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Consumer perception towards new natural cosmetic products in Finland

Moroccan Argan Oil

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>The purpose of this thesis is to study Finnish consumer behavior towards natural foreign cosmetic products. Therefore, it is essential to know about the perception and the interest of Finnish people in those products, by selecting the main factors that affect and guide their buying decision.</p> <p>The theoretical part was about the natural cosmetic products in Finland, and the focus was on consumer behavior including all the attributes that affect him such as cultural, social, personal, and psychological. The Finnish consumer behavior was studied in particular as it is the targeted person in this research. Reliable and valid books and sources were used to enrich the thesis.</p> <p>An online survey was conducted for the empirical part to achieve the outlined objectives. Then an interpretation was realized after gathering the received data and analyzing it with statistical software. The survey was sent to a group of people which include barbershops, beauty salons, and stores that sells natural products, and to other people (friends and neighbours) who have an interest in natural cosmetic products. The questionnaire survey received more than the expected responses, which was very helpful for the analysis of the findings.</p> <p>The theoretical part and the research finding were supporting each other, there is a big interest of Finnish people towards new natural cosmetic products in the Finnish market. Finnish people respect nature and all what comes from it, the new natural cosmetic product is always welcome in Finland but with quality as the first important value in a product, followed by environmental safety, fair-trade certification. The last ranked matters were the packaging, country of origin, and the brand.</p>		
<p>Key words : Consumer behavior, natural cosmetic products, Moroccan argan oil, Finnish consumer</p>		

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
2	PROBLEM SETTING AND CONCEPTUAL FRAME OF REFERENCE.....	5
2.1	Research problem and research objectives	5
2.2	Conceptual framework.....	7
2.3	Boundaries of the thesis.....	8
3	NATURAL COSMETIC PRODUCT IN THE FINNISH MARKET	9
3.1	Short overview of cosmetics	9
3.2	Short overview of Argan oil	10
3.3	Finnish people consumption of natural cosmetic products.....	11
4	CONSUMER BEHAVIOR	13
4.1	Consumer behavior in general	13
4.2	Characteristics affecting the consumer behavior	17
4.2.1	Cultural factors	17
4.2.2	Social factors	18
4.2.3	Personal factors	20
4.2.4	Psychological factors	21
5	FINNISH CONSUMER BEHAVIOR	24
5.1	Background of Finnish people consumer behavior	24
5.2	Interest of Finnish people in natural product	26
6	METHODOLOGY	27
6.1	Research design.....	27
6.2	Research method	27
6.3	Population and sample.....	28
6.4	Questionnaire design	29
6.5	Data collection and analysis.....	31
6.6	Reliability and validity	33
7	RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	33
8	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	45
9	RECOMMENDATIONS	49
10	FINAL WORDS	49
	REFERENCES	
	APPENDICES	

1 INTRODUCTION

Previously, beauty has always been a craft which was very local in its products and traditions. There was no global standard of what it meant to be beautiful. But, the waves of globalization which began in the nineteenth century made the world becoming a global village. The five continents are connected thanks to the development of different modes of transport and the exponential evolution of telecommunications. The global beauty market is then in unceasing growth. (Jones, 2011)

Global cosmetic producers are constantly trying to find new vegetable oils, essential oils, botanicals and marine ingredients. They are trying to find ingredients that tell an inspirational marketing story then have a remarkable attribution that link with local knowledge and energy to realize global SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). Cosmetic manufacturers also use popular ingredients from health and food sectors. Sustainability and traceability have become one in all important key issues for global producers and consumers. (Tilaar, 2018)

In this thesis, the interest was focused on the perception of Finnish people to the Moroccan argan oil and cosmetic natural products derived from it. The author will know more information about the consumer behavior in general, the internal and external factors that effect on him. Finnish consumer behavior towards natural cosmetic products and what lead them to buy a certain product or service.

The Finnish market is a potential market with high GDP which explains the high revenues, Finnish people pay more attention to what they buy, the nature of the product, and the benefits that a product has on their skin, hair, and body. Finnish people like to be healthy and care a lot about nature, they are simply following their Finnish lifestyle, and that is the secret behind their happiness.

As a international business student, it is important to be successful in the job to have a fairly detailed knowledge about the country of origin of the product which is Morocco as well as the country targeted by this product which is Finland. Effectively, The author has been living in Finland for more than three years, which was enough to discover and understand the Finnish culture and society. In the other side, the author is from Morocco and precisely from the region known as the capital of Argan, which is Souss (Agadir). This thesis is then an opportunity for her to put all these assets to work and to see to what extent and see if she can be an interlocutor capable of presenting the product well and reassuring the Finnish consumer about it.

The methodology to be followed in this thesis consists of a data collection method where there is a questionnaire which was sent by emails to barber shops, to beauty salons and to stores that sells natural product. Also this questionnaire was diffused via Facebook pages who are interested in natural products, and to other people (friends and neighbours) who have an interest in natural cosmetic products. After getting responses, the received data were studied and analyzed. The results helped to get a clear idea about Finnish consumer behavior, their perception towards natural cosmetic products in general and towards Moroccan Argan oil products in particular.

2 PROBLEM SETTING AND CONCEPTUAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

2.1 Research problem and research objectives

Understanding consumer behavior is essential for any company to find success for its current products as well as new product launches. Every consumer has a different thought process and attitude towards buying a particular product. If a company fails to understand the reaction of a consumer towards a product, there are high chances of product failure. (Website of clootrack).

The big challenge of this thesis is thereby to know how Finnish consumers from Nordic countries will agree to use in their everyday life a product coming from South Mediterranean Sea.

Finnish people are known by their tradition of living in harmony with nature, they are very serious about the environmental protection. People are very careful about what they put on their skin, on their hair and on their body ; because most of them have sensitive and allergic-prone skin. This makes them look for natural cosmetic products that will have only benefit with almost no side effects. Finland has a high turnover in the natural cosmetics segment and the market is expected to grow by 9,8% in 2020-2025. (Website of Statista)

To overcome this issue, the following research objectives have been targeted:

1. What is the value of natural cosmetic products in the Finnish market?
2. What is the importance of consumer behavior study?
3. What are the main characteristics that affect consumer behavior?
4. What kind of factors influence Finnish people in natural products?
5. What is the perception of Finnish consumers towards Moroccan argan oil?
6. Would Finnish people be interested in buying Moroccan Argan oil?

To answer these questions, it is more appropriate to go and ask directly the consumer. So, a group of people were chosen for that purpose. The targeted participants in this thesis were those working in the barbershops, beauty salons and stores that sell natural cosmetic products. And also the Facebook pages where there are people interested in natural cosmetic products.

