

Purchase Intention on Grooming Products among Metrosexual Men: Whether Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty and Self Concept Give Significant Relationship?

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to study on purchase intention among metrosexual men living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In total, three hypotheses are developed on the relationship between dependent variable, purchase intention with brand loyalty, brand awareness and self-concept. The hypotheses were tested through a Smart-PLS using data from a sample of 200 of respondents in Kuala Lumpur. This research has been conducted to identify best drivers affect purchase intention of skincare or grooming products among metrosexual men in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Most of independent variables are significantly correlated with Purchase Intention. The outcome of this study provides valuable understandings about metrosexual men who have a positive relationship between brand awareness, brand loyalty and self-concept towards purchasing skincare or grooming products. Furthermore, it also recommends numerous important insights for marketing experts in terms of designing effective marketing strategies to capture the growing market, especially in the context of male skincare and grooming products.

Keywords: Purchase Intention, Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty, Self-Concept, Metrosexual Men

Introduction

The Malaysian cosmetic product market has been growing exponentially which recorded 10% annual growth and a projection of above RM3.0 billion by the end of the year 2027. This increase in market size and consumer interest in facial care products makes the exploration of this consumer segment worthwhile. In the perspective of managerial, Duffy (2018) stated fashion, apparel and grooming were usually associated with women. However,

Duffy (2018) found men nowadays are genuinely concern on their apparels and grooming products too. The purchasing behaviour on personal care products can be said evolved from time to time (Kumar et al., 2021). Beauty care products can be related to women and it is always growing but the men's market today especially metrosexual men got the bloom (Skalen, 2010). Skincare products are no longer exclusive to female customers, as more and more men are purchasing skincare products due to changing lifestyles and increased consciousness of their appearance (Ho et al., 2020). Metrosexual men do think that they are very well-concern on their self-image as they want to be looking good at public. They can also be described as urban male with a strong aesthetic sense who spend more time and money on their appearance and lifestyle (Collins English Dictionary, 2021). Globally, men's grooming products sales are expected to hit USD 166 billion in 2022 (Warfield, 2019).

Metrosexual men are also showing their major concern on their own appearances and looks. The metrosexual men like to invest their money and time through changing lifestyle, diets and they urge themselves to look good by purchasing of consumer goods like personal care products, clothes and accessories (Sankaranarayanan and Mekoth, 2014). A specific male consumer category that has contributed to this emerging culture is the so-called metrosexuals – young adult men living in metropolitan cities who are meticulous about their grooming and appearance (Sin & Omar, 2020). Although the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected over 180 countries, infected more than 6.5 million people and killed more than 383,000 grooming business should continue as to cater the market segment. Since market segments for these products have a highly global sales, focus on how to draw attention to attract the potential buyers is very important because it is a rapidly growing brand segments, although the segment is poorly understood and under examined (Ferry & Astuti, 2021). Furthermore, from the findings, it shows that marketing strategy such as social media is using to purchase the facial care products (Ferry & Astuti, 2021). As a result, manufacturers need to respond vigorously to gain their market share in this evolving market. The trend market of grooming products among men is increasing and the manufacturers have also identified to focus on this niche market and there is a paucity of study in this area (Ferry & Astuti, 2000; Sin & Omar, 2020; Kacen, 2000).

There is a growing number of Malaysian men who have paid more attention to their grooming and appearance, including skincare, haircare, and general hygiene (Kumar et al., 2021). A study shows that Malaysian men spent an average of 20 minutes daily on their grooming, and 56% of them also stated that grooming had boosted their level of self-confidence (Cheong, 2012). Reports suggest that the metrosexual community is on the rise in Malaysia (Aida, 2014). Hence, understanding purchase intention of metrosexual men towards skincare products helps local organizations or business to fulfil consumer needs and wants. Thus, this study aims to identify the relationship between brand awareness, brand loyalty and self-concept towards purchase intention of facial care products among metrosexual men in Malaysia.

Review of Literature

Overview of Metrosexual Men Purchase Intention

The men's beauty care or skin care market instead is a relatively new and emerging market, it is growing, and it is very attractive to study on this niche market (Eng, Ahmad & Onn, 2018; Mounghkem & Surakiatpinyo, 2010). In US, 1900s marketing data suggested that men would buy cosmetics if they believed it would enhance their masculinity, so recent advertisement targeting men's grooming products employed a different language to differentiate itself from

