

The Determinants of Customer Satisfaction When Purchasing In-store Cosmetics in Vietnam

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Abstract: This study attempts to explore the determinants of customer satisfaction when customers purchase cosmetics in-store in Vietnam market. Additionally, this paper also explores the relationship of constructed variables with the main variable - customer satisfaction. This research adopts the quantitative research method. The data was collected from 300 clients who directly purchased the cosmetics in-store in the big cities of Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang. Half of questionnaires were handed out at stores by the researchers and the rest was distributed on a beauty forum (social media) to maintain the validity and reliability of the collected data. The results of this study explored and confirmed the influences of visual appearance, marketing mix and service quality in forming customer satisfaction. Also, this paper highlights the combination of marketing and branding activities in generating customer satisfaction in cosmetic purchase.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, cosmetics, marketing mix, service quality.

1. Introduction

The cosmetic industry in Vietnam, before 1997, received little attention from both international and domestic brands due to the low standard of living and economic strain. However, after 20 years, this industry has become an active and healthy market with the growth rate nearly 115% compared to 2007 [1]. There are three reasons for this explosive growth: economic development, marketing activities and the shift in distribution.

Firstly, dynamic marketing activities generate multi-faceted information leading manufacturers, media agents and the customers to be more aware of the negative consequences

of using unbranded products [2]. Many scandals of cosmetic containing toxic ingredients, being fake products and cheap beauty care have been revealed in authority channels; the customers, as a consequence, pay more attention to reliable sources of the products and also have followed the trend of using international brands. Moreover, customers now might access the products on a huge number of information sources [3] regarding benefits of using suitable cosmetics [4]. Hence, these factors have led to the growth in the sale revenue of the cosmetic industry in Vietnam in particular.

Secondly, the change in distribution method is also a determinant of the growing demand for cosmetics in Vietnam. In the period 2015-2016, there was a dominance in E-commerce penetration [4], especially social media trading [2]. Regarding store purchases, people can

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easily find any labeled or branded cosmetic in any department store in cities such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Economic development plays a key role in enabling the buying power of Vietnamese consumers. With a population of 91.7 million people, Vietnam has reached a GDP growth rate of over 6.7% in 2016 [5]. The indexes shows that the Vietnamese standard of living has been improved significantly compared to the late 1970s. This has led to the increasing demands for beauty products particularly and other products generally.

Since the high demand in the market, cosmetic firms are now striving to continuously innovate to maintain the success of their companies. Kotler (2001) has mentioned that there are many factors leading to the success of an organization such as: strategy, information system, and dedicated employees [6]. However, the key element is generating customer satisfaction. In addition, there will be huge opportunities for firms to expand their businesses after the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) agreement. This paper studies the determinants of customer satisfaction when purchasing in-store cosmetics in Vietnam in order to partly help the beauty firms to improve their quality of services and generate business sustainability.

2. Literature review

2.1. Customer satisfaction

Satisfaction has been defined and measured in various ways over time [7]. Previous research defined satisfaction as the experience of consumers [8, 9] between customer expectations (or standards for the expression) and after-use experiences [10]. Kotler (2001) mentioned in his book that satisfaction is the “joy or frustration that results from a comparison with the current perception of food in relation to their expectations” [6]. The levels of satisfaction response are varied among individuals [10] as the discrepancies in

expectations, first estimations of future results [11], and real-time experiences.

Building and retaining customer satisfaction is considered as one element in strategic planning. According to the research of Fornell (2007), the cost of attracting new customers is five times greater regarding money and a firm’s resources than maintaining the current ones with satisfaction [8]. Yet, focusing deeply on satisfying customer expectations can result in some negative consequences such as neglect of the fiscal result [12] or paying little attention to expanding the market share [8]. Therefore, managers need to be aware of the pros and cons in balancing activities within firms.

Brand value consists of tangible and intangible value; and customer satisfaction is categorized as an intangible value of the firm and brand [8, 13]. There are four explanations for how customer satisfaction might influence the overall profitability of an organization: protection from rivals, long-term profit from frequent purchases [14], customer avoidance shifts and gaining a lost market [15]. Since there are advantages in retaining customer satisfaction, firms are required to research consumer behavior using “up-to-date perceptions” to persuade them to spend money on the products and services [16].

