

Full Length Research Paper

The effective factors related with feelings, brand perception and purchase decision under a model

Tooraj Sadeghi*, Khadijeh Ghaemmaghami Tabrizi and Asieh Noroozi

Department of Business Management, Islamic Azad University, Neyshabur Branch, Pajohesh Avenue,
Zip code: 9319613668, Neyshabur, Khorasan Razavi, Iran.

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Nowadays, development of perfume from a luxurious item to a fashionable one due to different brands which are launched to the market selection is harder for customers. Also, the tremendous cost of companies to enter the market, studying and recognizing target groups and their preferences play an important role in positioning and decreasing the cost of perfume failure. Although various researches have been done in the field of cosmetics and beauty industries; the present research is the first one in the field of perfume in Iran. The goal of this research is to examine the effect of feelings and brand perceptions in purchasing of the same-name fragrances and the rate of familiarity with this concept of perfume. This study attempts to review the effective factors related with feelings, brand perception and purchase decision under a model. The results show that there is a direct significant relationship between the product feature and feeling during purchase. There is a direct significant relationship between the promotion and feeling during purchase and finally, there is a direct significant relationship between the brand perception and purchase intention.

Key words: Same name fragrances, feelings during purchase, brand perception, purchase intention, brand.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout much of recorded history and perhaps beyond, people have added fragrances to lotions and potions to mask unpleasant odors or create a certain ambiance. Perfume as a mood setter and sexual attractant has also been around for a long time (Wilkie, 1995).

These days, the flavor and fragrance (F&F) industry deserves some attention: the total market has been continuously increasing from US\$ 9.6 billion in 1995 to nearly double in a decade (US\$ 19.9 billion in 2007), and the top 10 companies accounting for nearly 70% of this market. The world consumption of flavor and fragrance chemicals in 2006 was predominantly directed to the United States, the Western Europe and Japan, which accumulated almost 75% of the sales market. This breakneck growth has mainly been driven by the demand of a huge number of consumer products with flavors and

fragrances in its composition. This is one of the reasons that put the F&F industry among the most profitable industries and with highest growth over the last decades, having applications on food and personal care products. In our modern society, fragrances and flavors, whether they are used as perfumes or flavorants, play a central role in people's daily life—from showering to scenting a home or from sweetening a cake to flavoring a meal. Thus, mainly for these reasons, it is seen that fragrance companies continue to seek over the years, for new, pleasant and lastingness fragrances not only extracted from natural products but especially those obtained from synthetic paths due to its simplicity and lower production cost (Teixeira et al., 2009).

When consumers are considering purchasing a product, their purchase intention will be determined based on the perception of its value given by its brand. When consumers have a higher opinion on the quality of a certain brand product, they are likely to have higher perception of value. Additionally, when consumers benefit more from purchasing the brand product than the price

*Corresponding author. E-mail: t.sadeghi@iau-neyshabur.ac.ir.
Tel: (+98) 551-6621901-10. Fax: (+98) 0551-6615472.

paid, they are more likely to make the purchase. Aaker and Keller's (1990) research discovers that a brand with positive image improves consumer loyalty and trust and strengthens consumers' purchase intention. Brand image no doubt remains an important cue during the process of consumers' purchase decision making (Lin and Lin, 2007).

Consumers usually go through confirmation of need, research prior to purchase, and product evaluation to make a purchase decision, and the last is a particularly important factor. Due to the fact that there are always risks within any purchase decision, consumers rely on product information or cues to lower the risks. Olson and Jacoby (1972) categorize product characteristics into intrinsic and extrinsic product cues. The former is related to the composition of a product, including product knowledge like design and features. The latter is product-related components, which do not belong to the product itself, like price and brand. Zeithaml (1988) agree that intrinsic (product knowledge) and extrinsic (brand image) cues are the most important factors consumers consider when evaluating a product before purchasing. Since intrinsic product cues, for example, function or quality are often not obtainable right away, extrinsic product cues like brand image then become the sole premises consumers rely on (Lin and Lin, 2007).

