

Purchase decision: Its mediating effect on the relationship between the marketing mix and choice of marketing strategies in Occidental Mindoro

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Abstract

This study employed an exploratory sequential design to identify the marketing mix that influences senior high school students' decisions to purchase cosmetic products and to determine its effect on purchase decisions and on sellers' marketing strategies. Data were collected from 339 female SHS students from the seven schools in the SAMARICA area. Findings reveal that price, product, promotion, people, and place were the five factors that emerged during the qualitative phase. Moreover, the data reveal that respondents placed the most significant emphasis on product safety, as these products are directly applied to their bodies. Also, this reveals that the decision to purchase cosmetics is not only a rational, function-driven process but also heavily influenced by social and emotional factors. The extrinsic need for social acceptance and a sense of belonging is closely related to the intrinsic drive for self-improvement and confidence. Therefore, consumers will continuously patronize a product from a particular seller if they are consistently satisfied with its price and quality, thereby ensuring sustained sales and, eventually, profit. The data also reveal that the purchase decision mediates the relationship between the marketing mix and choice of marketing strategies. Thus, the indirect or mediating effect of the marketing mix on the choice of marketing strategy is significant. Understanding their needs, wants, and buying decisions determines the organization's success. Lastly, recommendations are enumerated to help manufacturers, marketers, distributors, and sellers determine and improve the processes, practices, procedures, and methodologies associated with cosmetic production and marketing.

Keywords: cosmetic products, market mix, purchase decision, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), marketing strategies

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1. Introduction

Beauty and hygiene products, collectively known as cosmetics, are the fastest-growing consumer segment, compared with other categories, including food, beverages, and household products, according to a study conducted by Naseri et al. (2025). World Panel Philippines found that purchases of personal care products grew by 11% from June 2014 to June 2015. This figure is higher than the 7% growth in purchases of household care products, 6% for food products, and 5% for beverages. This growth is a clear manifestation of the Filipino shoppers' high regard for hygiene and beauty products (International Trade Administration, n.d.; Tariga et al., 2021). Within the personal care mega sector, Worldpanel (2015) and Inquirer.Net (2015) found that Filipinos are prioritizing skin care products (hand and body lotion, facial care, liquid soap, and bar bath soap), hair care products (shampoo, conditioners, and treatment), and oral care (toothpaste and toothbrush). Based on the above information, it is clear that the cosmetics industry will continue to grow over the coming years.

However, it is a known fact that in the business world, the main problem confronting players, specifically manufacturers and sellers of commercial products, including cosmetics, is deciding which strategies to employ to maintain a high volume of sales and stay in business. The marketability of a product is always dependent on the consumers' decision to buy it. Thus, analysis of the buying behavior of consumers is very important in order to formulate good and effective marketing strategies that would ensure stable sales. To be competitive, cosmetics manufacturers and sellers need to identify and understand their consumers' buying behavior. Consumer's buying behavior is the total of a consumer's attitudes, preferences, intentions, and decisions regarding a marketplace when purchasing a product or service. The decision to buy, as one of its components, determines sales of a particular cosmetic product (Oberoi & Oberoi, 2018). Students, particularly those in Senior High School, occupy a large share of the cosmetics market. Moreover, Slabá (2019) mentioned that people between the ages of 17 and 24 take more effort and care of their physical selves. Thus, senior high school students belonging to this age bracket are believed to be more inclined to buy cosmetic products. Udayanga et al. (2024) found that the majority of those who purchase cosmetics are teenagers and young adults, mainly aged under 25. This supports an earlier study by Zebrowitz et al. (2013), who found that younger people are more open-minded and concerned about their appearance. In the Philippines, according to The World Bank (2020), the 15-24 age bracket, which includes senior high school students, comprises 19.16% of the population and is the third-largest age group in the population structure. In the consumer market, this figure would be a very significant number for consumer goods consumption.