female counterparts (Ehlers, 2021). The market of men's grooming continues to grow worldwide, and is expected to reach \$81.2 billion USD by 2024. Meanwhile, the global market size of men's personal care has increased steadily since 2015, and is expected to top \$27.54 billion USD by 2025. The largest markets are in Europe and America, while the fastest growth can be found in Asia, especially China and India (Ehlers, 2021). Beside, Asia Pacific is also expected to be the fastest-growing regional market for men's personal care over the forecast period (Grand View Research, 2020). The inclination of men towards corporate lifestyle and rise in the number of educated customers especially in emerging economies such as China and India is the key factor driving the market in the region. Factors such as pricing, quality of products, and a number of mid-range brands catering to men's category continue to be a decisive factor in influencing consumer choices (Grand View Research, 2020). In addition, the trend of metrosexual had spread along with the Japanese Pop and Korean Pop trends throughout every corners of this world lately, even in Malaysian market (Eng et al., 2018). Cosmetic products have been mostly related to women for years, since the cosmetic industry has offered the product in terms of beauty and feminine. But nowadays the situation has changed, where men are more aware and concerned about their self-appearance since younger age to older age of the importance of beautifulness, boyish charm, and fitness which separate market for male consumers (Sanny et al., 2020).

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is a kind of decision making that studies the reason to buy a particular product such as food products, personal care products or even electric appliances by consumer (Popovic et al., 2019). Purchase intention is something that represents consumers who have the possibility, will, plan or who are willing to buy a product or service in the future. Furthermore, according to Gogoi (2013) purchase intention can be defined as a state of where customer tends to buy a certain product in certain circumstances. Purchase intention means a consumer prefers to buy a product or service because individual finds that they need a particular product or service, or even attitude towards a product and perception of product. In other words, purchase intention means consumer will buy a product once again after they evaluate a product and find out that the product worth buying. The purchase intention parameter is the main indicator in evaluating consumer behavior, which can predict consumer behavior when making a purchase decision; because the stronger the purchase intention, the greater the probability of purchasing (Jasin, 2022). This statement also been supported by Bernardo et al (2022); Cheng et al (2021); Haudi et al (2022) where purchase intention serves as an indication of self to buy a brand or take a purchase action. Meanwhile according to Herrando & Martin (2022), purchase intention refers to the likelihood that an individual will purchase the item in question in the future.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness can be defined as the strength that the brand has in the consumer's mind (Aaker, 1996). Brand awareness involves two main elements which are recall and recognition (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Since the early 1950s, research on consumer behavior has placed a significant emphasis on the concept of brand awareness (Faeq et al., 2020). Brand awareness defines the relationship between a customer and a product that has a degree of importance or tendency to stimulate feelings of interest in that product (Strubel and Patrie, 2016). Beside, brand awareness is the consumer's ability to remember the brand as part of a certain product category (Huang & Sarigözü, 2014; Da Costa et al., 2017). In short, brand

awareness refers to the consumer's understanding or recognition of a specific product. According to Josiam et al (2016), level of awareness affects consumer's behaviour formation as well the way they make decisions to purchase the products. In reviewing prior research on brand awareness, it was revealed that consumers with high level of brand awareness are positively influenced in their purchase intention and shopping experience due to their high level of interest in products/services (Campbell et al., 2014). Obviously, when consumers face a huge selection of commodity brand, the higher the brand awareness, the easier it is to attract consumers (Zhang, 2020). In addition, brand awareness also will act as a picture that is in the minds of consumers of a product that has been seen or heard and can recognize the product again when given a hint (Shwastika and Keni, 2021). Furthermore, the higher the brand awareness, the higher the purchase intention. In addition, perceived quality is able to influence consumers to pay a higher price for a product or service that has a distinct difference compared to other products (Chakraborty, 2019). By having strong brand awareness, consumers are able to more quickly identify items and services by their respective brands (Faraj et al., 2021). In other words, brand awareness is basically what a customer remembers about a brand, and it shows what a customer thinks about a brand in general (Faeq, 2022). A positive brand awareness serves to boost a variety of outcomes, including a customer's contentment, the quality of the service they receive, their loyalty, and their intention to make additional purchases (Faeq et al., 2021).