2.2. Introduction of marketing mix

Marketing mix consists of four P(s): product, place, promotion and price. The earliest marketing mix theory was researched by Professor Jerome McCarthyin (1960) and has been continuously studied by various authors to explore the relationship and the additional factors [17, 18, 19]. Going back to the original 4Ps, products are regarded as a bundle of benefits, which firms offer to the end user [20]. Price means the price strategy which the organization has decided as the offered value for the customer. Place refers to the distribution strategy while promotion refers to the communication plan to help firms approach current and future customers [3]. The mentioned 4Ps are commonly emphasized in the marketing mix in the marketing process.

2.3. Previous models of customer satisfaction

The European Customer Satisfaction Framework Model

The model of customer satisfaction is a model that can be described in a path diagram to analyze a set of relationships between variables. It differs from a simple path analysis for all variables are latent variables measured by many indicators, the model Index U.S. customer satisfaction (Figure 1) is a measure of the industry between customer satisfaction with the quality of U.S. goods and services they purchase and use [21] and customer satisfaction in Europe is an economic indicator, represented in the index (Figure 2).

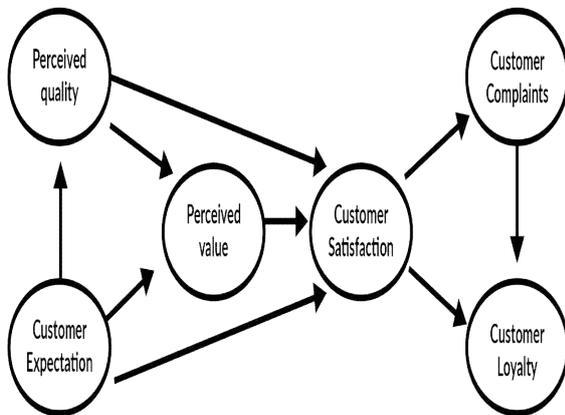


Figure 1. The American Customer Satisfaction Framework.
Source: Anderson et al. (2000) [22]

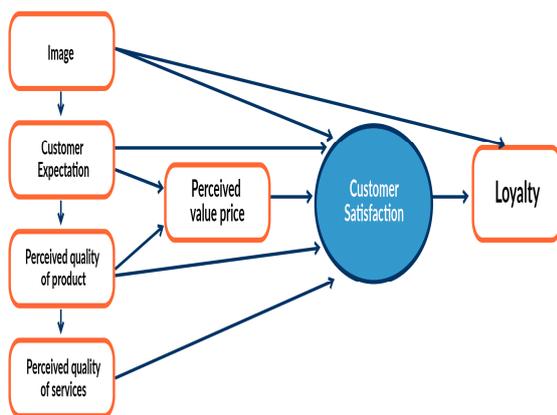


Figure 2. The European Customer Satisfaction Framework.
Source: Bryant (1995) [21]

FACS Model

In the paper of Hokanson (1995), the author has developed a comprehensive model illustrating the factors influencing customer satisfaction [23]. There are eleven factors, including friendly staff, courteous staff, knowledgeable staff, helpful staff, the accuracy of payments, prompt payment, competitive prices, service quality, better value and payment of a clear and quick service. These eleven factors have been listed and researched in the study and Figure 3 below presents the findings of Hokanson. Compared to the previous model, European Customer Satisfaction, the former emphasizes how pre-purchase factors influence customer satisfaction; while the latter focuses on the experience in-store. The research was conducted in the banking sector; hence, the model does not have generalization to other contexts [24], and so it is worth examining the customer satisfaction determinants in other situations and sectors.