A review of previous studies showed that there is really a lack of literature that specifically addresses the buying behavior of senior high school students regarding cosmetics. Therefore, this study aimed at identifying the marketing mix that may influence their decision to purchase cosmetic products and to examine the relationship between marketing mix, purchase decision, and choice of marketing strategies to come up with more generalizable results that would be beneficial to the players of the cosmetic industry in planning their future activities and marketing strategies, as well as to its consumers.

Statement of the Problem - This research aimed to identify the different marketing strategies that affect the purchase decisions of female senior high school students when buying cosmetic products. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions: (1) What are the different marketing strategies affecting the purchase decisions of female students in buying cosmetic products? (2) What is the level of the marketing mix as influenced by purchase decision in terms of price, product, promotion, people, and place? (3) What is the level of the respondents' decisions in buying cosmetic products? (4) What is the level of sellers' choice in marketing strategy? (5) Does the purchase decision mediate the relationship between market factors and choice of marketing strategies? (6) Is the level of sellers' choice of marketing strategy significantly affected by the marketing mix and purchase

Significance of the Study - Cosmetics, by becoming part of people's everyday lives, have grown into one of the world's biggest industries. Thus, this study is envisioned to generate practical as well as theoretical significance among the key players of this industry to make it more profitable and sustainable. Practical, since the information to be generated would be helpful to the stakeholders of the cosmetic industry, specifically in the improvement of the process, practices, procedures, and methodologies associated with cosmetics production and marketing. Specifically, the findings would be practically beneficial to the following: Manufacturers would benefit from the study by identifying products that would further propel market demand. For Distributors and Sellers, they can identify the factors that influence their consumers' buying behavior, in this case, Female Senior High School students. They would be able to modify and enhance their marketing strategies, which would eventually increase their profits. For Future market researchers, the information generated in this study would provide additional reference specifically for those dealing with studies related to youth and students, one of the largest groups of product consumers.

Teachers, specifically those teaching business management courses, would benefit from the results of this study. They will be provided with vital information they can use to enhance their students' knowledge and practical skills, which are essential for the establishment and sustenance of any business endeavor. The students, the focus of the study, will receive helpful information on the types of cosmetics that would be best for them. They will also learn the importance of good grooming and body hygiene. Moreover, since parents are the ones most affected by school expenses, they will also benefit from the findings of this study. Through this study, they will gain important information that explains why their children sometimes ask for extra allowance. Aside from that, they will also learn what to advise their children about when making buying decisions. The government will also benefit from this study. If the cosmetics industry continues to prosper, it will generate more jobs and tax revenue. For the Department of Education, the government agency tasked with managing the country's education sector, this study will yield benefits. The design of the curriculum specializing in business or livelihood will be strengthened by the study's findings, which identify the factors that influence consumer buying behavior, specifically among youth. For the youth at large, not only will the female Senior High School students benefit from this study, but the whole youth sector will as well. They will be provided with information to help them choose the cosmetic products best suited to them, which will enhance their personality. As to its theoretical significance, the study is envisioned to generate knowledge that would provide an in-depth understanding and explanation of the findings regarding the variables investigated and ultimately contribute to refining the theories used in the study. Hopefully, it will contribute to the scientific body of knowledge.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study - The study focused on the female senior high school students from private and public schools in the SAMARICA Area, Occidental Mindoro. The independent variable investigated was the marketing mix, with indicators such as price, product, promotion, place, and people. The mediating variable examined was the purchase decision of female senior high school students. The dependent variable examined was the choice of marketing strategies. An analysis of the relationship among the identified variables was also part of this study. Three hundred and thirty-nine (339) copies of the validated researcher-made questionnaires were distributed to the identified respondents to gather the needed information that would provide answers to the research problems presented earlier. This study was conducted from August to November 2025. Moreover, this study was limited to cosmetic products only and does not include other products.

