

## **Psychological Determinants of Saudi Women's Purchase Intention of International Brand Cosmetics**

**By**

**Dr Norah A. A. Almotrefi**

Department of Psychology, College of Education, Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

**Dr Sanjeevni Gangwani**

Department of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

**Dr Nadia A. A. Alshahrani**

Department of Basic Sciences, Applied College, Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

**Prof. Wesam M. A. Ibrahim**

Department of Basic Sciences, Applied College, Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and Faculty of Education, Tanta University Egypt

E-mail: [WMIbrahim@pnu.edu.sa](mailto:WMIbrahim@pnu.edu.sa)

### **Abstract**

In this study, we examine the influence of psychological factors—brand image, brand equity, brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived value, price consciousness, and perceived quality—on the purchase intention of international brand cosmetics among women in Saudi Arabia. We conducted a survey and collected 500 valid responses from Saudi women. The data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science version 25 and applying the Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression methods. The results reveal that psychological factors greatly influence Saudi women's purchase intention of international brand cosmetics, with brand image and perceived quality having the maximum impact. The findings of this study have several implications—they can be utilized by the cosmetics industry to understand Saudi women's needs and demands for cosmetic products. The findings also provide insights into the prominent psychological factors that influence Saudi women's purchase intentions of international brand cosmetic products, which can guide the cosmetic industry to plan and design better product promotion strategies for women consumers in Saudi Arabia.

**Keywords:** brand image, brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived value, price consciousness, perceived quality, purchase intention, cosmetics of international brand

### **Introduction**

Cosmetics generally refer to products that can enhance consumers' beauty, appearance, attraction, and glamour. They include skin and hair care products, make-up items, deodorants and perfumes, oral cosmetics, and toiletries. The global cosmetics market revenue was approximately US\$ 80.74 billion in 2021. The cosmetics industry in Saudi Arabia has also been growing rapidly and was worth US\$ 4.7 billion, the largest in the Middle East that constitutes approximately 20% of the global cosmetics market. Economic studies reveal that Saudi women occupy the top position globally in terms of spending on cosmetic products. Recent statistics

issued by Saudi Customs suggest that the sum spent on imported cosmetics exceeded SAR 2.3 billion, with people preferring to buy luxury products. In this study, we analyzed the prominent psychological factors affecting Saudi women's purchase intention of global cosmetic brands. The findings of this study suggest that the cosmetic goods industry should focus more on the psychological factors that satisfy the needs and expectations of Saudi women on buying cosmetic products. The findings can also guide companies in the cosmetic industry and retailers to manufacture and sell cosmetic products based on the needs and demands of women consumers.

## Literature Review

In this study, we focus on the psychological factors affecting purchase intention. Purchase intention is a significant concept in marketing (Morrison, 1979) used to understand purchase behavior. Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010) find consumer purchase intention as a driver to stimulate the purchase of any product or service. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) contend that purchase intention is an important construct of consumer behavior that influences the purchase decision or buying behavior of consumers. Hair, Wolfinbarger, and Money (2011) define purchase intention as a person's attitude toward a certain product or service. Wee et al. (2014) argue that purchase intention can be favorable or positive or even unfavorable or negative. The study on purchase intention provides marketers with an insight into the consumers' actual behavior (Ghalandari & Norouzi, 2012). According to Borzooei, Mahdi, and Asgari (2013), for any industry, purchase intention is the most significant positive feeling among consumers. Various studies dealing with women's cosmetic consumption behavior focus on the attitudes and motivations of teenage girls (e.g., Cha, 2006) and female college students (e.g., Yang, 2008). Several studies examine the correlation between purchase intention and consumer behavior (e.g., Tan, Kwan, & Eze, 2009). Other studies focus mainly on identifying the factors that affect consumers' purchase intention of foreign products in different regions of the world (e.g., Shimp & Sharma, 1987; Yoo & Donthu, 2005). These studies suggest that meeting consumer needs and demands would lead to an escalation in purchase intention (Fortsythe & Shi, 2003; Rodriguez & Fernandez, 2017), and therefore, maximize the profit of the company.

## Psychological factors influencing purchase intention

In this section, we review several prominent psychological factors that influence the purchase intention of cosmetics products. These factors are elaborated below.

### *Brand image*

A brand image comprises a customer's perceptions about the overall experience with certain products (Nurhasanah & Hariyani, 2017). Companies with a strong brand image positively influence purchase behavior (Kuhn, Alpert, & Pope, 2008). The brand image relates to consumers' thoughts and feelings about the brand (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010) or their mental image of the brand which differentiates it from other brands (Faircloth, 2005). Brand image has a significant role in shaping consumers' purchase behavior and decision-making process (Akkucuk & Esmaeili, 2016; Burmann, 2008; Djatmiko & Pradana, 2015). Businesses need to maintain a positive and unique brand image. Hence, they promote their brands to attract customers and ensure their loyalty to reap high profits (Chang & Liu, 2009). The brand image tends to be associated with product quality. According to Safitri (2018), most customers would even prefer to purchase a branded product or service believing that the brand image is a measure of product quality.