2.4. The determinants of customer satisfaction

Brand name and design

The recent research of Neilsen (2014) confirmed the crucial role of brand name and reputation [25]. The research accounts for 80% of Vietnamese consumers preferring to consume and be satisfied with familiar brand names compared to wholly-new brands. In the same line, the research of Keller and Lehmann (2006) agreed that products from famous brands are likely to be beneficial and have a high sales return [26]. These well-known brands are more likely to attract the attention and interest of consumers [27]. In addition, the value of the brands is not in their product portfolio, it is in the emotional connections of the brand to its customers as regards satisfaction feeling [28]. Therefore, the researcher constructs the first hypothesis below:

H1: There is a significant and positive relationship between the brand name of cosmetics and satisfaction.

When it comes to the design, according to research by Duff (2007) who investigated the

niche market in cosmetics, results show that cosmetic buyers have become more fashion conscious and require the design of products to be more attractive [29]. More consumers tend to use different makeup designs for different occasions. The sense of 'trendy' is usually defined as an awareness of new designs, fashion changes, and sleekness, as well as being eager to buy something interesting and trendy. The second hypothesis is developed as follows:

H2: There is a significant and positive relationship between cosmetics' design and satisfaction.



Figure 3. Hokanson's model of customer satisfaction.

Service quality

Service quality is one important factor in determining customer satisfaction. Parasuraman et al. (2005) [30] confirmed that service quality is an important factor determining customer satisfaction. The relationship between salespeople and customers affects the long-term habit of customers shopping in the store with their favorite services. In the same vein with Parasuraman, in the model of Wilson et al. (2008), five factors affecting customer satisfaction were explored such as: service quality, product quality, price and personal and situational factors [31]. If the expectation is higher than the performance of services, and lower quality of service is the response, customers will be dissatisfied [32]. Service quality is the determinant of customer satisfaction in the American Customer Satisfaction Framework and The European

Customer Satisfaction Framework which are mentioned in section 2.3 of this paper. Thus the third hypothesis is developed as follows:

H3: There is a significant and positive relationship between service quality and satisfaction.

4Ps in marketing strategy

Product quality is the core value of the benefit bundle delivered by an organization to customers. Depending on the needs and requirements of users, each product/service will meet expectations in a different way (Russell and Taylor, 2011) [33]. In the model of Wilson et al. (2008) [31], they explored the notion that product quality is one of the main antecedents in determining the level of satisfaction after use. Also, the product/service is considered as the solution for the problems of users (Levitt, 1960 cited by Grant, 1999) [20]. If buyers can solve their problem, as a consequence they will be satisfied. Hokanson (1995) [23] in his customer satisfaction model also mentioned price and part of the product policy as satisfaction's determinants. Hence, the fourth hypothesis will be constructed as follows:

H4: There is a significant and positive relationship between product quality and satisfaction.

Regarding the price in the 4Ps, price is an important factor for customers when choosing products [27]. Customers are likely to be willing to spend more money on branded products and favourite brands [26]. However, in general, customers perceive price as a tool to measure the received value when buying a particular product/service [34]. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis was developed:

H5: There is a significant and positive relationship between cosmetics' price and customer satisfaction.

Promotion refers to the communication strategy used in the marketing mix. In fact, marketers need to conduct a range of activities from advertising, public relation, direct marketing, personal selling to promotion [35] as IMC (integrated marketing communication). The communication campaign affects customer images, beliefs and attitudes to the products and

brands, which leads to the purchase behavior of customers [36]. Each day, one person is approached by more than 3,000 marketing messages [37] and this has an influence on the personal perceptions and purchase decision [38] of the customer. Therefore, it is worthwhile to conduct this hypothesis to test in this study:

H6: There is a significant and positive relationship between promotion and satisfaction.

Lastly, the place in the 4Ps indicates the distribution channels and strategies of brands or firms. It also includes the store locations and operations, in this research context, for the cosmetic products available. As Chung and Lee (2003) stated, the location is a crucial element in the marketing mix that influences customer satisfaction [39]. In the same line with Chung et al, the main aim of distribution channels generates convenience in buying [2]. As a result, the level of satisfaction will increase. This study will test the hypothesis below to confirm the role of place in enhancing customer satisfaction.

H8: There is a significant and positive relationship between place and customer satisfaction.