2. Methodology

This study utilized a sequential exploratory research design. This type of research combines qualitative and quantitative approaches (Berman, 2017). This study began with qualitative research and continued with the quantitative research after the qualitative phase was completed. A qualitative research approach is explicitly used to identify the marketing mix that affects purchase decisions. Qualitative Method is the best for researching many of the why and how questions of human experience (Crossman, 2019). The researcher used the qualitative research

results to develop a survey questionnaire on the different marketing mixes, purchase decisions, and the choice of marketing strategies. There were 2,862 senior high school students officially enrolled in 7 secondary schools in the SAMARICA Area, including both public and private schools. Using the Raosoft calculator with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level, out of 2,862, the sample size was three hundred thirty-nine (339) students. They were chosen using stratified random sampling by year level and school type.

To facilitate data gathering, the researcher prepared two sets of instruments: one for qualitative research (an interview guide) and the other for quantitative research (researcher-made). An interview guide in essay form was used in the qualitative phase. The results of the thematic analysis in identifying the marketing mix/strategies were used to formulate the first variable of the quantitative survey instrument. For the quantitative phase, the researcher-made instrument was divided into three (3) parts; the first part was composed of 5Ps in the marketing mix in terms of price, product, promotion, people, and place, which consisted of six (6) items each, which was the result of the qualitative research. The second part is the reasons for purchasing cosmetic products, composed of six (6) items. The last part identified the level of the choice of marketing strategies, consisting also of six (6) items.

Moreover, the researcher-made instrument was examined using expert validity. The researcher sought the assistance of five (5) experts in the field of research from the graduate school professors at Divine Word College of San Jose to determine the accuracy and the relevance of the items in the instruments. Recommendations and suggestions from the experts were considered to improve the instrument. After the final instrument had been prepared, it was given and administered once to thirty (30) female senior high school students of Tanyag National High School for reliability testing. The reliability test was conducted using the split-half method. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of reliability of all sets of constructs were 0.798, while all composite reliability coefficients are 0.800, 0.799, 0.801, 0.796, 0.796, 0.800, and 0.797, respectively. It covers the five sub-variables of the marketing mix with six items each, the reasons for purchasing cosmetic products, composed of six (6) items, and the choice of marketing strategies, which also consists of six indicators. These results indicated that the sets of constructs are reliable and internally consistent.

Letters requesting permission were sent to the principals of the schools where the respondents were enrolled during the study period. Upon approval of the request, the researcher immediately distributed the survey questionnaires. Instructions were clarified among the respondents, including the time for retrieving the completed questionnaires. Respondents were given 1 week to complete the questionnaires, after which the researcher personally collected the completed questionnaires. Moreover, the data gathered were processed through tabulation. Data were analyzed statistically using the regression analysis. Descriptive data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as percentages and means, to characterize the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to identify the level of agreement of the respondents to the statements used to measure the level of influence of the different marketing mix, such as price, product, promotion, and people, on their purchase decision using a 5-point Likert scale and verbal descriptions. The relationship between dependent and independent variables was analyzed using SEM software. An analysis of the mediation effect of the purchase decision between the marketing mix and the choice of marketing strategies was also conducted using the said software. Lastly, to uphold proper norms and ethical standards in research, the researcher has provided citations for the different materials reviewed and presented in this paper. Permission from the principals of the respective schools was secured prior to conducting the research. After reaching an agreement with the relevant participants, the researcher personally distributed the questionnaires and explained the procedures for completing the instruments to the respondents to ensure accurate and reliable data. The respondents' privacy was respected at all times, and everything they shared or disclosed was treated as confidential. To organize the data correctly, the responses were checked, tallied, and tabulated as the basis for this research.