2.2 Conceptual framework

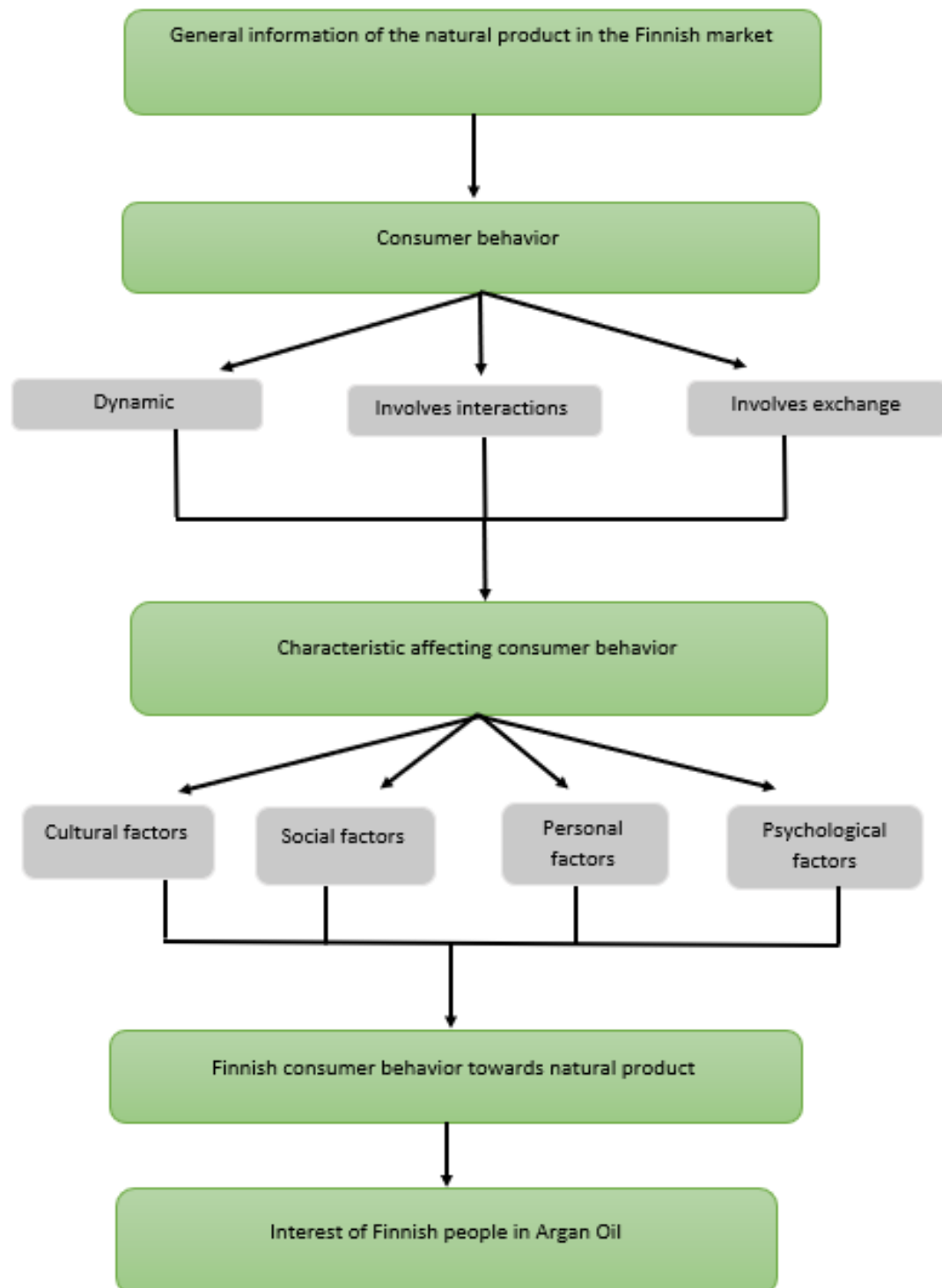


Figure 1. Conceptual framework – Consumer perception towards natural cosmetic products in Finland

To have a clear idea about what is expected from this research, right tools are required to guide this work through all its steps and be able to understand each one. The conceptual framework is the needed tool, above (figure 1) it can be seen the conceptual process of the thesis which explains the natural progression of the research. Conceptual framework is covering all the key concept of this thesis, it simplifies and helps the reader and the writer to understand the process of the research and the path to follow.

The pillar in the conceptual framework is "the consumer behavior". This behavior is affected by a set of parameters such as ; the culture, the social and economic status, the personality and the psychology of the consumer.

At first, a general information about natural cosmetic product in the Finnish market will be given. At second, the consumer behavior and its different forms will be explained. After that, there will be a determination of the external and internal factors that affect the consumer behavior. The external factors are the cultural and the social factors and they usually come from the environment and the received education whether at home or at school. The internal factors are personal factors, and psychological factors, those are generally linked to gender, age, physique and health. Afterward, the discussion will be focused on the Finnish consumer behavior and the interest in natural products. Finally, the autho find out if the Finns already knew about Moroccan Argan oil products and if they are ready to accept them in their market shelves and in their lives.

2.3 Boundaries of the thesis

The most challenge the author to faced during the work on this thesis is to find references about Finnish natural product and about Finnish behavior in English, especialy the scientifiqu studies. The informations were more available in Finnish, a language that she does not yet master. In this research, few websites were used as a source of informations, something that was not really very useful because the language used in the sites is quite popular and not scientific.

The author consider nevertheless that this kind of study would be beneficial for local and international companies who wants to invest in foreign natural cosmetic products in Finland. It would be also usefull for entrepreneurs who are looking for ideas and want to start green business in the beauty industry. Even the author herself, this study will be useful if she ever embark on a future project which consists in marketing natural cosmetic products based on Moroccan argan oil.

3 NATURAL COSMETIC PRODUCT IN THE FINNISH MARKET

3.1 Short overview of cosmetics

The history of cosmetics can be said to have started during ancient Egypt. Their usage had, first and foremost, hygienic purposes and health advantages. The usage that also has advantages for healthcare, or fighting against the aging of the skin are relatively new approaches to cosmetics. In 1984, the word ‘cosmeceuticals’ (which is a combination of “cosmetics” and “pharmaceuticals”) was used in order to have an expert definition of products offering both cosmetic and therapy value. Nowadays, the trend of using and seeking natural materials and additives is on the rise. This is most notable for cosmetic products. The reason for this increase is the apperency of negative effects of synthetic materials on health and on environment. Marketing trends are turning towards natural solutions for cosmetics and link natural cosmetic product usage to healthy lifestyle. Many products are becoming an integrated part of our everyday life, like soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and even sunscreens and Makeup. The history of cosmetics is shaped parallel to that of humanity. Nowadays, the cosmetics market is vastly changed, it became incredibly competitive and global, where quality, efficiency, and safety are all highly important. Consumers also became extremely refined, therefore, scientific research and product development became steps producers cannot skip. Furthermore, consumers are well aware of environmental protection and sustainability questions (animal protection, active agent—pollutant relations).

Therefore, new cosmetic ingredients also have to pass an environmental protection criterion. (Amberg, Fogarassy, 2019)

3.2 Short overview of Argan oil

Argan oil (*Argania Spinosa* Kernel Oil) is produced from the seeds of the argan tree and it has many valuable properties for people. The most valuable oil has light yellow or light red colour, it has delicate flavour and it is cold pressed in a mechanical way. The argan oil is a valuable food, pharmaceutical and cosmetic raw material, having wide range of tastes and remedial properties. It contains a high level of both oleic acid and linoleic acid, making it an excellent source of basic polyunsaturated fatty acids, also it is particularly rich in polyphenols and tocopherols (Vitamin E) that exhibit significant antioxidant activity. (Goik, Zaleska, 2019)

When observing the offer of cosmetic industry, one can notice a huge interest in argan oil. Almost every cosmetic company uses this raw material. Argan oil has a similar content of esters of glycerol that appear in the content of human sebum. It also includes tocopherols and plant sterols. It consists of 80% of unsaturated fatty acids that include about 37% of linoleic acid that belongs to essential unsaturated fatty acids that are very important in keeping the right epidermis barrier. It has zero-degree comedogenic properties. Therefore, it is used in skincare, face care, massage, for rubbing into nails and cuticles, for hair care, oiling and for protecting hair. Moreover, it is used as an additive for face masks, powdery clays, emulsions (also as an ingredient of oily phase and emulsion stabilizer), oleogels, balms, lipsticks, lip gloss, shampoos also for skincare of delicate children skin, atopic skin, skin with rosacea and with excessive sebum production. It works beneficially for skin suffering from erythema, seborrhoeic dermatitis and folliculitis, with eczema, psoriasis and for stretch marks and scars. It moisturizes intensively, nourishes skin by supplementing lipids in intercellular cement and recovering and strengthening hydro-lipid film of skin. (Ainane, 2016)

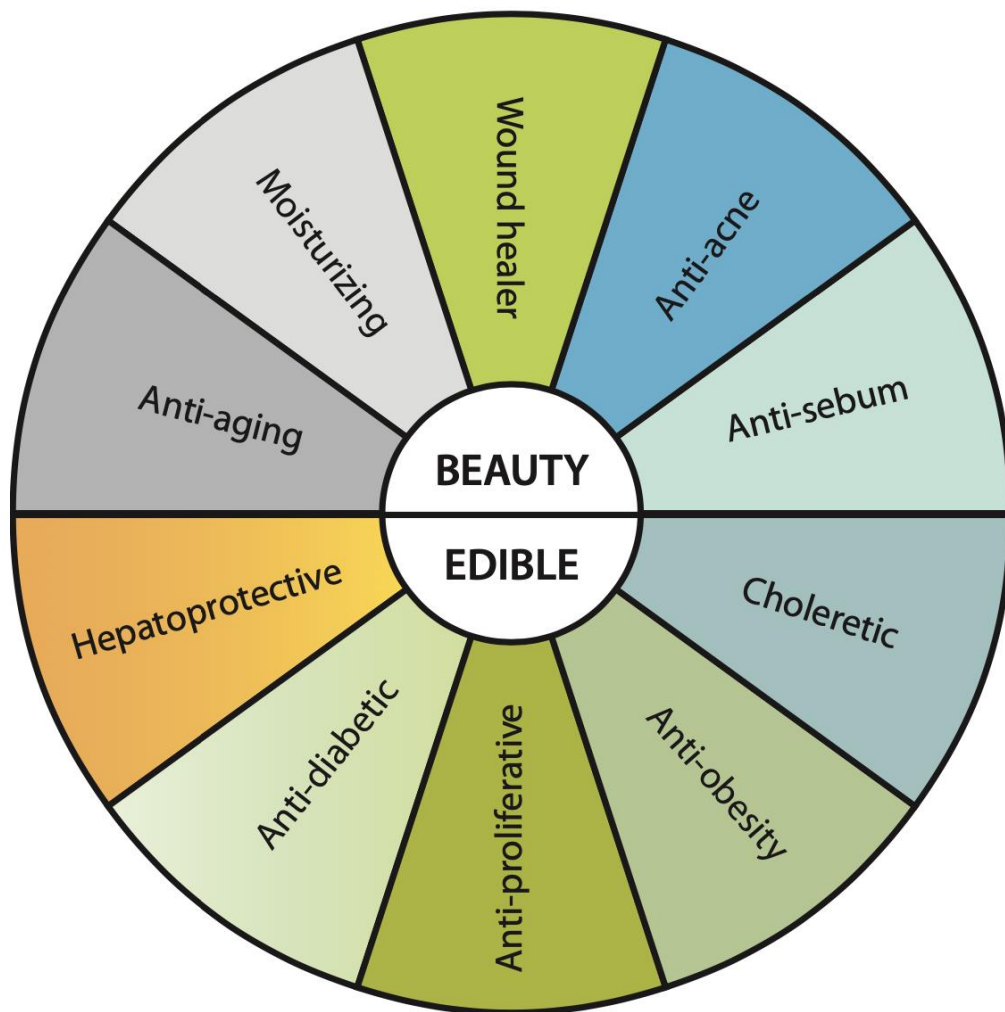


Figure 2. Therapeutic Properties of Argan Oil (website of tree of life)