***Brand equity***

Brand equity refers to the incremental value of a product because of its brand name (Knight & Pelton, 2009). Businesses can enhance brand equity by creating a favorable image about their brands in the minds of consumers to influence their purchase behavior and eventually increase their profits (Shamsher, 2015). As the brand image is a result of marketing activities, many businesses use advertising as a primary tool to develop their brand equity (Hsiung, 2011). This can be further enhanced by celebrity endorsements in advertising for certain brands, which would affect consumers' purchase intentions (Nelson, 2010).

***Brand awareness.***

Brand awareness is another concept related to brand image and refers to the strength of the brand in the consumer's memory, which facilitates the identification of the brand (Keller, 1993). This type of awareness affects consumers' decision-making because it would more likely foreground the brand in the customers' memory and interfere in the purchase decision process, and eventually, trigger the purchase intention (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000). Moisescu and Gica (2007) argue that brand awareness can add to a brand's competitive advantage. The literature advocates this argument stating that a customer is more likely to purchase familiar and well-known brands (Keller, 1993).

***Brand loyalty***

Brand loyalty is a key concept in investigating consumer behavior (Lee & Feick, 2001; Wood, 2004). It is generally perceived as customers' psychological commitment to a particular brand (Farr & Hollis, 1997; Chi et al., 2009). Brand loyalty is linked with brand awareness and brand image as it is likely to exist when customers have high awareness and a good perceived image of the brand (Aaker & Keller, 1990). In other words, brand loyalty measures a customer's attachment to a particular brand (Aaker, 1991). Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) defined brand loyalty as a vital element for the long-term profitability of any business and its ability to gain and maintain a significant market share. A customer can be considered loyal to a particular brand if this brand becomes their first choice when intending to buy a product (Tong & Hawley, 2009). A loyal consumer would repurchase only the same brand or service even when other alternatives are available in the market (Ryan, 1999)

***Perceived value***

Perceived value is closely related to customers' loyalty and satisfaction (Mehmood & Hanaysha, 2015). It can be defined as the consumer's feelings about the perceived benefits of purchasing a particular product or service (Ali, Omar, & Amin, 2013). The consumer's perceived value of a certain product affects their purchase intention and a higher perceived value leads to a higher purchase intention (Medeiros, Ribeiro, & Cortimiglia, 2016). A consumer's value is determined by the extent of satisfaction of their needs, degree of acceptability of the price paid for the product or service in question, lower price compared with competitive alternatives in the market, and the benefits received compared with the cost incurred in the exchange (Zeithaml, 1988).

***Price consciousness***

Price consciousness relates to the degree of customers' willingness to pay cheaper prices and seek more discounts (Rahpeima, Vazifedost, Hanzae, & Saeednia, 2014). Indeed, consumers with high price consciousness seek low-priced products more than consumers with low price consciousness (Thanasuta, 2015). The situation is reversed in the case of product quality—consumers with high price consciousness focus less on product quality than those with low price consciousness (Norfarah & Siti-Nabiha, 2018). Hence, these customers have less brand loyalty as they switch to another brand when they are offered a lower price (Wavi et al., 2018; Singh & Pattanayak, 2014).

### *Perceived quality*

Perceived quality depends on consumers' judgment (Asshidin, Abidin, & Borhan, 2016) and enhances competitive advantage (Chowdhury and Andaleen, 2007). It can be viewed as a product's "suitability for use" (Russell & Taylor, 2006) or "excellence" (Asshidin et al., 2016). Consumers' perceptions of product quality can be based on their direct experience in using a certain brand (Moisescu & Gica, 2007). Product quality is considered a significant determinant of consumers' purchase intention (Wu, 2006). Moreover, quality is prioritized over price in the context of brands (Ailawadi, Neslin, & Gedenk, 2001).

From the above review, we can infer that many studies have focused on identifying the psychological factors that affect purchase intentions. In this study, we aim to examine the effect of psychological factors on Saudi women's purchase intentions of international brand cosmetic products.

## **Research Objectives and Hypotheses**

### *Research Objectives*

1. Examine the demographic profile and buying behavior of Saudi women concerning the purchase of international brand cosmetic products.
2. Analyze the effect of psychological factors such as brand image, brand equity, brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived value, price consciousness, and perceived quality on Saudi women's purchase intention of international brand cosmetic products.
3. Identify the prominent psychological factors that affect Saudi women's purchase intention of international brand cosmetics.
4. Based on the findings of the study, provide suggestions to cosmetics industry retailers in Saudi Arabia to understand Saudi women's needs and expectations that can influence the purchase of international brand cosmetic products.