Store environment

The term “store environment” was introduced by Kotler (1973), as a marketing tool, in order to influence the five basic human senses when purchasing in-store products [40]. There are number of scholars who have studied and discovered the variables in store environment such as window display [41], entrance design [42] or staff appearance [43] that influence the shopping behavior of customers. Previously, the studies of Chang (2000) and Heung and Gu (2012) determined the relationship of store environment with customer satisfaction in a leisure setting and restaurant context [44, 45]. Two studies have found that there was a significant relationship between those two variables. Yet, the paper of Andaleeb and Conway (2006) found contrary results compared with the two mentioned [46]. Hence, in this research, the author would like to construct the seventh hypothesis as below:

H7: There is a significant and positive relationship between store environment and customer satisfaction.

With these 8 above hypotheses, we draw a model to illustrate the relationships of proposed determinants towards the customer satisfaction as Table 4.

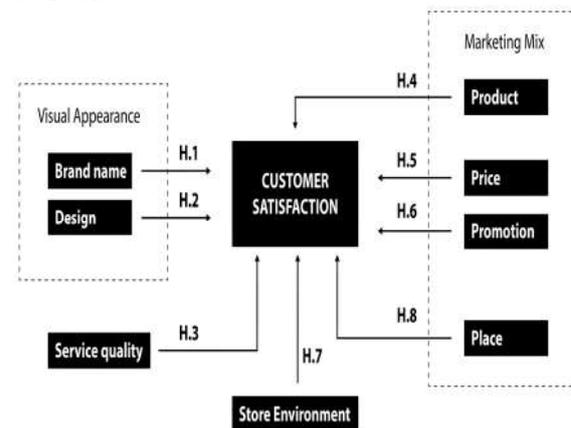


Figure 4. Hypothesis framework.

Source: Authors' proposal

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

This paper adopted the quantitative research method to examine the variables influencing customer satisfaction. The research aims to explore the relationships between variables, hence, the quantitative method is suitable to test the model [47]. Table 1 below presents the measured items in this research.

All items used to measure the variables adopt the 5 point Likert-Scale: completely disagree, disagree, not identified, agree, totally agree.

3.2. Data collection

The purpose of this study is to assess these factors influencing the customer's satisfaction when buying cosmetics in-store, in Vietnam. Hence, the survey designed a questionnaire targeting specifically customers at cosmetics stores. After the questionnaire was carefully designed, it was sent directly to customers shopping at the cosmetics stores.

Table 1. Variables in the research

Variable	Items	Source
Brand name	BR	The brand is reputable
	BR2	Brand name and image attract me to purchase
	BR3	Brand name is selected regardless of price
Product quality	PQ1	The brand last longer than other brands
	PQ2	The materials used by the brand are natural
	PQ3	The brand has sufficient color
Price	P1	Increases of price do not hinder me purchasing
	P2	The brand provides goods value for money
	P3	The price associated with the brand
Promotion	PP1	Ads of the brand are attractive
	PP2	Ads of the brand attract me to purchase
	PP3	Window displays are attractive
Service quality	SQ1	Salesperson of the store is well-trained
	SQ2	Salesperson of the store willing to help
	SQ3	Salesperson of the store friendly and courteous
Design	D1	The brand provides wide variety of designs
	D2	Designs of the brand are suitable for me
	D3	Designs of the brand have distinctive features
Store environment	SE1	The brand has a good store location
	SE2	The brand has sufficient outlets
	SE3	The interior display is attractive
Place	SE1	The brand has a good store location
	SE2	The brand has sufficient outlets
	SE3	The interior display is attractive
Customer satisfaction	CSA1	Overall how satisfied are you with products and services?
	CSA2	How close is the cosmetic to your ideal postal service provider?
	CSA3	Considering your expectations, to what extent has the cosmetic fallen short of or exceeded your expectations

Some 300 clients were randomly selected from a list of customers in the cosmetics stores. 150 questionnaires were sent directly and handed to customers, 150 questionnaires were sent via email and respondents were asked to answer all the questions in the questionnaire. Only those questionnaires that were answered fully have been used to conduct the analysis. After gathering information, the correctly completed questionnaires that were retained and inappropriate surveys were discarded.