Brand Loyalty

Increased brand loyalty makes consumers more likely to buy the products, as well as it creates the ability to repurchase and increase positive word-of-mouth (Foroudi et al., 2018). According to Shahid (2017), a loyal customer will prefer to purchase his brand consistently no matter what price is offered. In addition, they also create the possibility of increasing sales volume, attracting new consumers, and providing commercial leverage through distribution channels, which opt for the security of brands that have loyal customers (Ranjbariyan et al., 2012). Other empirical studies have also validated the positive impact of brand loyalty on consumer purchase intent, stating that loyal buyers tend to refer the brand to others and continue to buy the branded products even if the price is higher than competitors (Calvo et al., 2015; Akkucuk & Esmaeili, 2016). By possessing strong brand loyalty, the customer committed with his brand and repeat his purchases for the same brand. The best practices in creating, building and sustaining a brand is by offering higher levels of engagement with customers which will lead to higher brand loyalty (Eelen et al., 2017; Kaur et al., 2020; Fernandes and Moreira, 2019). However, through technology advancements, the ways in which customers can demonstrate loyalty toward a brand have broadened beyond purchasing (Coelho et al., 2019; Khamitov et al., 2019). For instance, according to Khamitov et al (2019), brand loyalty can be beyond the purchase transaction where the customers incorporate the relationship with the brand, which can be expressed in either social and/or economic exchanges. As a dynamic concept Luciano et al (2018), brand loyalty now incorporates increased interaction, influence and ownership stakeholders have with brands (Oh et al., 2020; Swaminathan et al., 2020). today's market, brands aim to establish long-lasting, profitable relationships with their customers Swaminathan et al (2020), which can lead to loyalty and/or oppositional loyalty to other brands (Japutra et al., 2019).

Self-Concept

Self-concept is a key influencer in consumer decision making process (Kang et al., 2012; Yusof & Ariffin, 2016). The components of self-concept encompass of physical, psychological besides social attributes in which has an impact on an individual's affective, behavioural and cognitive components (attitudes, beliefs, and values). The notion of self-concept thus elevates the needs of grooming as one of the fundamental tools that men can use to enhance and mitigate their physical appearance and outlook; further boosting one's masculinity and manliness. Self-concept would exert a strong impact on consumer behaviour and decision-making process, such as acquisition and consumption of products (Giovannini et al., 2015). According to Giovannini et al (2015), individuals who have high self-concept are more concerned about their social identity. According to Shephard et al (2016), fashion consciousness and self-image were stems from being self-concept. Previous studies have shown the positive relationship between fashion consciousness and attitude towards product or brand (Lam and Yee, 2014; Shephard et al., 2016) but self-concept has received less attention. Research by (Kumar et al., 2020) showed that individual self-concept, which was built by self-image and self-consciousness, contributed positively to men's attitudes towards grooming products, which would positively affect men's intention to purchase grooming products. It is quite evident that individuals favor to utilize brands consistent with one's own perceived self-concept through way of preserving their self-image and consumers place huge significance on using those products/brands that matches with one's own perceived self (Sandhu et al,2018). In this era consumers will not only choose products that match their expectation in term of usage; but also about how the products of brand match with their own self-concept (Ulag et al., 2023)

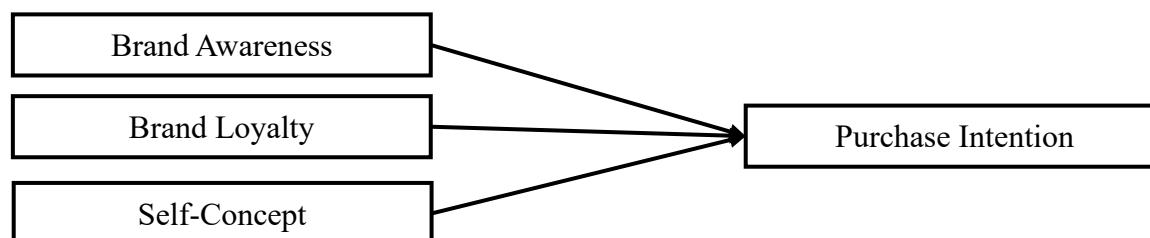


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Hypothesis Development

H1: There is a significant relationship between Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention.

H2: There is a significant relationship between Brand Loyalty and Purchase Intention.

H3: There is a significant relationship between Self-Concept and Purchase Intention.

Methodology

A quantitative research has been designed and an online survey was employed as an instrument to gather data. The target respondents for this research are young male living in Kuala Lumpur. Purposive sampling method is used for collection of data. G-Power analysis software is used to determine the sample size of this research with several drivers. Thus, based on the result from G-Power, 77 respondents are the minimum sampling size for this research. Therefore, only 200 survey questions were given back and can be used to analyse. Participants were asked to rate the degree to which he agreed with each of the statements using a 6-point Likert scale. Roscoe (1975) suggested that sample size larger than 50 and less

than 500 are appropriate for most studies. In total, there were 20 items that have been used to measure four variables. One of the items has been reversed code according to suitability. A Smart Partial Least Square (Smart-PLS) was used to analyse the data.