3.3 Finnish people consumption of natural cosmetic products

Finns have a strong relationship with the nature, they value the environment and all what comes from the nature. Natural products play an important role in the economy and society. The rural Development Program for Mainland Finland 2014-2020 includes grants for companies and projects aiming to develop the natural product sector. The program provides support for different communication and cooperation projects and for development activities carried out by individual micro and small enterprises. (Website of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland)

The consumption of natural cosmetic product has grown more rapidly than consumption in the traditional cosmetic market. There is a big demand in natural cosmetic product in the Finnish market which explains the growing interest people have in their health and wellbeing. The Finnish natural cosmetic market is expected to grow annually by 9% during the five coming years. The revenue in the beauty and personal care market amount to US\$23.3m in 2020. In relation to total population figures, per person revenues of US\$4.21 are generated in 2020. Natural products and digitalization are coming together in a unique way (Website of Statista)

Finnish cosmetic market is smaller than the global cosmetic market, but the most important is that the Finnish market provides many opportunities for natural cosmetic product importers, it encourages them and supports them. Thanks to the growing demand for natural products and environmentally friendly products. The Finnish market is encouraging and supporting entrepreneurs who want to start a green business, in order to make Finns benefit from the product and other countries rich nature, Finnish market is not only helping entrepreneurs who are using local plants but also entrepreneurs who want to import new natural products from different countries. (Organic natural cosmetic product, 2018)

Many brands created a new line which concerns only natural cosmetic products while the other ones were developing their own product and make it more natural. Their main focus is on purity and sustainability. (Website of Business Finland)

Finnish skincare is rich in antioxidants and pressed oils, the Finnish beauty might seem quite subdued, it is, in fact, bursting with ancient recipes and a detailed relationship with nature. Taking benefits from the nature and producing some products that will improve your health and make you get rid of your skin problems is always a good idea. The advantage is that you are participating in sustainability, and you are using natural product and helping grow the green business. (Website of Visit Finland)

Finland is one of the world's most forests countries, with the special northern climate and short but intense summers with long days full of sunlight. Sun light play an important role in the production of raw materials with a concentration of nutritious ele-

ments and flavonoids. Nowadays, a number of Finnish companies are skilled in producing natural ingredients for cosmetic, pharmaceutical and healthcare applications, these companies include innovation in refining natural resources. The unique relationship with nature, weather, clear air, soil and water helped Finns have a strong economy. (Website of Business Finland)

4 CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

4.1 Consumer behavior in general

Before doing any marketing activity it is obligatory to understand the concept of marketing studies. Marketing is engaging customers and managing profitable customer relationship, satisfying customer needs is the basis. (Kotler & Armstrong 2018, 28.) To sell a product or service, it is necessary to follow a marketing strategy, by defining the product, price, place and promotion. In order to place a product in its suitable place and promote it in a good way, it is important to understand and be familiar with the targeted people.

According to Philip Kotler's book the characteristics affecting consumer behavior are divided into four factors: cultural factors, social factors, personal factors, and psychological factors. According to the American marketing Association, consumer behavior is defined as "the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behavior, and the environment by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives." (Peter & Olson 2001, 6). In other words, the feelings and thoughts people experience and the actions they carry out are all implied in the consumer behavior during the consumption processes. Even more, it also includes all the things in the environment that influence these thoughts, feelings, and actions. For example, comments from other consumers, advertisements, prices, packaging, product appearance and many others. It is obvious then to realize that consumer behavior is dynamic, interactive, and involves exchanges. (Peter & Olson 2009, 5-6)

Consumer behavior is dynamic because the thinking, feelings, and actions of consumers are constantly changing. For example, the big knowledge offered by the internet allowing people to be well-informed about products and services, the growing awareness towards the protection of the environment and animals and the increasing social networks influence on trends. Those factors make a product life cycle shorter and push the companies for innovation and create some unique items which makes a high competition in the market. The dynamic nature of consumer behavior plays a vital role in the development of marketing strategies. Many people before deciding, they highlight the fact that if they are in the need or if they just want to have a certain item for example, and that makes them be in a different consumer group. (Peter & Olson 2009, 5-6.)

Consumer behavior involves interactions which makes marketers think a lot on what products influence shopping, purchase, and consumption and how those interactions influence individual consumers, what make them satisfy consumer needs and wants, plus adding value for them (Peter & Olson 2001, 6). Many companies are called to take people's thoughts, feelings, and actions into consideration because this is what would allow their marketing strategy to be on the right path.

Consumer behavior involves also exchanges between human beings. More precisely people give up something of value to others and receive something in return. This means that there is an exchange between the consumers and the marketers. In fact, nowadays the role of consumer is not only of a buyer and that of the marketer is not only of a seller, but there is an exchange of ideas and experiences from consumer and innovation and creativity from marketer. (Peter & Olson 2009, 6-7)

To study a consumer behavior there is three main approaches. Interpretive, traditional, and marketing science. The interpretive approach is based on theories and methods from cultural anthropology and it aims to develop a deep understanding of consumer consumption and its meaning. This approach is helping marketers to understand more what product and services mean to consumers and what is their experience in purchasing and using them. (Peter & Olson 2001, 10.)

Traditional approach is based on theories and methods from cognitive, social, and behavioral psychology, as well as sociology. It tries to establish theories and methods to explain consumer decision making and behavior. This approach has deep impact on marketing thought because it brings marketers closer to consumer and supports them about the decision process and social influences on consumer behavior. (Peter & Olson 2001, 10.)

Marketing science approach is based on theories and methods from economics and statistics. It usually includes the developing and testing mathematical models to anticipate the impact of promoting strategies on consumer choice and behavior. This approach can handle a huge scanner data sets to help solve marketing problems, so it is considered as a pillar in the consumer goods industry. (Peter & Olson 2001, 10.)

Marketers want always to know more about the buying consumer decisions. If they can answer the questions about what consumers buy, where they buy, how and how much they buy and when they buy, it is not however easy for them to know about the whys behind consumer buying behavior. The answers are often locked deep within the consumer's mind. Often, consumers themselves don't know exactly what influences their purchases.

It is then that the stimulus-response model was introduced, which will give a clear image of consumers "black box", in other meaning it symbolizes a consumer's mind and how it reacts to marketing efforts and clarify how the environment's effect on consumers which define buyers' responses. (Kotler & Armstrong 2018, 158-159).

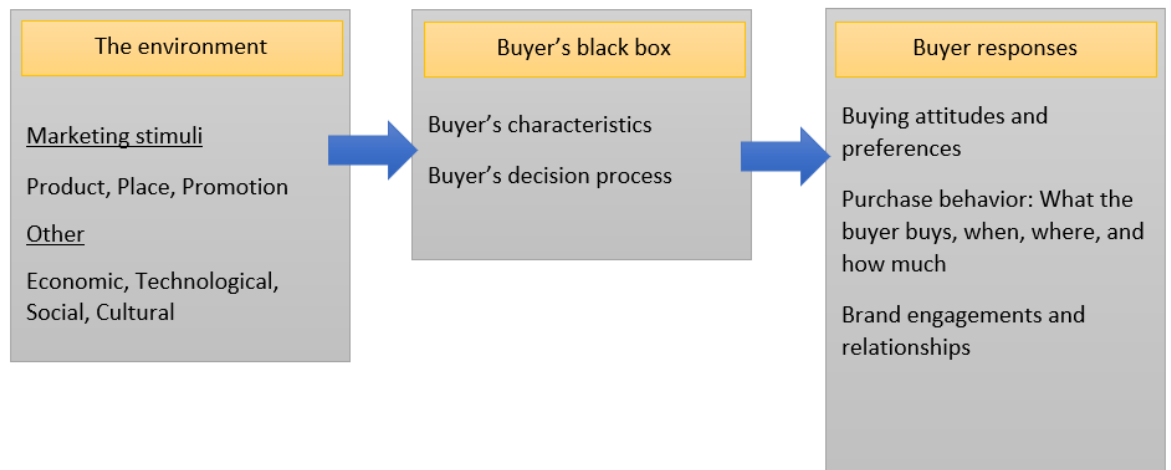


Figure 3. Stimulus-response model of buyer behavior (Kotler & Armstrong 2018, 159.)

