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PERFUME PREFERENCES BY GENDER: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PURCHASE FREQUENCY, AVERAGE SPENDING AND PURCHASING DECISIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine whether there is a significant association between gender on perfume preferences, focusing on purchase frequency, average spending, and purchasing decisions between local and international brands in Petaling District, Malaysia. Despite the growing competition in the perfume industry, gender-based studies in consumer behavior remain underexplored. A structured online survey was conducted, collecting data from 485 respondents aged 18 to 40. Using chi-square tests of independence and crosstabulation, the results revealed that gender significantly associates with purchasing decisions when it comes to choosing local or international brands. In purchasing decisions, females gravitate toward international brands, while males show a preference for local brands, influenced by price sensitivity. However, no significant associations between gender were found in purchase frequency and average spending. These findings highlight the role of gender in shaping perfume choices and offer practical implications for both local and international brands to tailor their marketing strategies to appeal to gender-specific preferences.

Keywords: *Average Spending, Gender, Local vs International Brands, Perfume Preferences, Purchase Frequency, Purchasing Decisions*

INTRODUCTION

The perfume industry today represents more than just a marketplace for fragrances; it embodies individuality, lifestyle, and social identity. Consumer preferences are shaped by cultural values, psychological motivations, and social expectations, with gender emerging as one of the most influential factors in purchasing behavior. In Malaysia, religious values and cultural norms strongly influence consumption patterns (Yusoff, 2019). However, the ways in which men and women interact with perfume products remain relatively underexplored.

Perfume is often perceived as an extension of self-expression, where purchasing decisions are influenced not only by personal preference but also by gender roles, social image, and brand perception. Previous studies suggest that factors such as perceived value, personal motivation, and habitual behavior significantly affect consumer loyalty and brand selection (Abror et al., 2023). Despite the global growth of the perfume industry, limited research has examined gender-based differences in consumer behavior within the Malaysian context.

Recognizing these gender-specific dynamics is vital for brands aiming to connect meaningfully with local consumers. Research has shown that demographic variables frequently reveal distinct behavioral patterns (Januri et al., 2017), providing marketers with valuable insights to anticipate trends and refine strategies. In this light, the present study focuses on the Petaling District, analyzing gender associations with spending behavior, purchasing decisions between local and international brands, and overall engagement with perfumes. Specifically, this study aims to determine whether there is a significant association between

gender and perfume preferences, focusing on purchase frequency, average spending, and purchasing decisions between local and international brands.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional design to investigate gender-based associations in purchase frequency, average spending, and purchasing decisions between local and international brands in Petaling District, Malaysia. The sample consisted of 485 respondents aged 18–40, selected using convenience sampling. Participants were approached in urban locations like shopping malls and retail outlets within the Petaling District.

Data collection was conducted using a self-administered online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, consisting of multiple-choice questions on demographic details, purchase frequency, average spending, and purchasing decisions. The survey allowed for efficient data gathering and a broad representation of the target demographic.

Statistical analysis was performed using Chi-square tests of independence and crosstabulation to examine the relationships between gender and the variables of interest: purchase frequency, average spending, and purchasing decisions. The test is suitable for analysing categorical data and determining statistically significant differences in the distribution of responses between genders. According to Rana & Singhal (2015), the chi-square statistic is calculated as;

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}} \quad (1)$$

where O_{ij} denotes the observed frequency and E_{ij} denotes the expected frequency. If the p -value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that there is enough evidence of a significant association between gender and perfume preferences and vice versa. In addition, crosstabulation was used to present the frequency distribution of responses across categories, offering a visual understanding of gender differences in perfume preferences and spending behavior (Rana & Singhal, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Information

The demographic profile of respondents is summarized in Table 1. The total number of valid respondents was 485.