### *Hypotheses*

Based on the literature review, we formulate the following hypotheses:

**H1:** Brand image significantly impacts Saudi women's purchase intention of international brand cosmetic products.

**H2:** Brand equity significantly influences Saudi women's purchase intention of international brand cosmetics.

**H3:** Brand awareness significantly affects Saudi women's purchase intention of international brand cosmetic products.

**H4:** Brand loyalty significantly impacts Saudi women's purchase intention of international brand cosmetic products.

**H5:** Perceived value significantly influences Saudi women's purchase intention of international brand cosmetic products.

**H6:** Price consciousness significantly affects Saudi women's purchase intention of international brand cosmetic products.

**H7:** Perceived quality significantly impacts Saudi women's purchase intention of international brand cosmetic products.

## **Methodology**

We conduct a descriptive study employing both primary and secondary data for analysis. Secondary data were gathered through various journals, articles, books, and academic

websites related to the subject. Primary data were collected using a self-designed questionnaire through google forms. The respondents included Saudi women of various age groups, occupations, and marital statuses. The link was provided to all the participants of the study through email and wapp. The questionnaire comprised three sections. The first section included demographic information of the respondents, the second consisted of psychological factors affecting the purchase intention of international brand cosmetics, and the third included the items of purchase intention. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the responses of Saudi women consumers with the responses varying from strongly disagree to strongly agree (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was applied to measure reliability—the internal consistency of the scale. To examine the relationship between psychological factors and the purchase intention of Saudi women, the collected data were analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Science version 25 using the Pearson correlation test and multiple linear regression.

## Results and Discussion

Saudi women who participated in the study, 49% were married while 45 % were single. The majority of the respondents were in the 21–30 years age group, followed by 31–40 years. Women over 50 years who participated in the study were few. Most Saudi women were government sector employees or students; participants from the private sector were relatively few. The majority of respondents were graduates, with few respondents having completed a master's or doctorate.

**Table 1** Demographic Information of Respondents.

S. No.	Demographic Factor	Sample Size	Variables	Percentage
1.	Marital status	500	1. Married	48.6%
			2. Single	45%
			1. < 21 years	14.7%
			2. 21–30 years	29.2%
2.	Age	500	3. 31–40 years	27.4%
			4. 41–50 years	18.9%
			5. > 50 years	9.7%
			1. Student	33.5%
			2. Unemployed	16.3%
3.	Profession	500	3. Government sector Employee	40.7%
			4. Private Sector Employee	8.9%
			1. Sub-University	13.9%
4.	Education Level	500	2. Undergraduate	66.9%
			3. Masters	12.7%
			1. < SAR 5000	47.3%
5.	Monthly Income	500	2. SAR 5000–10000	22.3%
			3. SAR 10000–20000	24.5%

The buying behavior of Saudi women revealed that 68% preferred to purchase imported brands over local brands as they were high-income consumers. As 40% of respondents were financially independent, the total sales of imported products or international cosmetic brands were higher than those of local cosmetic products in Saudi Arabia. For their purchase of international brand cosmetic products, most women preferred malls and supermarkets to

departmental stores, specialty stores, pharmacies, or direct company websites. The frequency of their purchase is usually 3–6 months. Saudi women spent SAR 500 on average, and 48% preferred to buy eco-friendly cosmetics.

**Table 2** *Saudi Women's Buying Behavior of International Brand Cosmetic Products.*

S. No.	Buying Behavior	Sample Size	Variable	Percentage
1.	Frequency of purchasing international brand cosmetics	500	1. Several times a month	8.4%
			2. Once a month	11.8%
			3. Once every three months	33.2%
			4. Once every six months	46.6%
2.	Amount spent on cosmetics	500	< SAR 500	66%
			SAR 500–1000	28.4%
			> SAR 1000	5.6%
3.	Place of purchase	500	Retail/Departmental stores	25%
			Malls/Supermarket	40%
			Specialty stores	10%
			Pharmacy	5%
			Company	
			Website/sales portals	10%
3.	Preference for buying eco-friendly products	500	Beauty Salon	10%
			Mostly	47.9%
			Sometimes	35.6%
4.	Preference for purchasing imported brands	500	Never	12.7%
			Mostly	68.1%
			Sometimes	17.1%
5.	Financial independence	500	Never	14.9%
			Mostly	39.3%
			Sometimes	31.3%
			Never	29.4%

### *Cronbach's Alpha Results*

**Table 3**

S. No.	Variable	Factor	Cronbach's Alpha Value
1.	Dependent variable	Saudi women's purchase intention	0.89
2.	Independent variable	Psychological factors	
		1. Brand image	0.85
		2. Brand equity	0.83
		3. Brand awareness	0.86
		4. Brand loyalty	0.84
		5. Perceived value	0.82
		6. Price consciousness	0.83
		7. Perceived quality	0.87

We conducted a pilot test for the questionnaire and used Cronbach's alpha to measure the reliability of the measurement scale. We randomly selected responses of 50 respondents to test the reliability of the questionnaire. The value of Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all the measurement scales was above 0.7, thus establishing their reliability.