The Figure 3 is clarifying the stimulus-response model of buyer behavior and how does it work. The block in the middle of the figure is the buyer's black box, it is an individual process that leads to the consumer's final decision and it shows that the consumer behavior is based on his background. The buyer is affected by the environment which include the marketing stimuli. The marketing stimuli contains the marketing mix of an organization, product, price, place, and promotion. Moreover, other factors like economic factors, technological, social, and cultural factors. All those are the factors that effect on the buyer's decisions, by knowing those factors we can measure the "what's", where and "when's" of buyer behavior. (Kotler & Armstrong 2018, 159).

By defining consumers characteristic, the reader can know the consumer decision, the main characteristic mentioned before which are cultural, social, personal, and psychological. The buyer's black box focusses on the relation between the stimuli and the response of the consumer. When the buyer understands and recognizes the problem, its response then is conscious, rational decision process in the black box model. Once the consumer has recognized the problem, they search for information on products and services that can solve that problem. After making the decision process, marketers must forecast the purchasing plans of consumers by knowing what the buyers buy, when, where, and how much. Marketers should also use brief descriptions

of the products of interest because at that time the consumer is ready to buy but still need to look for information on goods and services that will satisfy his or her needs.

4.2 Characteristics affecting the consumer behavior

Consumer purchases are influenced strongly by cultural, social, personal, and psychological characteristics, which must be taken into account by marketers.

4.2.1 Cultural factors

Cultural factors have a big influence on consumer behavior, every culture differs from the other one, each culture has its influence on the person's behavior.

Culture:

“Culture is the set of basic values, perceptions, want, and behaviors learned by a person from family and other important institutions” (Kotler & Armstrong, 159). Many visions of the world were established by each society, they are building their cultural world by using and creating meaning to constitute important cultural distinctions. Marketers find it difficult to understand all what culture might include such as common reactions, beliefs, and characteristic patterns of behavior. Nevertheless, they should consider different matters while analyzing culture. (Peter & Olson 2001, 290.)

There are different levels of the analyze of the cultural meaning that marketers must take in consideration. Those levels include macro level of an entire society like Canada, France, Poland, Kenya or Australia, subcultures such as African-Americans, the elderly, and people who lives in new England, and finally social classes which include the middle versus working class. (Peter & Olson 2001, 290.)

Subcultures:

“Subcultures are distinctive groups of individuals in a society that share common cultural meanings for affective and cognitive responses, behaviors, and environmental factors” (Peter & Olson 2001, 323). Subculture includes different regions,

nationalities, geographic regions and racial groups. The reason why it is very important for marketers to satisfy customer's needs by creating good design and having good product. (Kotler & Armstrong 2018, 160.)

Social classes:

Social classes are society's whose members share similar values, interests, and behaviors. It is measured as a combination of occupation, education, wealth, income, and other variables. Social classes are considered as an ordered division and relatively permanent. (Kotler & Armstrong 2018, 162.)

Social class comprise four groups- upper, middle, working, and lower class. People are influenced by their education and occupation, from a person to other ideas change and the way of thinking also. We conclude that social class refers to a national status hierarchy by which groups and individuals are distinguished in terms of esteem and prestige. (Peter & Olson 2001, 340-341.)

4.2.2 Social factors

Human buying behavior is always influenced by other people living around him, and people are always trying to imitate other humans to be accepted in the society. Social factors are classified under reference groups, family members, roles, and status in the society.

Reference groups:

A group according to Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong, is defined as two or more people who interact to accomplish individual or mutual goal. Groups affect the purchase of specific products and brands, they also affect consumer knowledge, attitudes, and values. (Kotler & Armstrong 2018,162.)

Reference groups are cultural groups in that members share certain common cultural meanings, a group to which there are certain standards of attitudes. For example, group of college class, workplace colleague group, ethnic group, religious group. Those

groups can influence the persons behavior and cognitive, in their way of talking, behaving and dressing also. Marketers use reference groups to lend credibility to products and services and help convince potential customers to buy the product. Marketers choose a trusted person by the purchasers as an example famous singer, jock, celebrity, etc. The marketers know their targeted people and understand what other people like and need in order that they create advertising that suggests that the normative reference group of the person prefers a certain product or service, that will definitely make people buy the product or the service without hesitation because they trust the representer or the advertising maker of the company and this person can be their idol. (Website of Study.com).

Family:

Family plays an important role in shaping the buying behavior of a person. Before having any knowledge about the product or service a person is following what his family buys. The family is a unit of analysis for marketers because there is an influence on each other when making purchase choices for household for example or even for some personal purchases. It is important to understand the family life cycle first which will help marketers understand how important cultural trends for example affect family structure and consumption behavior. (Kotler & Armstrong 2018, 368.)

Roles and status:

A person's buying behavior is related to his status in life. If a person is in a high position, his buying behavior will be influenced by his status. A person in a low position will be in a different situation and must think before buying because his budget will not be enough maybe for a certain service or product. A Chief Executive Officer in a company will buy according to his status, while an employer or a staff of the same company will have a different buying pattern. (Website of Cloutrack)

4.2.3 Personal factors

Age:

Age plays a vital role in the buying behavior, age, and human lifecycle influence the buying behavior of consumers. Old people and middle elderly will be interested in buying decent and subtle designs while teenagers would be more interested in buying loud and bright colors. Age groups can be analyzed as subcultures because they often have distinctive values and behaviors. Some people think of themselves younger than their age. Those people, their behavior and cognitions are more connected to their psychological age more than their chronological age. (Peter & Olson 2001, 328.)

Occupation:

Consumer buying behavior and process is affected by his or her occupation. People with different occupations have different interests for example what interests a physician differs than what interests a construction worker or a teacher. The physician first need for his work are the medical tools for his clinic, and different equipment and furniture while a teacher or a construction worker will need first to fulfill his goal in life which is providing good living conditions for him and his family then other desires as secondary needs. Knowing the nature of each job and its details of the target audience will facilitate and enable the marketers to provide and offer a product that suits needs and desires. (Website of Promediaz)

Income:

Consumer buying behavior depend on the level of income of each person. Each individual is thinking in an appropriate way of how he can distribute his budget according to his needs and life requirement, from the important ones to the less important. The job of marketers is to make the product or service fit to the income of targeted group without causing any financial crisis in their expenditures. Furthermore, they follow the level of income and spending rate of the targeted audience and the changes that are occurring in them constantly. (Website of Promediaz)

Lifestyle:

Lifestyle is the way of an individual lives, and his interaction with the environment in which he is, and with all people, attitudes and variables around him, and his emotional responses to it. So, it is perceived and evident through a person's various interests, activities, and opinions. (Website of Promediaz)

4.2.4 Psychological factors

Psychological factor is one of the most important factors affecting consumer behavior when deciding to buy, and it is considered the focus of building the marketing process for any product. Psychological factors are divided into several sections and by cue, namely

Internal drive

The Internal drive directs a person towards pursuing a specific behavior or action, to achieve a purpose, to satisfy an urgent need that arose within him, and that caused anxiety and internal tension for the person. For example, you felt hunger (an urgent need) that arose inside you, caused anxiety and tension in your stomach, and led to the presence of internal driving forces that push you to search for any source of food (the goal) to satisfy your hunger, and when you eat, you will have achieved your purpose and the tension decreases or goes away. From this standpoint, your primary task is to uncover the needs of your customers that motivate them to meet them by purchasing your product. (Website of Promediaz)

However, the needs are many and different, so how can someone classify them or find out what is suitable for his product? Many scholars have presented various theories to categorize the human needs of an individual. Among the most prominent was Maslow's "Abraham Maslow's theory of needs" and likewise in Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs".