There are different kinds of sorting fragrances. Gabriella Zuckerman (New York City fragrance consultant) mentioned: the fragrance industry produces two types of fragrance for consumers, functional fragrances and playful fragrances. Functional fragrances are those scents used to reinforce the function of a product such as lemon scents added to detergent. Playful fragrances are those used in perfumes and colognes (Wilkie, 1995).

Many years ago, the idea that a brand created for and promoted to one sex could be extended to encompass both sexes would have seemed bizarre. The tone of voice, image, colors and style of a brand targeted at women would, the old-timers might argue, mean that it is wholly unappealing to men. Clothes brands, accessories, and, most of all, fragrances, needed different emphases to appeal to their audience. Unisex and "same-name" brands create an appeal to both men and women unconstrained by the traditional limitations of fashion branding – machismo for men and allure or sensuality for women. The success of brands such as Calvin Klein has changed the way in which we perceive fashion branding since the "unisex" approach taken by this fashion house has succeeded while traditional fashion brands with an expressed gender target have struggled (Markham and Cangelosi, 1999).

Markham and Cangelosi (1999) divided fragrances in their research within two groups. Unisex perfumes mentioned earlier and the same name perfumes which is the subject of this research. The same-name brand accepts many of the points made earlier but the image is less radical. The difference between the sexes is acknowledged

but the brand itself is gender neutral. Men and women can share the same brand without it compromising either party's preferences.

Why is fragrance so important to the buying public?

The key is a mixture of biological response, psychology, and memory. The limbic system is the most primitive part of our brain and the seat of immediate emotions. Certain odors elicit elemental emotional reactions because some fibers of the olfactory bulb dip directly into the limbic system. Smell, more than any other sense, is a straight line to feelings of happiness, hunger, disgust, and nostalgia - the same feelings marketers want to tap (Wilkie, 1995). Cultural factors affect awareness and willingness to purchase many products and services. Cultural differences exist due to differences in the geography, infrastructure, natural resources, types of businesses, length of time the culture has existed, and other factors present in the various countries around the world (Markham and Cangelosi, 1999).

Brand name, brand image and perfume

The importance of branding is recognized as one of the key weapons for companies in competitive markets. Brand investment has been found to contribute to the attainment of positional advantages and hence performance (Simms and Trott, 2006).

Kotler (2000) contends that brand is a name, term, symbol, design or all these components, and is used to distinguish one's products and services from competitors. A perfume's name is an important product attribute. Consumers view a brand as an important part of a product, and branding can add value to a product. For example, most consumers would perceive a bottle of Opium perfume as a high-quality, expensive product. But the same perfume in an unmarked bottle would probably be viewed as lower in quality, even if the fragrance were identical. Unforgettable brand names create image that support each perfume's positioning. These names suggest that the perfume will do something more than just make you smell better. Oscar de la Renta's Ruffles perfume began as a name, one chosen because it created images of whimsy, youth, glamour and femininity - all well suited to the target market of young, stylish women. Only later was a scent selected to go with the product's name and positioning.

To consumers, the bottle and package are the most tangible symbols of the perfume and its image. Bottles must feel comfortable, be easy to handle and look impressive when displayed in stores. Most importantly, they must support the perfume's concept and image (Kotler, 1999).

Keller (1993) defines a brand image as an association

or perception consumers make based on their memory toward a product. Thus, brand image does not exist in the technology, features or the actual product itself, but is something brought out by promotions, advertisements, or users. Through brand image, consumers are able to recognize a product, evaluate the quality, lower purchase risks, and obtain certain experience and satisfaction out of product differentiation. When it comes to experiential product evaluation, a positive brand image may make up for an inferior image of the origin country and raise the possibility of the product being selected.