### *Correlation Analysis*

Based on Table 4, the p-values of brand image, brand equity, brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived value, price consciousness, and perceived quality are  $0.000 < 0.001$ . Besides, the correlation coefficient (R-value) of brand image, brand equity, brand loyalty, perceived value, price consciousness, and perceived quality show significant positive relationships among independent variables, respectively, whereas brand awareness has a moderate positive relationship. Hence, hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, and H7 are confirmed. The results reveal that various psychological factors affect Saudi women's purchase intention of international brand cosmetic products.

**Table 4** *Pearson's Correlation Analysis.*

S. No.	Hypothesis	Relationship	r	P-value	Sig. Level	Result
1	H1	BI→SWPI	0.82	0.000	**	Accepted
2	H2	BE→SWPI	0.70	0.000	**	Accepted
3	H3	BA→SWPI	0.68	0.000	**	Accepted
4	H4	BL→SWPI	0.74	0.000	**	Accepted
5	H5	PV→SWPI	0.72	0.000	**	Accepted
6	H6	PC→SWPI	0.71	0.000	**	Accepted
7	H7	PQ→SWPI	0.83	0.000	**	Accepted

Note. \*\*Significant at the 0.001 level; BI = Brand Image; BE = Brand Equity; BA = Brand Awareness; BL = Brand Loyalty; PV = Perceived Value; PC = Price Consciousness; PQ = Perceived Quality ;SWPI = Saudi Women's Purchase Intention

### *Model Summary*

**Table 5** *Effect of Psychological factors on Saudi women's purchase intention.*

S. No.	Independent Variables	Beta Standardized Model
1	Brand image	0.24***
2	Brand equity	0.25***
3	Brand awareness	0.10
4	Brand loyalty	0.23***
5	Perceived value	0.26***
6	Price consciousness	0.22***
7	Perceived quality	0.27***
	R <sup>2</sup>	0.78
	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.78
	R <sup>2</sup> Change	0.004
	F Change	4.037***

Note. \*\*\*Significance at the .001 level.

Table 5 tabulates the model summary of predicting the statistical relationship between psychological factors (brand image, brand equity, brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived value, price consciousness, and perceived quality) and Saudi women's purchase intention of international brand cosmetic products. The coefficient of determination is the measure of the amount of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. The value of 0.78 indicates that 78% of the variance in Saudi women's purchase intention (dependent

variable) is explained by the seven psychological factors (independent variables) of Saudi women. Brand awareness, with a standardized coefficient of 0.10, is insignificant because  $p > 0.001$ . However, the values of brand image, brand equity, brand loyalty, perceived value, price consciousness, and perceived quality are significant at  $p < 0.001$ , implying that these factors significantly contribute to the variance explained. The F change value of  $p < 0.001$  indicates variance is significantly explained by the model.

## Conclusion

In this study, we investigated the impact of psychological factors on Saudi women's purchase intention of international brand cosmetics. The results revealed that psychological factors such as brand image, brand equity, brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived value, price consciousness, and perceived quality had a significant relationship with Saudi women's purchase intention of international brand cosmetic products. Specifically, perceived quality was demonstrated to be the most significant factor that contributed to Saudi women's purchase intention. Therefore, consumer behavior, preference, and needs must be identified to design products that can satisfy them. The findings of this study can guide the cosmetic industry, suppliers, and sellers to understand their target customers and design their products accordingly.

## Recommendations

The cosmetic industry must not only aim to generate profits from women consumers but also produce eco-friendly, safe, and effective products. Regular feedback or reviews from women consumers about products can help them to upgrade or innovate as per the needs and demands of consumers, and thus, boost their sales.

### *Limitations of the Study*

The findings of the study are limited to the purchase of imported brand cosmetic products and women consumers of Saudi Arabia. The results cannot be generalized to other industries as each industry has different consumer needs and buying behavior.

### *Future Implications of the Study*

This study involved only Saudi women consumers. Comparative studies can be conducted in the future to include respondents from other geographic locations and cultures to generalize the research outcomes. Besides, for future study, research related to factors such as feedback, product performance, and product packaging affecting women's purchase intention of cosmetic products can also be conducted.

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