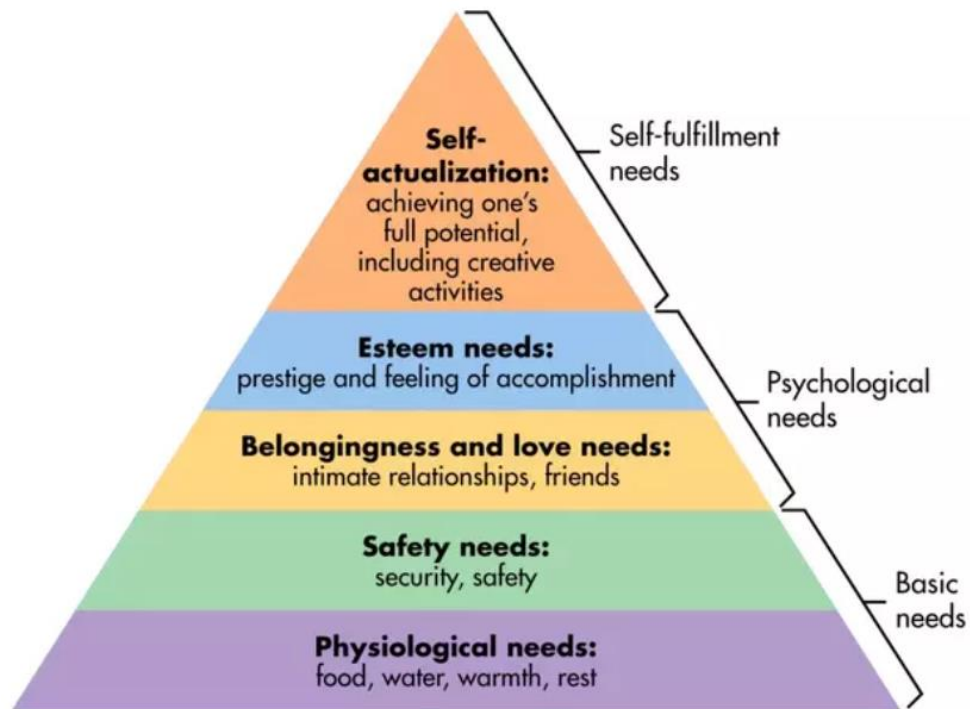


Figure 4. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Website of SimplyPsychology)

According to this classification, the needs are divided into:

Primary needs: These are the physiological needs (food, drink, sleep, housing, clothing...) and come at the base of the pyramid. **Secondary needs:** they are represented in obtaining security and stability, then the social need in terms of a sense of belonging, friendship, and others, and then rise to the top of the pyramid where the need for respect and self-esteem, and their achievement through success, achievement, etc.

(Website of SimplyPsychology)

Your role, then, is clear in understanding the needs of your customers and defining them first, and then how to make your product finally satisfy this need. But what if the motivations of the customers are random, unorganized, and not directed towards specific behavioral goals? Here comes the role of **perception** and **learning** in directing these impulses towards the right path.

Perception

Perception is the process by which the stimuli as light, color and sound are selected, organized, and interpreted. The study of perception focuses on what we add or take away from these sensations as we assign meaning to them. (Solomon 2010, 117)

Perception is the brain's processing of information that comes from the senses, in order to understand the world around us, this process is usually taking place outside the human consciousness. The world can be seen in differently by two people or more. Perception is a mental process and makes your senses receive the five stimuli around to form the information by organizing and arranging them. Many people can face same situation, but they perceive it in a different way. An example of that is a student who submitted his homework 1 hours before the deadline and a student who submitted it 5 minutes before the deadline, the first one is considering himself to be late on submission of the homework while the second one considered himself submitting the assignment on time. No one is wrong but each one has its own perception. (Website of Mawdoo3)

Learning

Learning indicate the change in behavior, because of the accumulated experiences that the individual goes through. The consumer is affected by his decision to buy according to the purchasing experiences he has previously experienced, and his learning may be positive or negative. An individual must have a motivation to learn, as a marketer there should be a specific search for the motives that push and lead customers to the product or service.

Understanding this will give a wealth of new opportunities and marketing inputs to add. The customer is always free to give his comment after buying a product, so if he pays for it of course it is necessary to not disappoint him and make him happy with the purchase. So, it is very important not letting the customers reach the point where he gives some bad reputation on a product or service, marketers should always provide them with complete and clear information about the product so that they are not negatively affected by the product and decide not to return or turn to it again. (Website of Promediaz)

Trends and beliefs

Trends and beliefs indicates the tendency that the individual develops towards specific stimuli and adopts them, and includes under their various topics, ideas, people, and situations. When you have some attitudes and beliefs for a long time, it is hard to change them, especially when a long period of time passes, because they are obtained and shaped by many factors. It always necessary to be careful and pay attention to the directions of your product and what trends is making and change and modify accordingly. Those trends cannot be changed but it is possible to make change that fits and support those trends in your favor. A marketer should pay attention to his customers comments and try to make them give a positive comment instead of negative ones, because those comments will not make the marketer lose the existing customers but new customers also which means the potential customers, as marketing trends move between individuals like wildfire. (Website of Promediaz)

Motivation:

Motivation refers to the process that causes people to behave as they do. From a psychological perspective, motivation occurs when a need is aroused that the consumer wishes to satisfy. Once a need has been activated, a state of tension exists that drives the consumer to attempt to reduce or eliminate the need. (Solomon 2010, 175) Thinking about certain product or service can force us to be motivated and considering it as need which will make as buy it easily. Behind the motivation there is a goal to satisfy a need. As marketers it is important to understand that need, what is it and why it exists.

5 FINNISH CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

5.1 Background of Finnish people consumer behavior

Consumer behavior is a broad and generous label comprising many different issues, theories and research methods, so there are many differences between consumer

behavior researches, yet most of them share a strong interest in learning more about how consumers acquire, use, and get rid of products.

Most Finns priority in purchasing is quality, then the origin of product and the brand image. Referring to a research done by K Group, the customers are more into chemical and synthetic free nutrition, minimal packaging, and organic products, which explains why Finnish are using natural cosmetics. (Website of Societe Generale)

After my short experience in selling natural cosmetic products in Finland, I had the chance to know Finnish consumer behavior towards natural cosmetics, what they like, what they don't like, how they behave and how open they are to outsider brands. Consumers are very selective when it comes to cosmetic product, they are always looking for what will make their skin, hair and body look good and healthy. Finns have a very close connection with the nature, that make them lean on natural cosmetic products more than chemicals. Before buying the product, they collect the information about it, know the composition of the product and its ingredients, being sure that the cosmetic product is accompanied by legally required labelling and other necessary labeling in Finnish and Swedish.

The cold weather in Finland causes many skin problems, and more allergies than before. Therefore, consumers are becoming increasingly interested in more natural alternatives that do not contain chemicals which can irritate their skin. When a Finnish consumer trusts the brand or the product and knows that it has no harm or second effect on his skin, his brain accepts it which makes his body ready to accept it and expect only good results from it and at the end it really gives the results he wished. (Website of Laponie of Scandinavia)

Finns like to see the product, to smell it or touch it, so they can try it or buy it. They do not like strong scents or shiny and strong colors in packaging and the more the products looks simply the better it is Finnish consumers are interested more about the effectiveness of the product, they are quality-oriented and expect that the natural product work, natural origin is no longer enough to convince them of the quality of

the product. To make your product interesting to them you need to show that it works.

5.2 Interest of Finnish people in natural product

Understanding Finnish people and Finnish culture reveals a lot about their interests. Finns are appreciating their environment and have a strong relationship with nature, their usage of natural products and the concerns about synthetic ingredients and chemical substances are increasing particularly in cosmetic domain.

Many communities or groups share and maintain certain forest relationships. These include, for example, forestry professionals, nature entrepreneurs, environmental educators, campers, scouts, berry pickers, hunters and summer cabin owners. The relationship between Finns and the forest may be related to the forest as environment, as a resource or a source of inspiration, experiences and knowledge. (Website of elävä Perintö)

The cosmetic industry is going green, with the Finnish nature providing a various amount of ingredients to be used in cosmetic formulations, such as sea buckthorns, berries, Nordic cotton, plant, and trees extracts. Lumene is the most beauty brand used by Finnish women, it is natural ingredients, and it is not tested on animals, that explains the interest of Finns in natural products. Owing to the climate in that country, Finns are known for skin sensitization, allergy, irritating and itching, that is why they stick to basic and simple natural cosmetics. (Website of Business Finland)

Frantsila is also one of the first Finnish enterprises in the natural cosmetics sector, 250 natural cosmetics and health care products have been developed at the Frantsila wild herb farm Hämeenkyrö. The success behind these products is that the plants are growing organically, without control substance. The clean Finnish soil helped Frantsila to have hundred different plants which are antioxidants. (Website of Slow Finland)

Those two brands are very famous in Finland and there are of course other brands who are trying either to produce a new line product of only natural ingredients or they are trying to innovate their old product in a sustainable and natural way.

6 METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research design

Research design is a master plan that specifies the methods that will be used to collect and analyze the information needed for a research project. It is a way to carry out a research and having a plan to conduct it. (Burns, Veeck, Bush & Bush, 2011, 92)

Research design is concentrating on descriptive research where the research problem is already formulated, and its goal is to know people's behavior, reaction, and opinion towards a new product in the Finnish market.