3. Results and Discussions



Figure 1. Final Thematic Map for Marketing Strategies/Mix

Figure 1 shows a thematic map illustrating the marketing strategies/mix of 15 female senior high school students that influenced their decision to purchase cosmetic products. It is the result of the qualitative research analysis conducted by the researcher. The illustrated results were derived from the qualitative questions that were asked during the interview. The data gathered were recorded, transcribed, tabulated, and coded to extract the themes. The identified themes derived from the analysis are as follows: price, product, promotion, people, and place. The theme of the marketing mix for female senior high school students was included in the quantitative item questions. Furthermore, the results showed that the marketing mix influences the decision to purchase cosmetic products among female senior high school students: price, product, promotion, people, and place (Wijaya et al., 2025).

Table 1

Summary Level of Marketing Mix in terms of Price, Product, Promotion, People, and Place

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Price	4.62	Very High
Product	4.68	Very High
Promotion	4.54	Very High
People	4.62	Very High
Place	4.61	Very High
OVERALL MEAN	4.62	Very High

Scale: 4.20-5.00 Very High Level; 3.40 -4.19 High Level; 2.60-3.39 Moderate Level; 1.80-2.59 Low Level; 1.00-1.79 Very Low Level

Table 1 summarizes the marketing mix at the macro level, including price, product, promotion, people, and place. The overall mean of 4.62, interpreted as very high, indicates that the respondents strongly agreed that all the marketing mix variables investigated affect their decision to purchase cosmetic products, and the influence was further interpreted as very high. When ranked by degree of agreement and influence, Product is first, followed by people and price; place is ranked fourth, and promotion is ranked fifth or last. This finding is supported by Assidiki and Budiman (2023), who found that pricing, promotion, and advertising, product quality, and product delivery influence consumers' purchase decisions. This was further supported by Zhao et al. (2021) and Albari and Kartikasari (2019), who stated that price also significantly influences consumer buying behavior. This finding proves that the majority of consumers still place a high premium on the price of the product they usually buy.

In addition, the data reveal that the respondents place the greatest consideration on the safety of the products, as these are directly applied to their bodies. Furthermore, the data also indicates their concern about protecting their bodies from harm that may be caused by the cosmetics they apply to different parts of their bodies. This finding aligns with Chandon's (2020) finding that people consider safety from allergenic ingredients. It is noteworthy that the originality and popularity of the products received the lowest rating of 4.65. The findings corroborate the findings of Faisal-E-Alam (2020). who discovered that quality was the most important factor influencing consumers' purchase of cosmetics. These findings are supported by Chandon (2020), who also found that quality is a major motivating factor in preferring one cosmetic brand over another. In terms of promotion, Zhao et al. (2022) concluded that advertising and promotion significantly influence consumer buying behavior. Their findings strongly support this study's findings regarding promotion as a factor that influences purchase

decisions. While the overall mean of 4.62 under the indicator of people reveals that the respondents strongly agree that people have very high influence on the decision of respondents to purchase cosmetic products, this implies that the respondents are encouraged to buy cosmetic products based on the sellers' ability to inspire the buyers in terms of the products' ability to enhance the specific physical attribute buyers wanted to improve. Lastly, regarding place, the data closely align with respondents' responses to the question of where they buy cosmetics (mean = 4.61). This implies the respondents' preference for the ease of buying products. In retail stores, anyone can buy products without the hassle of queuing at the payment counters or searching through the shelves. Likewise, products sold by ambulant vendors easily reach consumers, which explains the high rating. This is supported by Udayanga et al. (2024), who found that consumers prefer one cosmetic product over the other because of its easy availability. Furthermore, they also found that the majority of the respondents that they studied prefer to purchase cosmetic products in transit or at flea markets.