3.3. Data analysis method

Descriptive statistics

After the data was collected, it was analyzed using the first method, descriptive analysis, including personal information such as gender, age and experience. The data was then

analyzed with percentile distribution to assess the distribution of age, gender and experience related to how the clause in their research.

Factor analysis

Factor analysis is used in data analysis; there are different methods of analysis for factor analysis. Kim and Mueller (1978) suggested that the number of elements found as a result of the analysis process, determined based on the value of the Eigen value, must be greater than one [51]. However, Tucker et al. (1969) offer a different perspective, which is that a number of factors can be identified earlier, based on the purpose of the research study [52]. In this study, the researchers will conduct the factor analysis method pre-determined by several factors.

Reliability analysis

In order to ensure reliability, the authors conducted an analysis of the data reliability based on Cronbach's α values. If the Cronbach's α value greater than 0.7, the variables can be accepted. The Cronbach's α smaller than 0.35 means that the reliability of the variable is very low and should be removed [53].

Regression analysis

After analyzing the accuracy and reliability, the researcher used the regression analysis method to test and evaluate the assumptions.

Regression analysis is a statistical method, used to analyze the correlation between two factors.

4. Data analysis*4.1. Descriptive data*

The demographics of organizations and customers include four major demographics: (1) Marital, (2) Age, (3) Education, (4) Income. The results of the collected data is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristics of sample demographics

Measure	Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Marital	Married	102	59.6
	Unmarried	69	40.4
	Below 20	34	12.3
Age	20-30	37	20.5
	30-40	18	6.4
	40 - 50	52	19.3
	Above 50	30	17.5
Education	Never	21	12.3
	High school	35	20.5
	College	11	6.4
Income	Bachelor	33	19.3
	Other	71	41.5
	2 million	52	30.4
	2-3 million	39	22.8
	3-4 million	9	5.3
	4-5 million	38	22.2
	over 5 million	33	19.3

Source: Authors' calculation from SPSS results

Table 3. Reliability test

Factors	Items	Cronbach's α
Customer satisfaction	3	0.911
Services quality	3	0.841
Design	3	0.869
Product	3	0.813
Price	3	0.882
Promotion	3	0.882
Brand name	3	0.849
Place	3	0.829
Store environment	3	0.851

Source: Authors' calculation from SPSS results

Table 4. VARIMAX rotated component analysis (Factor-loading matrix)

	Customer satisfaction	Service quality	Design	Products	Promotion	Price	Brand name	Place	Store environment
csa1	.567								
csa2	.700								
csa3	.720								
sq1		.790							
sq2		.826							
sq3		.763							
dn1			.808						
dn2			.826						
dn3			.829						
prd1				.780					
Prd2				.822					
prd3				.823					
prt1					.704				
Prt2					.814				
prt3					.813				
pri1						.791			
pri2						.836			
pri3						.853			
bran1							.811		
bran2							.808		
bran3							.768		
P11								.862	
P12								.750	
pl3								.678	
str1									.838
Str2									.750
str3									.757

Source: Authors' calculation from SPSS results

4.2. Reliability analysis

The purpose of reliability analysis is to test the reliability of the elements and scale consistent with the questions provided. The reliability of a factor can be determined based on the value of AVE or Cronbach's α value. The accepted value should be in the range of 0.7 to 0.9 to confirm the reliability of all results [53].

From Table 3, the results show that all factors achieved good reliability. Therefore, the authors will conduct further analysis to test the relationship between variables.

4.3. Factor analysis

The purpose of factor analysis can be used to determine the structure of relationships between elements in the model. According to Pallant (2016), the load of each variable value greater than 0.5 are acceptable values and the load of each variable lower than 0.5 should be removed from the structure [54]. In this study, seven elements and the 26 items were tested to examine the relationship of structure and measurement of the item. The results are shown in Table 4.

From Table 4, all items achieved factor loadings greater than 0.5, and so all can be accepted.