The data collection method used in this research is a questionnaire which was delivered in the form of a survey. The questions were based on research questions to help the author know how popular argan oil is in Finland, its market size, and the interest of people for a new natural cosmetic brand. The questionnaire contains closed ended questions and open-ended questions.

6.2 Research method

Quantitative research method is based on the collection of information from surveys, questionnaire or through votes, in order to prove a hypothesis or disapprove it by measuring and making analysis. It is looking at the variables, which explains that it is

looking about numbers and focusing on collecting numerical data and popularizing it across group of people or demonstrate a phenomenon. More asked question in the quantitative method start by does, how and what. (website of USCLibraries).

Quantitative research can include sophisticated statistical models that test complex relationships between various variables, or it can be considered as calculating people in an emergency room. (Remler & Ryzin 2011, 183).

Qualitative research is a research that involve language, images, and other forms of expression, it allows to study customer behaviors from different cultures and describes reality as experience by the respondents. Qualitative research uses number of methodological approaches based on different theoretical principles and aims towards the exploration of social relations (Remler & Ryzin 2011, 11).

In this research quantitative method was used in order to collect and analyze data represented numerically to build reliable and accurate measurements that allow the statistical analysis. Quantitative research is allowing to highlight trends across data sets or the study groups and helps to learn more about the demographics of the population. Quantitative research is chosen for this research because the results achieved from this method were logical, statistical, and unbiased. The lack of time, money and connections were the reasons behind choosing quantitative method, there was no time also to observe and interview people one by one, however, quantitative method was allowing the author to ask same question to all respondents and get different answers and opinions.

6.3 Population and sample

The population is considered as one of the largest encompassing structures, it is a group targeted for a study specified by the objectives of the research. The use of the word population differs from managers and researchers, managers are using it in a normal and general way, while the researchers should be very careful and describe

the population precisely, that means that they should indicate who the respondents of the questionnaire or survey will be. (Burns, Veeck & Bush 2017, 238.)

Census should be mentioned while talking about population. Census is defined as an accounting of the entire population. As an example, if we want to know about the gender, age of members of a population, we should ask about it while doing our survey questionnaire. Sometimes it is hard of course, especially if there is a big targeted market, it is not possible to have 100% control over them and that will cause to not obtain a census that provides information within the period of census taking. (Burns, Veeck & Bush 2017, 238.)

A sample is a small part of the population which symbolize a whole group, it indicates the selection of people or element from population sampling refers to the process of selecting people or elements from a population for implication in a research study. The first reason of doing sampling is the lack of time and the limited resources. By selecting a sample from a population that researchers are interested in Limited resources or time often make researchers do sampling, they select a sample from a population of interest, that facilitate for them to make conclusions and inferences about the population. Only a part of the population in contacted and the findings will be based on those persons which will be presenting the whole population, this is a way to estimate the proportions with different opinions of the whole population. (Remler & Ryzin 2011, 145.)

6.4 Questionnaire design

A questionnaire includes different questions that the researcher desired the respondents to answer.

A questionnaire serves different key roles, and it is used for the quality control, it translates the objectives of the research into questions that can be asked to the respondents and make the questions simple and sequent to make the participants motivated to answer. The questionnaire is also trying to get as much as answers or information the respondents can give by having many different questions with standard responds, it is also facilitating and accelerating the analysis and the

information are valid and reliable. A questionnaire is seen as a lasting record of a certain research and can be kept along the years. (Burns, Veeck & Bush 2017, 216.)

A well-designed questionnaire affects the quality of the data collected, the reason why we should give the questionnaire enough time and develop a good one.

To realize a survey the researcher should take in consideration different factors, like deciding what and how to measure the research, decide on wording and simplify the questions, follow chronological order of the questions and finally launching the survey. (Burns, Veeck & Bush 2017, 216.)

To create a market research questionnaire the author followed different factors which will help in conducting a good questionnaire. First a questionnaire included an introduction where the author tells who she is, why she is doing the research, for who's interest and what is the survey about. (Burns, Veeck & Bush 2017, 216.)

Secondly, developing the questions, which facilitate the selection of appropriate response formats. The questions should measure attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and demographics to get a reliable and valid responses. Thirdly, the order of the questions in the questionnaire. It starts by asking questions about demographics (age, gender), brand tracking, consumer behavior and finally industry insights. This explains that the questionnaire is starting from general questions to specific ones.

To keep the respondents motivated and answer all the questions with the same enthusiasm, the author designed a good questionnaire which includes the most recommended practices for designing a questionnaire. The questions were very simple, specific, and clear, the general questions precede the specific ones, complicated words are not used, and the response options are easy to answer. (Burns, Veeck & Bush 2017, 217).

The questionnaire was designed in a way to answer the research objective questions. It contains 16 simple questions which can be answered quickly and easily by the targeted people. The questionnaire was an effective way to measure the buying behavior, attitudes, opinions of people. The questionnaire contains closed questions and open questions, closed questions allow the respondent to provide information which can easily be converted into quantitative data and allowing statistical analysis

of the responses. Also, all respondents were asked the same exactly questions in the same order which make the results consistent. Open questions allow the respondents to express their own opinion in their own words in a detailed way, this allowed the author to gather more in-depth answers. One problem of the questionnaire is that the possibility to know if the respondents took their time and focused on the questionnaire to answer in a appropriate way, so the author was not able to know if the answers were very reliable and trustful, but since this questionnaire has no relation with sensitive topics, the author believed that the respondents answered honestly and spontaneously.

Before analysis of the data the author did some important preliminary work in order to get beneficial analysis. She verified will the collected data and checked the respondent's answers and missing information. If there was no possibility to analyze some data, they were be rejected. And other data were organized in a way that simplifies the analysis.

6.5 Data collection and analysis

The most important when conducting a research is the data collection stage. Research questions cannot be answered, consumer needs cannot be met, and the business or the research cannot benefit from relevant findings without data. Data collection include primary data and secondary data.

Primary data are data originated by a researcher for the specific purpose of addressing the problem at hand. They are individually tailored for the decision makers of organizations that pay for well-focused and exclusive support. (Malhotra, Birks & Wills 2013, 61). Primary data is the data you collect yourself through surveys or interviews.

Secondary data are data that have already been collected for purposes other than the problem at hand. They are easy to be collected and not expensive. (Malhotra, Birks

& Wills 2013, p 61). Secondary data are collected from studies, for example while searching for information on the internet about certain subject and finding many other people who did a research on the same subject, using the findings in the research paper to feed into a written report, the monitored and evaluated report, then the collected data is secondary data because it is another person's work, and it does not belong to the person who is doing the research.

Good business decisions depend on trustworthy empirical analyses, the use of statistical and spreadsheet software makes analyzing data efficient. After collecting the data, analysis part comes up which help to draw a conclusion from the collected data. The goal from analyzing the data is to find meaning in data so that the derived knowledge can be used to make informed decisions. (Hyman & Sierra 2010, 33.)

In order to fulfill the requirement of this research the author combined the use of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was collected from the survey which was sent to more than 100 respondents and the expected answers were 50 valid responses. The survey was shared on Facebook groups with people interested in natural products, with barber shops and beauty salons, and stores that sells natural products. Those people were chosen because of their interest in natural product, and the nature of their work which is related to natural product somehow. The targeted people were persons aged 18 to 60 years old that were originally from Finland and also other nationalities who are living in Finland. There was a possibility to get some help from author's friend to share the questionnaire and get more responses. Reliable electronic sources were used as a secondary data to provide the research with critical reading and information needed for analysis.

This research was conducted by using an online questionnaire in a form of a survey, it is called 'surveyhero' which was easy to use and simplify the collection of the responses. The survey was shared in a form of a link and the target audience was reached by email, posts on Facebook and other social media platforms. The participants answered the questionnaire easily by using their desktop computers, tablets or smartphones. Surveyhero facilitated the analyze of the participants' responses by creating automatic diagrams and summaries.

6.6 Reliability and validity

It is always important for a researcher to make sure that the measures are valid and reliable. In order to know that the measures are effective, it is necessary to value their validity, reliability, generalizability, and sensitivity. Those measures are responsible about evaluation of all qualities through objective or subjective means. To identify the perfect course of action, it is important to get the best answers for the questions. Reliability and validity are the two characteristics that are considered as appropriate measures. (Hyman & Sierra 2010, 120.)

Reliability refers to how precise the method used to measure specific thing is. Applying the same scale various times and getting the same results every time that is reliability, it is said that the measure is consistent and trustful. Validity is a tool that measures what it is supposed to measure. For example, a measure of compassion, is it really measuring compassion and not measuring empathy instead as a different construct. (website of ER services)

Reliability is important because if the people who interpret the test cannot agree on the interpretation, the test result will be useless. Reliability gives an approximation of how consistent scores on an instrument are across time. Validity is more theoretical notion; marketers try to determinate whether the measure is measuring what it is supposed to measure which means that they are trying to define the ability of a scale to measure the construct of the intentional market. Hitting the target is validity, and in our research the target would be a construct that we are interested in operationally defining. (Hyman & Sierra 2010, 121-122.)