According to Grewal et al. (1998), the better a brand image is, the more recognition consumers give to its product quality. Consumers are usually limited in regards to the amount of time and product knowledge to make an informed purchase decision when facing similar products to choose from. As a result, brand image is often used as an extrinsic cue to make a purchase decision.

Akaah and Korgaonkar (1988) conclude that consumers are more likely to purchase well-known brand products with positive brand image as a way to lower purchase risks. This argument is also supported by Rao and Monroe (1988) that a brand with a more positive image does have the effect of lowering consumers' product perception risks and increasing positive feedback from consumers. Therefore, consumers generally believe they can make a satisfying purchase by choosing well-known brands and also lower any purchase risks by doing so (Lin and Lin, 2007). Brand images have been increasingly considered primary topics for many marketing businesses. Utilizing the ideal brand image not only assists enterprises to establish market positions, but also protect brands from other competitors. These potential factors with the brand life cycles have also strengthened the importance of brand image management.

Bennett and Rundle-Thiele demonstrated that the brand image before entering the market needed to plan a series of marketing strategies, including (1) the position of the target market and brand image in the brand life cycles; (2) the situation of the competitive market; (3) the expected results for diverse integrated marketing communication tools; (4) revising the brand characteristics in different stages of the brand life cycles. Thus, the key axle for developing marketing strategies should focus on how to integrate brand image dimensions, attributes and marketing communication tools in brand life cycles, especially considering the interactive effects (Lin and Hsu, 2009).

Brand perception

A number of studies focus on creating frameworks to understand the key components of brand perceptions, including Keller (1993), Aaker (1991) and Plummer (1985) (Simms and Trott, 2006). Brand perception is consumers' ability to identify the brand under different

conditions, as reflected by their brand recognition or recall performance. Brand recall refers to consumer's ability to retrieve the brand from the memory. Brand building has been around for centuries as a means to distinguish the goods of one producer from those of another. The earliest signs of branding in Europe were the medieval guilds' requirement that craftspeople put trademarks on their products to protect themselves and consumers against inferior quality.

In the fine arts, branding began with artists signing their works. Brands today play a number of important roles that improve consumers' lives and enhance the financial value of firms (Wonglorsaichon and Sathairapabayut, 2008).

Feelings and perfume

Perfume can be seen as a high-involvement product with a strong 'feeling' component, which is purchased on the basis of a transformational motivation (Lin and Lin, 2007). Previous researches agreed that the importance of fragrance feeling is the most important factor in making purchase intention (Yoh, 2005).

Purchase intention

Prior to purchasing, consumers begin by collecting product information based on personal experience and external environment. When the amount of information reaches a certain level, consumers start the assessment and evaluation process, and make a purchase decision after comparison and judgment. Therefore, purchase intention is often used to analyze consumer behavior in related studies. The so-called purchase intention means a subjective inclination consumers have towards a certain product, and has been proven to be a key factor to predict consumer behavior.

According to Kotler (1999), consumer behavior occurs when consumers are stimulated by external factors and come to a purchase decision based on their personal characteristics and decision making process. These factors include choosing a product, brand, a retailer, timing, and quantity. This means consumers' purchasing behavior is affected by their choice of product and brand. Thus, we can examine the following factors that may affect purchase intention: 1) price discount; 2) consumers' increase of product familiarity; 3) product characteristics that are related to product (Lin and Lin, 2007).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the researches in the field of perfumes are about chemical composition and allergic contact dermatitis (ACD). There are rarely research about perfumes and feelings. Mensing and Beck (1984) found that socialized

experiences contribute to the shaping of a person's personality, leading to a link between personality and odor preference. Some researches (Schmitt and Shulz, 1995; Cantor and Mischel, 1979) indicated the effect of perfume and person prototypes and their perception (Janssens and De Pelsmacker, 2007).

Willkie's (1995) research postulated that a woman's relationship with fragrance changes with age, but men usually dominate her reasons and explain this five stages of fragrance. Stage 1, puberty through teens, to define personal territory; cope. Stage 2, late teens through 20's, same as in teens, in addition to attracting men, and to feel feminine; fresh, happy. Stage 3, 30's to attract men; for special occasions; to feel special. Stage 4, 40's to attract men and please self.