Table 1: Summary of Demographic Information

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	190	39.2
	Female	295	60.8
Age	18-24 years old	155	32.0
	25-31 years old	168	34.6
	32-39 years old	162	33.4
Income Level	Below RM 2,000	161	33.2
	RM 2,000 - RM 5,000	165	34.0
	RM 5,001 - RM 10,000	116	23.9
	Above RM 10,000	43	8.9

Frequency of Perfume Purchases by Gender

The crosstabulation results showed a gender difference in purchase frequency. The distribution of responses is presented in Table 2. Since the chi-square test yielded a non-significant result (p -value = 0.934 > 0.05), the null hypothesis failed to be rejected, indicating no statistically significant association between gender and purchase frequency. Gender did not significantly impact the frequency of perfume purchases, with both

male and female consumers reporting similar purchasing patterns. Most respondents bought perfume every three months, suggesting a regular cycle influenced by usage rate and budget availability. This indicates that perfume purchasing behavior is largely influenced by personal habits rather than gender-specific tendencies. For local brands, aligning promotional campaigns with quarterly buying cycles could help target consumers during high-repurchase periods, improving sales and relevance.

Table 2: Crosstabulation between Gender and Purchase Frequency

Purchase Frequency		Rarely	Once a Year	Every 6 Months	Every 3 Months	Once a Month	Total
Gender	Male	22	39	42	54	33	190
		11.6%	20.5%	22.1%	28.4%	17.4%	
	Female	39	60	70	82	44	295
		13.2%	20.3%	23.7%	27.8%	14.9%	
Total		61	99	112	136	77	485
		12.6%	20.4%	23.1%	28.0%	15.9%	

Average Spending on a Perfume Bottle by Gender

The distribution of average spending on a perfume by gender is shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Crosstabulation between Gender and Average Spending

Average Spending		Below RM50	RM50 - RM150	RM151 - RM300	RM301 - RM500	Above RM500	Total
Gender	Male	21	50	43	50	26	190
		11.1%	26.3%	22.6%	26.3%	13.7%	
	Female	29	94	76	63	33	295
		9.8%	31.9%	25.8%	21.4%	11.2%	
Total		50	144	119	113	59	485
		10.3%	29.7%	24.5%	23.3%	12.2%	

Since the chi-square test showed no significant results ($p\text{-value} = 0.457 > 0.05$), the null hypothesis failed to be rejected, suggesting that gender does not significantly associate with average spending on a perfume.

Although not statistically significant, the results suggest that females generally spend slightly more on perfumes compared to males, especially in the higher spending categories. This points to a higher likelihood of female consumers being willing to spend more on perfumes that fit their preferences. Local brands could consider offering a variety of price points, ensuring they cater to both budget-conscious consumers and those seeking higher-end options. By enhancing the perception of quality, local brands could more effectively compete with international brands in the local market.

The Purchasing Decisions of Consumers by Gender

The crosstabulation for purchasing decisions by gender is shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Crosstabulation between Gender and Purchasing Decisions

Purchasing Decisions		Local	International	Total
Gender	Male	49	141	190
		25.8%	74.2%	
	Female	104	191	295
		35.3%	64.7%	
Total		153	332	485
		31.5%	68.5%	

Since the chi-square test for this variable was significant ($p\text{-value} = 0.029 < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that there is a statistically significant association between gender and purchasing decisions.

Gender influences were more prominent in purchasing decisions. Females were more likely to make independent purchasing decisions, with 64.7% reporting they were the primary decision-makers. In contrast, a larger proportion of males (35.3%) relied on others for purchasing decisions. This highlights the importance of targeting female consumers with marketing that emphasizes empowerment, personal preference, and product quality. For male consumers, campaigns leveraging external recommendations or endorsements may be more effective in influencing purchase behavior.

CONCLUSION

This study provides valuable insights into the role of gender in shaping perfume preferences within the Petaling District, Malaysia. While gender does not significantly influence purchase frequency or average spending, it has a notable impact on purchasing decisions between local and international brands. Female respondents were more inclined toward international products, whereas males showed stronger support for local brands, often influenced by price considerations. These findings highlight opportunities for brands to adopt gender-sensitive marketing strategies. Local brands can emphasize affordability and authenticity to appeal to male consumers, while international brands may focus on quality, prestige, and emotional connection to attract female consumers. Overall, incorporating gender as a key factor in marketing and product development can strengthen brand competitiveness in Malaysia's evolving perfume market.

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