7 RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this chapter the author represented the research findings and the research analysis based on the collected answers of the questionnaire survey. The questionnaire included 16 questions, which were open ended questions, close ended questions and multiple-

choice questions. The questionnaire was shared on Facebook pages, sent by email to stores that sell natural cosmetic products, barber shops and beauty salons and sent to the authors' friends. The questionnaire received 60 responses which was more than the expected number of answers.

The first three questions were demographic questions, where the author asked about the gender of the respondent, the age and the area where the respondent is living. As it is seen from Appendix 1, the first question was about the gender of the respondents. The author recorded that people who answered more to the survey were women which took up 81.67% and the left 18.33% were men. In the questionnaire survey there were five age categories, the first category included participants aged 18-24, they were almost half of the people who answered the survey, their percentage was 40%. The second category was participants aged 25-34, they represented 31.67%. The third category included participants aged 35-44, and they symbolized 21.67% of the responses. The fourth category which was respondents aged 45-54 and the fifth category with the age of 55 years old or above had the lowest percentage 3.33%, for each category.

In order to have more information about which area the targeted people are living in the author included some areas of Finland, the main areas that the author is interested in are Satakunta area and Uusima area. The author is studying and living in Satakunta region, and she has lived in Uusima region as well for a period of time. That made her know more people living in these areas but because the survey was shared on Facebook group and sent to friends, that explains that there are other people living in other areas than the ones the author is focusing on more. The proportion of the respondents living in Uusima region was the same proportion of respondents living in Satakunta region, it accounted for 35%. Respondents living in other areas were 23.33% while respondents living in Lapland and Northern Ostrobothnia had very low percentage.

In order to know in which way, the respondent has a connection to the subject, the author included in question number 4 three choices from where the respondent can choose what category he belongs to. The three categories were consumer, business professional like barber shops and beauty salons and natural products store. Up to 90%

of the responses were from consumers, barber shops and beauty salons represent 8.33% of the answers and about almost 2% were from natural products stores

5- How familiar are you with natural cosmetic products?

Number of responses: 60

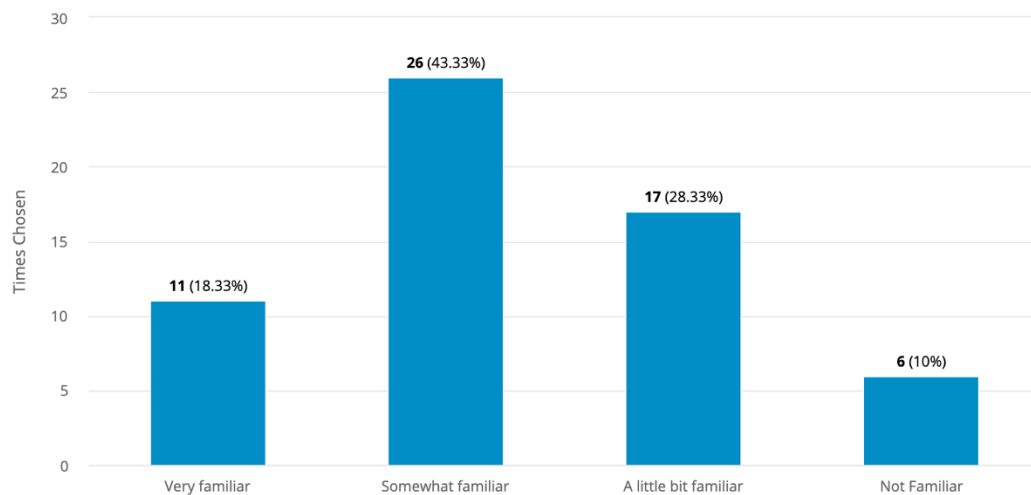


Figure 5. Question 5: How familiar are you with natural cosmetic products?

In order to know how familiar, the consumer is with natural cosmetic products, question number 5 includes rating scale from which the consumer can choose. Almost half of the respondents were somewhat familiar with natural cosmetic products, 28,33% were a little bit familiar and 18,3% were very familiar with natural cosmetic products, the last 10% were not familiar with natural cosmetic products. About 90% of the respondents were somehow familiar with natural cosmetic product which was a good sign for the coming questions. By having respondents who are familiar with natural cosmetic product, it is then easy to get some significant answers and can analyze well when having different answers.

Question 6 and 7 were about how often the respondents buy natural cosmetic product from local brands and from international brands. The author wanted to know if the consumer is buying natural cosmetic products from local brands or if he is purchasing from other international brands also. The author made two different questions where the respondents can choose from which brands they bought more.

6- How often do you buy natural cosmetic product from local brands?

Number of responses: 60

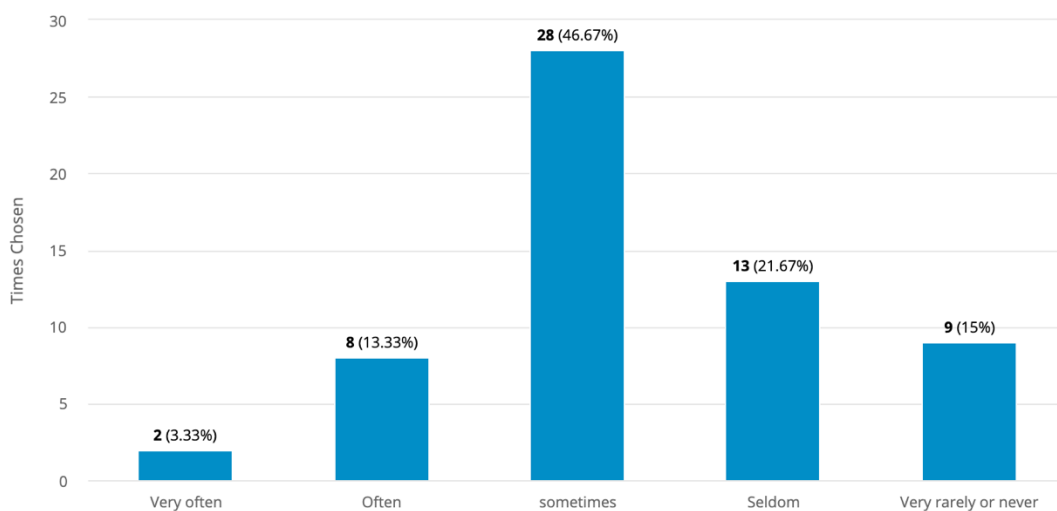


Figure 6. Question 6: How often do you buy natural cosmetic product from local brands?

The chart illustrates the percentage of people who buy natural cosmetic products from local brand. About 46,67% sometimes buy from local brands only sometimes, people who buy very often from the local brands are only 3,33%. 21,67% seldom buy natural cometic product from local brand and up to 13,33% often buy from local brand. The respondents who selected very rarely or were 15%.

7- How often do you buy natural cosmetic product from International brands?

Number of responses: 59

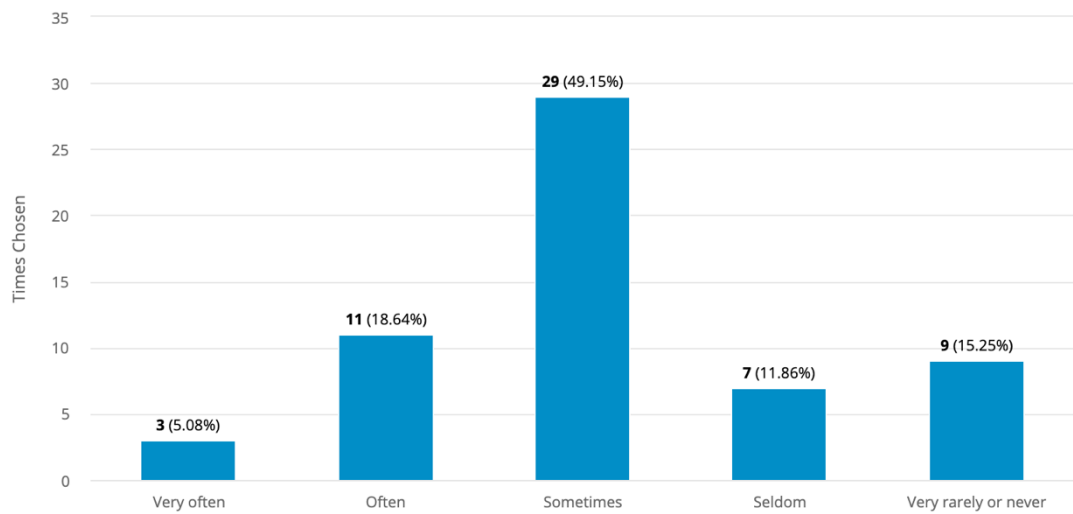


Figure 7. Question 7: How often do you buy natural cosmetic product from International brands?