Stage 5, 50-plus for social reasons (the appropriate thing to do) (Wilkie, 1995).

Some researches (Dubois and Laurent, 1996; Fournier, 1998) postulated perfumes as a medium to give good impressions to others (Yoh, 2006). Markham and Cangelosi (1999) examines the perceptions and preferences of fragrances by females about two major fragrance concepts (unisex and same name). They surveyed ten factors "scent, European fragrance, price, brand (purchased for self), brand (purchased as gift), mood, season, free items with purchase, container, and color." They found scent, brand purchased for self, and items given free with purchase were important to all cultures and likely not be determining dimensions. Whether or not the fragrance was European, price, and individual's mood while shopping, were the three factors scoring highest as being "culturally different" (Markham and Cangelosi, 1999).

Yi et al.'s (2000) research on heavy and light user postulated that both users considered the fit of fragrance to users in use of perfume while heavy users placed more emphasis on pleasure, individuality and attractiveness of fragrance (Yoh, 2006). Yoh (2006) who also researched on high and low involvement user postulated that people highly involved with perfume shopped more often in perfume specialty stores, considering smelling test as the more important information source than did people in the low involvement group. Young females like delightful and sensible and dislike stimulating and strong fragrance. People in the high involvement group preferred sophisticated and modern feelings of perfume fragrance more than did people in the low involvement group (Yoh, 2006). Janssens and De Pelsmacker (2007) have found that only a weak relationship exists between perfume choice and the actual self, and that there appears to be no support for a relationship between the ideal self and perfume choice.

METHODOLOGY

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the data. Modeling of structural equation creates a statistical model to study

linear relations between latent variables and evident variables. All the correspondents have been chosen from all the customers who buy same name fragrance from perfume stores by classify sampling. As Ding and Harlow (1995) note that 100 to 150 participants are sufficient to conduct SEM, the number of respondents with complete data in this study ($n = 200$) yielded a sufficiently large sample for the use of structural equation modeling. After deletion of irrelevant data, 148 questionnaires out of 200 were analyzed. (Asgari et al., 2008).

The main hypotheses of research

The research hypotheses are studied and tested here. Test statistics is T , which shall be accepted or rejected based on the value of test hypothesis (H_0). If the value of T is larger than 1.96, then H_0 is rejected at error level 0.05:

H_1 : Product features have a direct impact on the feeling during purchase.

Statistically, we have:

H_{1a} : There is no meaningful relationship between Product features and feeling during purchase.

H_{1b} : There is a meaningful relationship between Product features and feeling during purchase.

Based on Table 1, the assumed route from product on feeling is meaningful, and thus the hypothesis corresponding to the route is confirmed.

H_2 : The country of origin has a direct impact on the feeling during purchase.

Statistically, we have:

H_{2a} : There is no meaningful relationship between country of origin and feeling during purchase.

H_{2b} : There is a meaningful relationship between country of origin and feeling during purchase.

Based on Table 1, the assumed route from the country of origin on feeling during purchase is not meaningful, and thus the hypothesis corresponding to the route is not confirmed.

H_3 : Promotion has a direct impact on the feeling during purchase.

Statistically, we have:

H_{3a} : There is no meaningful relationship between promotion and feeling during purchase.

H_{3b} : There is a meaningful relationship between promotion and feeling during purchase.

Based on Table 1, the assumed route from promotion on feeling during purchase is meaningful, and thus the hypothesis corresponding to the route is confirmed.

H_4 : Purchasing situation has a direct impact on the feeling during purchase.

In other words, statistically, we have:

H_{4a} : There is no meaningful relationship between situation and feeling during purchase.

H_{4b} : There is a meaningful relationship between situation and feeling during purchase.

Table 1. Assumed route.

