

RESEARCH ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE IMAGE OF THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND BRAND EXPERIENCE TO PRODUCT PURCHASE INTENTION: A CASE STUDY AT VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, HO CHI MINH CITY

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Abstract: A strong brand not only focuses on improving the quality of products but also ensures a clear origin of information. Therefore, this study proposes a new research model related to product purchase intention, with a focus on psychological and behavioral aspects of customers. Using a sample of 291 Gen Z students who are using cosmetics, this study clearly demonstrates the influence of country of origin image and brand experience on product repurchasing intention, through trust in the brand as an intermediary factor. In addition, the study also proposes and discusses some practical applications in this field.

Keywords: brand experience, brand trust, country of origin, product repurchasing intention

1. INTRODUCTION

The socio-cultural characteristics, along with economic activities, are deeply reflected in the process of formation and development of each ethnic group. Each stage is marked by transformation. The process of national construction and development has created a unique image for each individual country. Through production, developed countries build for themselves a dynamic and modern economic image in production for themselves. Depending on their competitive advantages, other countries establish a unique and impressive image in the international arena. This is a significant advantage that companies and corporations to leverage to enhance the value of their products and attract customers. In addition, it is important to examine the influence of popular cosmetic brands' national image on customer reviews.

Cosmetics have now become a crucial part of beauty trends. Cosmetics appeal to men and women. At the same time, cosmetic manufacturers are focusing on enhancing the experience of their products. Gen Z is the generation that is here to shake the business of beauty; they are all about creativity and

meaningful living. This is considered a critical determinant of cosmetic success; it is important to consider and clarify whether creating a good experience guarantees customer loyalty.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Literature review and research model

2.1.1 Country of origin

“Country of origin” is considered an important factor that profoundly affects customers’ purchasing decisions. It is considered as subjective perception in general and customers in particular about a product through beliefs, concepts, or expressions before and during the purchase decision process. Dichter (1965) was one of the first researchers on the “country of origin” phenomenon, which led to fascinating new ideas for the field of international marketing. Nagashima introduced a more specific concept of “country of origin” in 1970, suggesting that a typical country’s image, reputation, and stereotypes are assigned to a product. Factors such as national features, political and economic characteristics,

history, and traditions shapes these image of the nation Yaprak (1978) has shown that both product characteristics and country of origin characteristics influence customers' purchasing intention. Han (1989) has also demonstrated that customers use the national image during product reviews and consider it an important source of information.

2.1.2 Brand experience

According to Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009), brand experience is an intrinsic and subjective response of the customer, involving feelings and perception. In addition, the brand experience encompasses reactive behaviors stimulated by brand-related elements, which form an integral part of the brand identity process, such as the packaging of the brand's products and the influence of environmental designs. There are three types of brand experiences: product experiences, shopping and service experiences, and consumer experiences (Brakus, Schmitt & Zhang, 2008).

Product experience occurs when customers interact and come into direct contact with the product, either through advertising or live presentations. The shopping and service experience manifests when customers engage with the physical space or environment of the service store, and take advantage of exclusive policies during their interaction. The consumer experience is defined as when customers shop and use a product (Hoch & Ha, 1986).

2.1.3 Brand trust

Brand trust can be defined as a customer's willingness to believe in a brand's capabilities and effectiveness (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). It can also be understood as customer confidence stemming from the brand's reliability and integrity (Chatterjee & Chaudhuri, 2005). Brand trust is considered an important intermediary factor in a customer's shopping behavior from the beginning of the shopping process until after the purchase, and it is also a major factor leading to a

customer's long-term loyalty to a brand (Lau & Lee, 1999).

2.1.4 Product repurchasing intention

Purchase intentions are individual actions that tend to involve the purchase of a particular product (Bagozzi, 1999). This is completely different from attitude which is the result of a series of assessments. "Intention" is defined as the impulse in consciousness that causes behavior (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). In simple terms, "repurchase intention" is the intent to buy a product from the same brand again. According to Park (2002), a purchase intention refers to "what we think we will buy". Only at the level of experience, depending on the context, can the intention to repurchase the product also be considered the intention to purchase it (Park, 2002).