Table 2*Mean Level of the Respondents' Decisions in Buying Cosmetic Products*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
I decided to purchase a cosmetic product to enhance my looks.	4.65	Very High
I decided to purchase a cosmetic product to improve my confidence.	4.66	Very High
I decided to purchase a cosmetic product to make me more sociable	4.52	Very High
I decided to purchase a cosmetic product to make me more acceptable to different peer groups	4.60	Very High
I decided to purchase a cosmetic product to maintain body hygiene	4.69	Very High
I decided to purchase a cosmetic product to attract the opposite or the same sex	4.66	Very High
COMPOSITE MEAN	4.63	Very High

Table 2 presents the data on respondents' mean levels of decision-making when buying cosmetic products. The composite mean of 4.63 suggests that psychological and social factors, including self-enhancement, social interaction, and confidence, influence respondents' reasons for buying cosmetics. This demonstrates that the decision to purchase cosmetics is not only a rational, function-driven process but also heavily influenced by social and emotional factors. The extrinsic need for social acceptance and a sense of belonging is inextricably linked to the intrinsic drive for self-improvement and confidence. This implies that methods that emphasize social proof, self-identity, and emotional benefits will be significantly more successful for marketers than those that only concentrate on functional features (such as price, quality, or packaging). The findings are similar to those of Yuliandari et al. (2023), who found that both intellectual and emotional factors heavily influence purchase decisions. Customers consider how they feel about the products in addition to the advantages. However, preferences and favorable emotional expectations frequently take precedence over risk aversion. While Almudimeegh et al. (2025) and Ma (2024) discovered that people wear makeup to reflect a preferred identity and satisfy their demand for self-expression. Higher self-esteem and confidence are associated with the use of reliable brands and high-quality products, suggesting that these products confer psychological benefits beyond functionality (Mobil et al., 2019).

Table 3*Mean Level of Sellers' Choice in Marketing Strategy*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
The seller's pricing strategy is based on customers' cost sensitivity.	4.64	Very High
The seller's product strategy is based on customers' quality preferences.	4.68	Very High
The seller's choice of promotion strategy should capture the target market.	4.65	Very High
The seller's choice of distribution strategy is based on the product's availability.	4.66	Very High
The seller's choice of marketing strategy is based on customers' purchasing power.	4.62	Very High
The seller's choice of marketing strategy is based on the target customer's needs or wants.	4.54	Very High
COMPOSITE MEAN	4.63	Very High

Table 3 shows the mean level of sellers' choice in marketing strategy. With an overall mean of 4.63, the data consistently demonstrates a "Very High" level of agreement across all parameters evaluating the seller's marketing plan. This strongly implies that, from the respondents' point of view, the seller (probably in the context of the earlier discussion of cosmetic products) uses a highly customer-centric approach, directly basing their core

marketing mix decisions (Product, Price, Place/Distribution, Promotion) on important characteristics of the target customer, including their needs, preferences, cost sensitivity, and purchasing power. Shirai (2015) stated that people believe there is a strong relationship between the price and quality of cosmetic products. It is a given that consumers are willing to buy products of good quality, even if they are more expensive than the same product with inferior quality. This insight is supported by Ganguly and Roy (2021), who stated that price satisfaction is important and influential in maintaining buyer-seller relationships. Therefore, consumers will continuously patronize a product of a particular seller if the buyer is always satisfied with the price of that product as well as the product's quality, thereby ensuring sustained sales and eventually profit. The information suggests the seller is using a marketing strategy that emphasizes external customer factors rather than internal organizational factors. Because it guarantees that the Marketing Mix (4Ps) is strategically aligned with the customer's mind, wallet, and convenience—the ultimate source of revenue—customer-centricity is a crucial factor in determining market success.

Table 4
Path Coefficients and P-values for Hypothesis Testing

Path	Path Coefficient	P-value	Interpretation	Effect Size	Effect Size Interpretation
Hypothesis 1: Marketing Mix → Choice of Marketing Strategy	0.078	0.02	Significant	.024	Small
Hypothesis 2: Marketing Mix → Purchase Decision	0.637	<0.001	Highly Significant	.104	Small
Purchase Decision → Choice of Marketing Strategy	0.123	0.011	Highly Significant	.050	Small
Marketing mix → Choice of Marketing Strategy	0.239	<0.001	Highly Significant	.020	Small

Effect Size: **0.02 – small, 0.15 – medium, 0.30 – large**

p-value: p < 0.001 Highly Significant p < .05 Significant p > .05 Not Significant