Route direction	Parameter estimation	Standard error	T
The impact of product features on feelings during purchase	0.58	0.18	3.25
The impact of country of origin on feelings during purchase.	- 0.27	0.15	- 1.83
The impact of promotion on feelings during purchase	0.43	0.18	2.46
The impact of situation on feeling during purchase	0.35	0.19	1.84
The impact of feeling during purchase on purchase intention	0.31	0.17	1.79
The impact of brand perception on purchase intention	0.48	0.18	2.60

Based on Table 1, the assumed route from situation on feeling during purchase is not meaningful, and thus the hypothesis corresponding to the route is not confirmed.

H₅: The feeling during purchase has a direct impact on the purchase intention.

Statistically, we have:

H_{5a}: There is no meaningful relationship between feeling during purchase and purchase intention.

H_{5b}: There is a meaningful relationship between feeling during purchase and purchase intention.

Based on Table 1, the assumed route from feeling during purchase on purchase intention is not meaningful, and thus the hypothesis corresponding to the route is not confirmed.

H₆: The brand perception has a direct impact on the purchase intention.

Statistically, we have:

H_{6a}: There is no meaningful relationship between brand perception and purchase intention.

H_{6b}: There is a meaningful relationship between brand perception and purchase intention.

Based on Table 1, the assumed route from brand perception on purchase intention is meaningful, and thus the hypothesis corresponding to the route is confirmed.

QUANTITIES OF T-STATISTICS DIAGRAM

Figure 1 indicates the quantities of the test statistics for each coefficient. Here, an observed T quantity is calculated for each parameter in the model. We can interpret that when the number of the sample is higher than 30 and observed T is higher than 1.96, the resultant relation is significant with more than 95% certainty.

Conclusion

In view of the ever-growing increase of brands and the sense of variety and diversity thirst in people in line with use of newer scent and purchase of other perfumes, free sample is an appropriate tool for familiarity with the other perfumes. Furthermore, beautiful and smart design and packaging can stimulate the people to purchase.

Concerning the effect of the brand perception on the purchase intention, we can express the matter thus. Brand is used as a very important and effective factor in purchase intention because famous brands decrease the purchase risk and enhance our certainty of the goods quality. Moreover the long durability of famous-brand perfumes increases the people's tendency to purchase.

The analysis of the results show that among the factors affecting the feelings during the purchase; only the product feature and promotion affect the feelings, and brand perception is directly effective on the purchase intention. In view of the gained results, the applied proposals and suggestions are presented thus.

In view of the results of the research in relation to perfume, the most appropriate tool for promotion of the product is that the marketers and sellers should present free sample. Furthermore, since the scent has been marked as the most important factor in product feature, the presentation of free sample during purchase can result in their familiarity with new brands and perfumes.

Unfortunately, due to the increase of the false and forged brands in the market of Iranian perfume and cosmetics, and difficulty of identifying the original from the false and forged brands, the people have become less certain of brands. An effective way to make sure that the perfume is original is to examine its durability. False perfumes are less durable compared to the original perfumes and remain only for few hours. Moreover, purchasing from the valid stores and shops is the best way to make sure that the perfume is original. Most of the false brands are sold with lower prices.

Since the customers among the perfume-manufacturing countries are more interested in European brands, we can say that the European bands are more probable to be sold and imported to Iran than other brands.

In view of the effect of mood in the situation factor, we can place the customer in a better situation for purchase through creation of suitable and calm spaces in the stores, the method of appropriate array and arrangement in the shelves.