Analysis of Data

From Table 1.0, the majority of respondents are those in 21-30 years old. It shows that this group of age contribute 71%. Other than that, most of them possessed Bachelor's Degree which equivalent to 118 respondents and equal to 59%. Most of respondents have RM4001-5000 estimated income which equivalent to 34.5%. Single men have the highest contribution on this study which is 51.5% and most of them are Malay (76.5%). They keen to spent more than RM61.00 for skincare products.

Table 1.0

Demographic Analysis

Demographic	Frequency	Percentages %	
Highest Education Level	Philosophy of Doctor	2	1
	Master	42	21
	Bachelor's Degree	118	59
	Diploma	22	11
	Certificate	7	3.5
	Secondary	9	4.5
Estimated Income (RM)	900 - 1000	2	1
	1001 - 2000	21	10.5
	2001 - 3000	44	22
	3001 - 4000	47	23.5
	4001 - 5000	69	34.5
	5001 - 6000	17	8.5
Marital Status	Single	103	51.5
	Married	88	44
	Others	9	4.5
Age	21 - 30 years old	142	71
	31 - 40years old	39	19.5
	41 - 50 years old	19	9.5
Ethnicity	Malay	153	76.5
	Chinese	22	11
	Indian	17	8.5
	Others	8	4
Expenses on skincare products	RM1.00-RM20.00	54	27
	RM21.00 – RM40.00	35	17.5
	RM41.00 – RM60.00	39	19.5
	RM61.00 and above	72	36

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a group of items estimate only one construct and how this construct is distinctly estimated (Hair et al., 2014). Discriminant validity was tested through the criteria suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981), where the value of each

construct should higher than the correlations among the constructs. As Table 2.0 indicates that the bold value of each construct in this study is higher than the correlation value among the constructs. Having such result confidently confirms that the model has adequate reliability and validity.

Table 2.0
Discriminant Validity

Construct	Purchase Intention	Brand Awareness	Brand Loyalty	Self-Concept
Purchase Intention	0.82			
Brand Awareness	0.60	0.88		
Brand Loyalty	0.36	0.36	0.70	
Self-Concept	0.52	0.47	0.53	0.71

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Similarly, as for Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Hair et al (2014) stated that AVE value should greater than 0.50. It explains that a latent variable is able to explain more than half of the variance of its indicators on average. Thus, all constructs in this study have value of AVE larger than 0.50 indicating that they are met the acceptable standard of convergent validity. Then, the acceptable of internal consistency of Composite Reliability is 0.70 while Cronbach's Alpha is 0.60 (Hair et al., 2014). Then, all constructs were above 0.70 and this met with the rule of thumb for Composite Reliability and all constructs in Cronbach's Alpha also met with the rule of thumb larger than 0.60.

Table 3.0
Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Construct	Items	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Purchase Intention	5 Items	0.68	0.94	0.93
Brand Awareness	5 Items	0.77	0.94	0.92
Brand Loyalty	5 Items	0.50	0.73	0.67
Self-Concept	5 Items	0.51	0.84	0.78

Structural Analysis

The value of effect size f^2 was used to measure the effect size of independent variable towards dependent variable in the model 0.02 (weak), 0.15 (medium) and 0.35 (large) (Hair et al., 2014). The effect size f^2 of this study shows that Brand Awareness effect size value is 0.45 indicates that it has large effect. However, Brand Loyalty effect size value is 0.05 which can be indicated as small effect. Lastly, the Self-Concept effect size value is 0.28 and can be indicated as medium effect.

Table 4.0
Structural Analysis

Construct	Effect Size (f^2)	T-Value
Brand Awareness	0.45	2.74
Brand Loyalty	0.05	1.89
Self-Concept	0.28	3.27

Figure 2.0 shows that the inclusion of Brand Awareness components in the analysis had contributed 43.7% in the variance of Purchase Intention. Next, the outcomes of testing the hypothesis and Brand Awareness is significantly correlated with Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.484$; $t = 2.74$) where $t > 1.96$, therefore H1 was supported. According to Strubel and Patrie (2016) supported that Brand Awareness has significant correlation towards Purchase Intention.

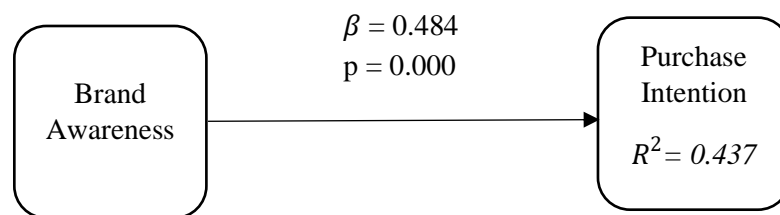


Figure 2.0: Relationship of Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention

Figure 3.0 shows that the inclusion of Brand Loyalty components in the analysis had contributed 43.7% in the variance of Purchase Intention. Next, the outcomes of testing the hypothesis and Brand Loyalty is significantly correlated with Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.391$; $t = 1.89$) where $t > 1.96$, therefore H1 was supported. According to Giovannini et al (2015); Shephard et al (2016) supported that Brand Loyalty has significant correlation towards Purchase Intention.