4.4. Regression analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical analysis, to determine the independent variables (explanatory variables) are defined as the dependent variable. To test these hypotheses, this study adopted a significance level of 5%, which means that if the p-value is less than 0.05, then the independent variables have a significant effect on the variable side. If not, they do not have a significant relationship.

The results of linear regression analysis factors: Design, Product, Promotion, Price, Brand name, Place, Store environment with customer satisfaction are shown in Table 5.

The final model shown in Table 5 had a good overall fit ($F = 35.375$, $p = 0.000$). At a significance level of 0.05, Design, Product, promotion, price, brand name, place (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H8) have a significant positive relationship with Customer satisfaction. Therefore, H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H8 hypotheses are supported. Store Environment (H7) has a significant level of > 0.05 , so H7 hypotheses was not supported.

The research framework with beta coefficients can be shown as in Figure 5.

Table 5. Linear regression analysis

Constructs	St. coefficients β	t value	R ²	Adj-R ²	F value
Design	.145*	2.065			
Product	.182*	2.600			
promotion	.236**	2.817			
Price	.212**	3.012	.636	.618	35.375***
Band name	.227**	2.961			
Place	.230**	2.967			
STO	.045+	.630			
Service	.203**	2.728			

Source: Authors' calculation from SPSS results

Dependent variable: perceived ease of use

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, 0.05 $< p < 0.1$

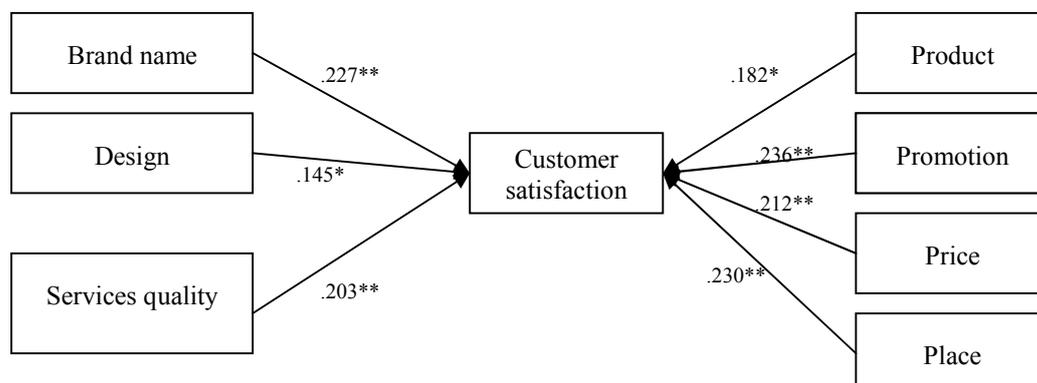


Figure 5. Path coefficients for research model.
(Path significance *** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.05$)

Source: Authors' calculation from SPSS results

4.5. ANOVA test

ANOVA test is used to analyze whether different segment of the samples will have different reactions on the variables. The samples vary regarding income and the purchase experience in-store. To be specific, based on the samples' frequency of visiting the site, we separated them into five segments, 2 million/month, 2-3 million/month, 3-5 million/month, over 5million/month. The authors used ANOVA test for investigating the effect of samples' income as well as purchase experience on Customer satisfaction, Service quality, Design, Product, Promotion, Price, Place, Brand name, and Store environment. The results are summarized in Table 6.

From the result shown above, at a significance level of 0.05, it can be seen that if samples have different incomes, then they tend to have a different reaction to the variables, including customer satisfaction, service quality, design, product, promotion, price, brand name, store environment, place.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Research result

From the result shown above, at significance level of 0.05, we can see that when

samples show differences income, then they tend to have different reaction to the variables, including customer satisfaction, service quality, design, product, promotion, price, brand name, store environment, place.

It can be seen that H7 was not supported; hence, the author can conclude that the store environment does not have a positive influence on overall customer satisfaction. Regarding the rest of the hypotheses, from H1 to H6 and H8 were supported, therefore, they have a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

When it comes to visual appearance, brand name and design of product were found to have a crucial influence on customer satisfaction. This result is in the same vein with Ang and Lim (2006) [55] - study of brand recognition, Lau and Phau (2010) [56] - study of effect of brand image, Rompay and Veltkamp (2014) [57] - study of the importance of packaging in purchase decision. The results enrich the knowledge with regard to the role of design in customer fulfillment.