The studies and review done by the researcher in Iran indicates that the advertising of products in the field of cosmetics and perfumes is very weak and most of the advertisement and promotion in Iran is done through magazines and monthlies. Most of the people's awareness of new perfumes is done through the advertisement

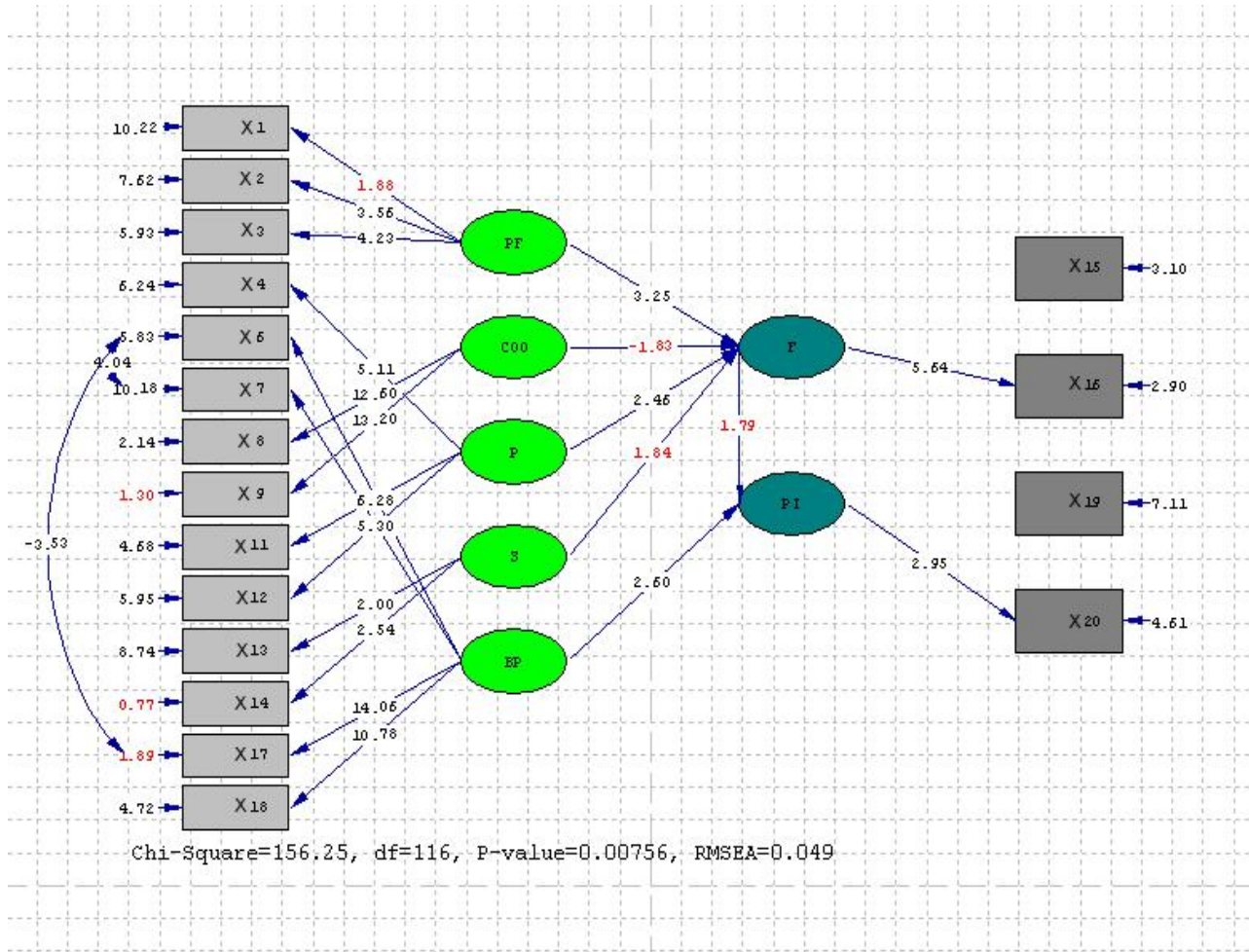


Figure 1. Analytical model of the research.

broadcast by the TV stations located abroad.

The first step for purchasing a new product is to be aware of it and as a result, make the promotion programs and advertisement being appropriate for Iranian culture and being capable of broadcast in Iranian domestic TV channels will make people aware of new perfumes and increase the volume of their purchase.

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