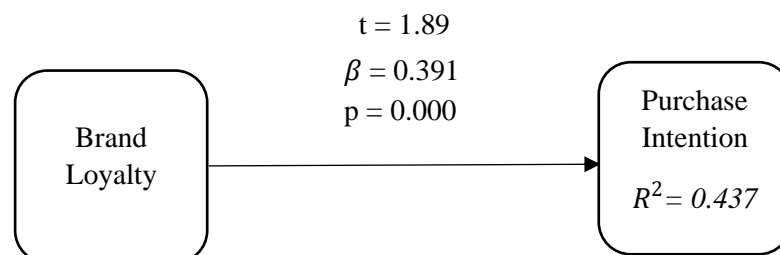


Figure 3.0: Relationship of Brand Loyalty and Purchase Intention

Figure 4.0 shows that the inclusion of Self-Concept components in the analysis had contributed 43.7% in the variance of Purchase Intention. Next, the outcomes of testing the hypothesis and Self-Concept is significantly correlated with Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.297$; $t = 3.27$) where $t > 1.96$, therefore H1 was supported. This result supports previous findings that suggest positive significant relationship of Self-Concept on Purchase Intention (Lam and Yee, 2014; Khan et al., 2017).

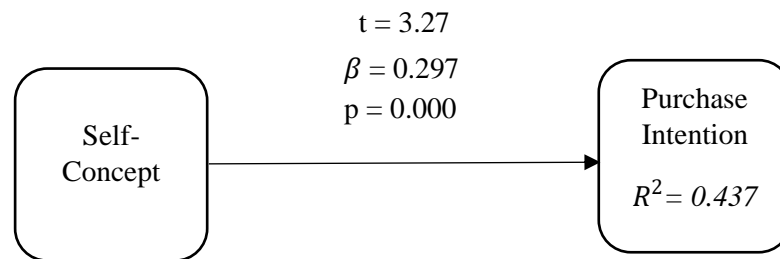


Figure 4.0: Relationship of Self-Concept and Purchase Intention

Conclusions

Beauty may be in the eye of the beholder, but there is little debate when it comes to the long-term attractiveness of the global beauty industry. The effect of brand awareness on purchase intention of skincare or grooming products was further analyzed among metrosexual men in Malaysia. The outcome of this study provides valuable understandings about metrosexual men who have a positive brand awareness and brand loyalty towards purchasing skincare or grooming products. The results extend the current knowledge to the fundamental motivations that influence men's behaviour by showing that brand awareness and brand loyalty are strongly increase the level of purchase intention on grooming or skincare products. This study also provides novel findings which indicating that the influence of self-concept on purchase intention is important in guiding the marketing strategies of the male grooming market especially metrosexual men. By marketing a product as having a private connection with customers, businesses will attract customers who are driven by self-oriented motivations. These consumers will also then have a high intent and high demand to purchase these products.

The results of this study will help the marketing practitioner to know which variables will be more influential when building marketing strategies and at the same time it will determine which element with the most influence on consumers. This study reveals self-concept as significant variable towards purchase intention among metrosexual men in Malaysia. Furthermore, it also recommends numerous important insights for marketing experts in terms of designing effective marketing strategies to capture the growing market, especially in the context of male skincare and grooming products. According to Tuten and Solomon (2017), social media is used as a promotional and communication tool with the aim of directing consumers to the decision-making process. According to Ferry & Astuti (2021), social media has become a part of every individual's life and it is one of marketing strategy. Anything can be done through social media, including advertising activities. Social media is currently having a role in influencing consumer in making purchases (Ferry & Astuti, 2021). Consumption of grooming products are driven by self-concept and product involvement; marketers must associate their core product's offerings with the aptness to elevate ones' self-esteem that is of expected by the society's 'beauty standard'. Even though the economic magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic on brands and retailers will be far greater than any recession, there are signs that the beauty industry may once again prove relatively resilient.

Limitation of Study and Future Recommendations

This study is based on the findings from Malaysian consumers of natural personal care products, suggesting that the findings of this study may not be directly applicable to other

cultural contexts or developed countries. Future studies may incorporate this limitation by extending the study to multiple cultural contexts or developed countries. In addition, a comparative study between developing and developed countries is likely to shed newer insights.

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