From the study, it showed that the 4Ps have a positive influence on customer satisfaction overall. Theoretically, marketing activities aim to satisfy customer needs, wants and to retain the relationship with the customer and consumers [2].

Table 7. Summary of tested results

Hypotheses	Results
H1: There is a significant and positive relationship between the brand name of cosmetics and satisfaction	Supported
H2: There is a significant and positive relationship between cosmetics design and satisfaction	Supported
H3: There is a significant and positive relationship between service quality and satisfaction	Supported
H4: There is a significant and positive relationship between product quality and satisfaction	Supported
H5: There is a significant and positive relationship between cosmetics' price and customer satisfaction	Supported
H6: There is a significant and positive relationship between cosmetics' promotion and customer satisfaction	Supported
H7: There is a significant and positive relationship between Store Environment and customer satisfaction	Not Supported
H8: There is a significant and positive relationship between cosmetics' place and customer satisfaction	Supported

The results of this study are compatible with previous papers [2, 38, 58]) regarding the role of the 4PS in generating customer satisfaction.

Regarding the store environment, the study was conducted in a cosmetic in-store selling context. It was found that the store environment does not have an influence on customer satisfaction, which is in the same vein with the study of Andaleeb and Conway (2006) [46]. Yet, this result contradicts the previous studies in a restaurant context by Chang (2000) [44] and leisure setting by Heung and Gu (2012) [45]. The difference can be explained by the unique experiences of the different contexts in which the studies were conducted.

5.2. Research implications

This paper combined factors influencing customer satisfaction researched in previous studies to create a research framework in order to explore the determinants of customer satisfaction when customers purchase cosmetics in-store in the Vietnam market. The result will be beneficial for the cosmetic retailer in general regarding the influencing elements of brand and marketing on customer satisfaction. As Aaker (1996) mentioned in his articles, customer loyalty, the consequence of customer

satisfaction, is an intangible value of a brand [59]. Hence, the retailer and brand might determine the factors in services and physical attributes to improve what the customer experiences when buying cosmetics at stores especially in the Vietnam market.

The study explored the significant effect of visual appearance and marketing activities on customer satisfaction. Firstly, regarding visual appearance, brand name and design play a crucial role for the first impression in store purchasing. From the results of this study, the design of product and packaging need to be considered as one factor influencing the purchase decision and customer satisfaction. As is shown in Rompay and Veltkamp's research (2014) [57], in an ambiguous metaphoric packaging, supplementary explanation will enhance the consumer's appreciation and raise their positive attitudes toward the brand personality, while a metaphoric packaging cue can draw more attention and increase the brand excitement. In addition, the design is required to be consistent with the brand image/name, which is built from a range of branding and marketing communication activities. This will be very useful for the elaboration of a marketing plan, advertising and the construction of a development strategy for selling cosmetic products in Vietnam.

Last but not least, each factor in the hypotheses model was under analysis and measurement to evaluate the influences and the importance level of each factor. Based on the results, a business can monitor and control the effects of customer's satisfaction through these elements.

5.3. Limitations of this study and further research

As other papers, this research cannot avoid limitations during the research progress. Firstly, this study focused on collecting data from big cities in Vietnam such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang; hence, other smaller provinces and cities were neglected. Future research is expected to collect information from all provinces in Vietnam to generate a comprehensive picture and confirm the generalization of the findings.

Secondly, the data analysis only evaluated the Cronbach Alpha, factor analysis and the multiple linear regression method. Future research might adopt other techniques to test the collected data.

Finally, the authors found that the factors that impact customer satisfaction alter day by day as a result of the customers' need, expectation and personal emotions - especially the fashion factor. Therefore, it is worth examining the other possible factors affecting customer satisfaction which are not yet stated in this study in other contexts.

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