Table 4 shows the path coefficients and p-values for hypothesis testing. The data reveal that the purchase decision mediates the relationship between the marketing mix and the choice of marketing strategies ($\beta = .078$, $p = 0.02$), as shown in the Table. The p-value of .02 suggests that the rejection of the null hypothesis about purchase decision mediates the relationship between marketing mix and choice of marketing strategies. Hence, the purchase decision mediates the relationship between the marketing mix and the choice of marketing strategies. It can be noted that the Indirect or mediating effect of the path from marketing mix to choice of marketing strategy is significant. This result is reinforced by the studies conducted by Xiao et al. (2022) and Musumali (2019), which point out that the key to the success of any business organization lies in the hands of customers. Understanding their needs, wants, and buying decisions determines the organization's success.

Moreover, statistical analysis indicates that the marketing mix affects the purchase decision ($p < 0.001$), the purchase decision affects the choice of marketing strategy ($p < 0.011$), and the marketing mix affects the choice of marketing strategy ($p < 0.001$). ($\beta = .637$, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$). This therefore reveals that the second hypothesis is rejected. Thus, the marketing mix (such as price, product, promotion, people, and place) positively affects the respondent's purchase decision and the seller's marketing strategy choice; the path coefficients (total effects) and probability values must be considered. This implies that an increase in the marketing mix score leads to an increase in the likelihood of purchase. The marketing mix provides companies and businesses with meaningful insights into how to improve their marketing strategies to capture their customers better (Sudarman & Lailla, 2023). Okumu (2015) substantiates this hypothesis that the marketing mix was proven to influence the consumer's decision in the purchase of cosmetic products. A business is more likely to succeed if it designs a tailored marketing mix for a group of customers with similar needs (Wichmann et al., 2022). Moreover, the marketing mix is consistently perceived as important to the performance of any organization. It is the bridge between the production and consumption of goods and services. It provides links between customers' needs and the means of satisfying them. This entails efficiently planning and executing the conception, distribution, promotion, and pricing of goods,

services, and ideas, and creating exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational consumer objectives (Grönroos, 1994, as cited in Zhang et al., 2024).

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

In light of the study's findings, the following conclusions are forwarded: The marketing mix that influences the decision to purchase cosmetic products by female Senior High School students is price, product, promotion, people, and place. The marketing mix significantly affects purchase decisions. The purchase decision has a significant and direct effect on the choice of marketing strategy, with only a small effect. The marketing mix significantly affects the marketing strategy. Purchase decision mediates significantly between the marketing mix and the choice of marketing strategy. Based on the results and conclusions derived from the study, the researcher highly recommends the following: cosmetic companies may develop their best market mix, giving priority to factors such as price, promotion, product, and place, which influence customers' purchase decisions. The marketing mix must be appropriately aligned and operate effectively to achieve organizational objectives and ensure the provision of the right product, at the right price, in the right place, thereby enabling more effective and efficient resource utilization. The researcher recommends that both cosmetic product manufacturers and sellers carefully modify and improve their marketing programs in order to formulate sound and effective marketing strategies that further propel market demand. The researcher recommends that marketing managers attend or provide training and seminars specifically on market mix to enrich them with techniques being used by the marketing department to provide practical techniques and powerful strategies to their retailers and wholesalers in promoting their products, and how to compete in the market to make consumers purchase their products and build brands and loyalty. The researcher recommends that marketers introduce some uniqueness to their product. Intense promotion through various forms of advertising may be used to reach a large number of customers. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) must fully monitor the operation of the cosmetic industry to ensure the provision of safe and quality cosmetic products. The study's results must be presented to cosmetic companies to provide them with the information they need for future planning and marketing strategies. To arrive at a more effective and efficient marketing strategy, which is the ultimate goal of this study, it is suggested that future researchers focus on other factors, specifically various promotional approaches, to identify which is best.

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