $\beta = 0.45$, $t = 3.75$, and $p\text{-value}$

smaller than 0.001. Another survey from Rudmila (2017) regarding the effect of digital media on consumer purchasing decision with the result alpha value = 0.601 showing that there is a possibility that digital media significantly influence consumer buying behaviour. Julie (2017), Girshwyn (2016) and Yasav (2015) getting the same result too.

Service quality is the last factor expected to influence the purchasing behaviour of the consumer. Stated in Wasim (2017) e-service quality has a major positive effect on purchase intention. Followed by another research, Bandar (2019) based on 322 samples of consumers that shop at the grocery in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia shows that service quality variables statistically significant influence consumer purchasing intention with the resulting beta is 0.219. Refer to Aiyun (2018), of service quality has a moderate positive impact on purchase intention with the correlation of 0.515. Other researches like Wonyoung (2017) and Hashim, Anura, and Husnain (2016) also agree with the impact of service quality to consumer buying behaviour.

3.2 Theoretical Framework



3.3 Empirical Framework

3.3.1 Promotion

Sales promotions such as discounts, free sample, loyalty programs and etc are the marketing tools that able to stimulate consumers' buying behaviour.

1. The advertisement is expected to be attractive because it helps to increase the company's visibility through word of mouth and create public awareness.
2. A rewarding membership loyalty program is expected to influence the consumer to come back to the brand and the brands able to grow rapidly.
3. It is important whereby the promotion deals able to motivate the consumer to buy and improve the reputation of the company.
4. Free sample without any purchase is expected to help the company reach to the targeted audience while building a trust relationship with the customer.
5. The reward redemption is expected to save more money for the consumer whereby it able to encourage consumer purchase frequently.

3.3.2 Price Strategy

Price refers to the amount of money that is expected to pay by the consumer in order to get the product or services.

1. Price should be reasonable for consumer in order to influence customer to purchase.
2. Price should be in an acceptable range for the consumer as they willing to expend their money at the products.
3. Price should be affordable for the targeted audience as they prefer to purchase when price is as little as possible.
4. The charged must be fair to every consumer instead of different price that cause dissatisfaction of customers.
5. Quality of product should be valuable for the pay of customer in order to satisfy customer on they are getting back the expectation value from the payment.

3.3.3 Product Quality

Product quality means incorporate features that able to satisfy consumers' want and at the same time improving the level of quality.

1. The store is expected to provide various types of choice to consumers in order to fit with consumers' preferences.
2. The ingredients are expected to be safe for use and not harmful to human's health.
3. Quality of products is worth the price while the pay is equivalent to the charged.
4. The products able to fit the customers' needs and market demand.
5. Product should be in good packaging in order to attract the consumer to purchase.

3.3.4 Technology

Technology refers to the practice of scientific knowledge in the industry in order to achieve efficiency.

1. The mobile app is expected to give good shopping experience for consumer's convenience and personalization service.
2. The website is easy to navigate and user-friendly which makes the consumer more willing to purchase through the platform.
3. Voice assistant is always ready to help in 24 hours a day at the same time enhance consumer insight.
4. Virtual makeup artists technology is useful for the consumer on help to make the decision.
5. In-store sensory experience expected to build a positive image for the consumer to return.

3.3.5 Service Quality

Service quality refers to the comparison of the perceived performance provided with the expectation of the consumer.

1. The staffs are expected to be knowledgeable with all the information regarding the product.
2. The staffs are expected to be professional in order to pursue consumer to purchase.
3. The attitude of staff is expected to always polite to the customer in order to let customers feel been respected.
4. The customer can be recognized by the staffs and enjoy customized service at the same time makes customer feel the staffs is friendly.
5. Customer able to make the decision with the suggestion from staff.

3.4 Research Methodology

According to the statistic from Mohd (2019), Malaysia's current population size in the year 2019 is estimated 62.3 million with 9.4 million, which is 90.2% of citizen and 3.2 million which is 9.8% are non-citizens. Next, stated in David (2015) there are around 100,000 people living in 19 urban areas of Malaysia such as Kuala Lumpur, George Town and Johor Bahru which they are more knowledgeable on the basics of skincare, highly educated and prefer to try new things compared with non-urban people meanwhile occupied high consumption on imported products. Therefore, the selected population for this research are from the urban area, George Town, Penang. Thus, a non-profitability sampling which is convenience sampling has been used for this research in order to distribute to a group of the population that closes to hand for the researcher with the estimated sample size of 100 to 200 respondents for this questionnaire.

A quantitative method, which is the questionnaire was chosen as the data collection instrument. It is the primary data source that will be used in the research for better measure and identify the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable, purchasing intention of the consumer. The questionnaire is divided into two-part whereby Section A is regarding the demographic information and Section B is the independent variables which are promotion, price strategy, product quality, technology and service quality plus the dependent variable which is purchasing intention of the consumer. Demographic information included in Section A is gender, age group, race, religion, income, and employment status. While Section B is five questions that is relevant to each of the independent variables in order to get accurate data from the result. Likert scale is used in the questionnaire from the scale of one to scale of five which are strongly disagreed (1), disagreed (2), neutral (3), agree (4) to strongly agree (5).

The questionnaire will be created with a web-based application for data collection purpose which is Google Form and will be distributed through social media like Facebook, WeChat, WhatsApp, Instagram etc. The Google Form will close from receiving a response from the respondents after one month period in order to analyse the result. Next, the R square reveals how much the variance independent variable is caused by the independent variable. The significance level set is 0.01, which means if P-value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis (H0) will be rejected. If P is greater than or equal to 0.05, then the alternative hypothesis (H1) will be rejected.

3.5 Conclusion

Therefore, this research aims to study whenever independent variables such as promotion, price strategy, product quality, technology and service quality is expected to have positive significant influence on the purchasing intention of the consumer on Sephora Gurney Paragon, Penang, Malaysia in order to better understanding the targeted consumer and develop new idea to satisfy them. This research will be using a quantitative questionnaire method with convenience sampling of 200 people to gather the data from the respondent. After the collection of data, the PSPP System will be used to analyse the result.

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