2.1.5 Research model

There have been a lot of studies related to the image of the country of origin and brand experience, such as Nguyen Ngoc Hien et al. (2019), Amina Merabet (2020), Wibowo, Rizan and Febrilia (2021), and Nugraha et al. (2024). Based on the previous basic theory and selective inheritance of relevant research, the model of country of origin, brand experience, brand trust and intention to continue repurchasing products is proposed as follows:

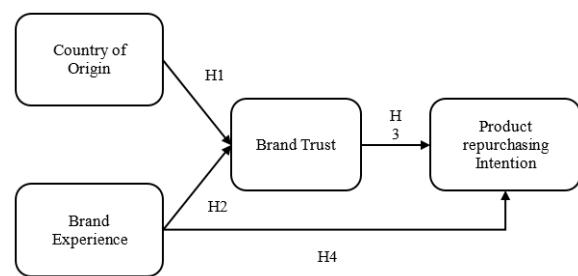


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

H1: Country of origin has a positive impact on brand trust.

H2: Brand experience has a positive impact on brand trust.

H3: Brand trust positively has a positive impact on product repurchasing intention.

H4: Brand experience has a positive impact on product repurchasing intention.

2.2 Research methods

2.2.1 Survey questionnaire

Survey questionnaires were used to collect data for this study, with scales applied by the previous authors. The questionnaire was distributed to the study subjects in two forms: online and paper. Online surveys used tools such as Facebook and Gmail. The research subjects are students studying at Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh City and using cosmetics. All surveys were distributed and evaluated in a collaborative and voluntary manner.

The study subjects received 350 questionnaires in total. However, only 291 responses were considered valid. The process of eliminating 59 responses was undertaken to weed out study subjects with uncooperative or unserious attitudes and behaviors. This removal was carried out to ensure the objectivity and authenticity of the data presented in the research paper.

2.2.2 Data analysis

Qualitative and quantitative research methods are employed to refine the scale and validate the relationship between factors. The initial qualitative study aims to calibrate scales and build questionnaires appropriate to the research context. The main method is a group interview to modify the scales. Next, the authors completed the survey specific to the research topic. To meet the requirements of this paper, the data collected will be analyzed using SPSS and AMOS software. The data analysis process includes: data encoding, descriptive statistics, reliability testing, factor analysis, factor identification, and linear structure modeling.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Research results

3.1.1 Statistics Describing the Characteristics of Sample

Table 1. Data descriptive statistics

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	104	41%
Female	187	59%
Monthly income		
Less than 5 million	209	71.8%
5-10 million	75	25.8%
11-20 million	6	2.1%
Over 20 million	1	0.3%

3.1.2 Variables Reliability Inspection

Table 2. Scale inspection results

No.	Factor	Encode	Alpha coefficient	Conclude
1	Country of origin	COO	0.811	Good quality
2	Brand experience	BE	0.737	Quality
3	Brand trust	BT	0.643	Quality
4	Product repurchasing intention	RP	0.761	Quality

Scales undergo reliability testing to ensure consistency.

This paper tested the consistency of the scale using the Cronbach's Alpha index. In social science research, a common rule of thumb for determining whether a scale is good or not that the Alpha value in this paper are greater than 0.6. This paper's Alphas in this paper are greater than or equal to 0.643 (for the brand trust factor).

3.1.3 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis should be applied in this paper to assess aspects of the scale and reduce the structural complexity of these scales. The current data are suitable for factor analysis when the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) coefficient is 0.75 and the Bartlett sphericity test is significant ($p < 0.05$). In this analysis, the factor loadings are all greater than 0.5 to show the practical significance of the scale. Following the reliability assessment of each scale and the factor analysis, the

variables associated with each factor are subsequently examined:

Country of origin: COO1, COO2, COO3, COO4.

Brand experience: BE3, BE4, BE5.

Brand trust: BT1, BT2.

Product repurchasing intention: RP1, RP2.

3.1.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis allows the theoretical structure of measurement scales to be tested, examining the relationship between the concept under study and other concepts without being influenced by measurement error.

Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Index	Standard	Result
CMIN/df	< 5	1.903
CFI	> 0.9	0.954
TLI	> 0.9	0.935
RMSEA	< 0.06	0.056
GFI	> 0.8	0.948

3.1.5 Structural Equation Modeling

Using confirmatory factor analysis is not enough for this paper to examine the relationships in more depth, but we need to clarify the relationships hidden in the

research model. Therefore, a linear structural equation model is used to test and measure the relationships and initial hypotheses. The results are listed below:

Table 4. Model suitability testing results

Index	Standard	Result
Chi-square/df (χ^2/df)	$\leq 2^{**}; \leq 3^*$	1.5
TLI	$\geq 0.9^*$	0.969
GFI	$\geq 0.8^*$	0.962
CFI	$\geq 0.9^*$	0.977
RMSEA	$\leq 0.08^{**}$	0.042

Table 5. Research hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Relationships	Estimation index	P	Conclude
1	+ COO \rightarrow BT	0.29	***	Accept
2	+ BE \rightarrow BT	0.38	***	Accept
3	+ BT \rightarrow RP	0.23	***	Accept
4	+ BE \rightarrow RP	0.43	***	Accept

Based on the linear structure model running, the results received are consistent with the basic requirements of the data analysis method. In addition, all hypotheses proved to be interrelated.

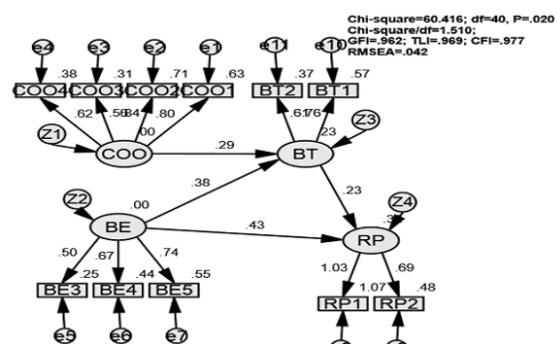


Figure 2. Structural Equation Modeling

4. CONCLUSION

After analyzing data from 291 survey responses through statistical research methods, the paper once again identified factors influencing customer intent and evaluations of the products they were using. In particular, the study confirmed the existence of the intermediate variable of brand trust and assumed a positive influence from two identified country of origin and brand experience factors.

The previous authors' research and this research paper's findings indicate that a variety of factors, including the product's

origin and the customer's experience, contribute to the formation of brand trust. This provides a basis for cosmetic companies/manufacturers to develop their own strategies to enhance their competitive position in the market.

However, time and financial limited the paper's focus to only two factors: country of origin and brand experience, leaving other factors unanalyzed and unresearched. Follow-up studies can expand and investigate new elements or ways of acting between them, as well as increase the practicality and application of research findings.

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Notes:

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HÌNH ẢNH QUỐC GIA XUẤT XỨ VÀ VIỆC TRẢI NGHIỆM THƯƠNG HIỆU: MỘT NGHIÊN CỨU CÁC THƯƠNG HIỆU MỸ PHẨM CỦA GEN Z TẠI THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH

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Tóm tắt: Một thương hiệu mạnh không chỉ tập trung vào việc cải thiện chất lượng sản phẩm mà còn phải đảm bảo nguồn gốc thông tin xuất xứ rõ ràng. Do đó, nghiên cứu này đề xuất một mô hình mới liên quan đến ý định mua sắm sản phẩm, với sự tập trung vào các khía cạnh tâm lý và hành vi của khách hàng. Sử dụng mẫu gồm 291 sinh viên thuộc thế hệ Gen Z và đang sử dụng mỹ phẩm, nghiên cứu này chỉ ra rõ sự ảnh hưởng của hình ảnh quốc gia xuất xứ và trải nghiệm thương hiệu đối với ý định mua sắm lặp lại sản phẩm, thông qua niềm tin vào thương hiệu như một yếu tố trung gian. Ngoài ra, nghiên cứu cũng đề xuất và thảo luận về một số ứng dụng thực tiễn trong lĩnh vực này.

Từ khóa: niềm tin thương hiệu, quốc gia xuất xứ, trải nghiệm thương hiệu, ý định tiếp tục mua lại sản phẩm

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Ghi chú:

Tác giả đã xác nhận không có tranh chấp về lợi ích đối với bài báo này.