As the graph shows 49,15% of people sometimes buy from international brands, 18,64% were consumers who often buy from international brands. A low percentage was for consumers who buys very often, and it is up to 5,08%, 11,86% seldom buy and 15,25% very rarely or never buy from International brands. From Figure 5 and 6 it is clear that the results were converging, the results were almost the same except for respondents who answered seldom there was a difference of almost 10%, people who seldom buy from local brands and they were more than people who seldom buy from the international brands. Those answers are explaining how Finnish consumers gave the opportunity to all kind of brands, it does not matter if it is a local brand or international brand. The important for Finnish people is what benefits the products of e certain brand have on their health and wellbeing. Making each question alone and a possibility for respondent to choose gives a detailed results and explains that one person can buy from local brands and also from international brands.

8- When buying a natural cosmetic product, do you make decision at the time of purchase or beforehand?

Number of responses: 59

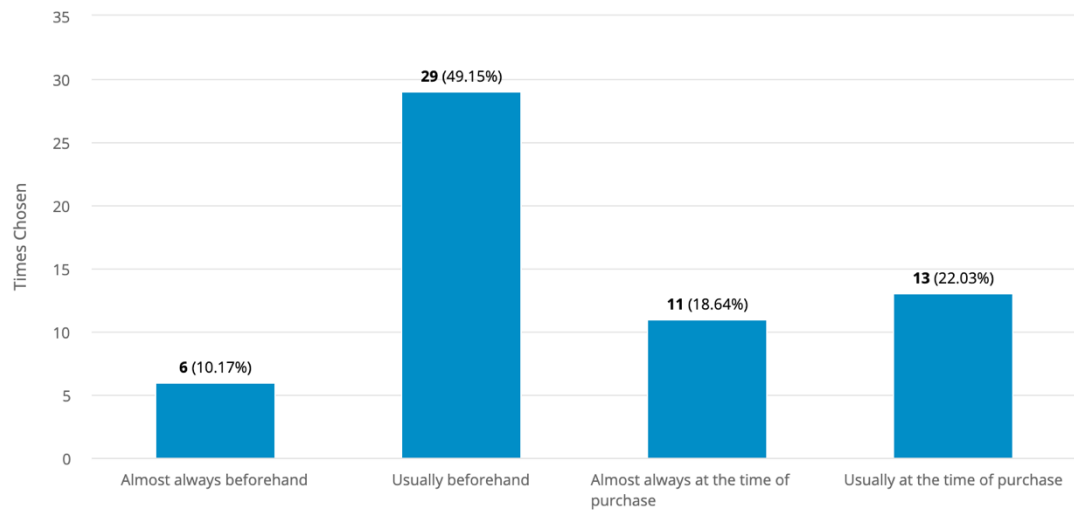


Figure 8. Question 8: When buying a natural cosmetic product, do you make decision at the time of purchase or beforehand?

The chart illustrates the buyer decision before buying a natural cosmetic product, half of the respondents usually make decision beforehand. The respondents can only choose one answer from the multiple choices. 22,03% selected usually at the time of purchase, 18,64% answered almost always at the time of purchase and the left 10,17% answered almost always beforehand. This question was a link to the theory part where the author was explaining the stimulus-response of the buyer behavior and how does it work. The consumer behavior is based on his background and affected by the environment also which includes the marketing mix of the product (product, price, place and promotion). Respondents who answered usually beforehand were the people who look for information about the product before buying it and, know its benefits, watch some review videos and make decision before going to shop and purchase it.

9-How important is the opinion of your friends and family on your purchase of a product?

Number of responses: 60

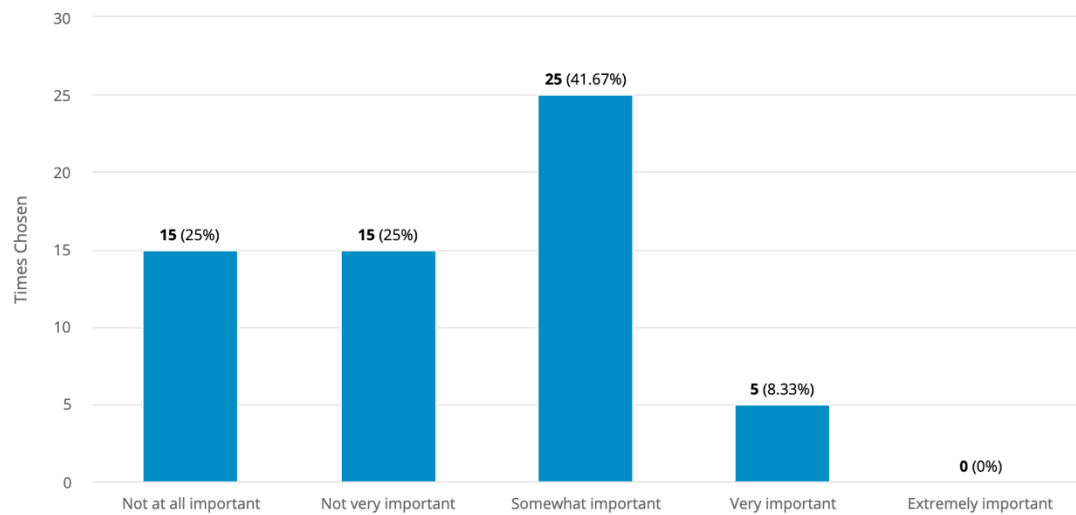


Figure 9. Question 9: How important is the opinion of your friends and family on your purchase of a product?

The answers to this question help the author understand the characteristic that affects consumer behavior, this question was asking more precisely about the social factors. The participant can choose the importance of the opinion of their friends and family. Is it important or not important, 41,67% of participants answered that it is somewhat important for them, participants who answered not at all important and not very important had the same percentage which is 25%. 8,33% answered very important, a low proportion but still important to know it, those respondents can have a very big influence on them, and they consider them very important and follow what they buy also. No one of the respondents voted on extremely important.

The graph shows some significant results, respondents who answered not at all important and not very important have the same percentage, those people need to be convinced to buy the product, not by their friends or family but by the marketer itself, because the Finnish consumer is autonomous in his choices and he is ready to buy what he wants and trust his choice. The product should be advertised, and the marketer should always include creativity and innovation in order to get more customers.

10- When it concerns natural cosmetic product, which of the following factors matter for you?

Number of responses: 60

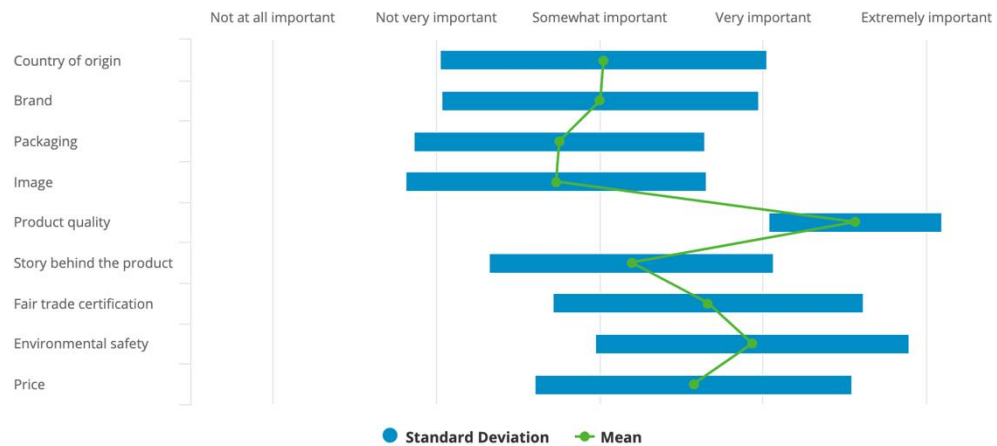


Figure 10. Question 10: When it concerns natural cosmetic product, which of the following factors matter for you?

The graph above illustrates the results of the factors that matter the most for the consumer in a product. This refers to the theory part where the author explained the factors that Finnish consumers take into consideration while buying a product. It is clear that all respondents answered that the product quality is classified as a very important factor to extremely important, followed by that factor the environmental safety which was voted as a very important factor. Fairtrade certification and the price were somewhat important to very important. The story behind the product wasn't very important for some participants but very important for others that explains that it is somewhat important factor. The image of the product and the packaging was not very important to somewhat important that explains that it is just a plus if the owner of the product spends more time in creating nice packaging and image. Country of origin and the brand of the product were between not every important factor to very important that make these two factors somewhat important for all the respondents of the survey.

The author asked the respondents to write in the empty box below question 10 some more factors they have in mind that they want to share and matter for them. Adding to the 9 factors the author included in the question, 9 participants added some other important factors that they take into consideration when buying a natural cosmetic

product which includes animal testing free, safe for health and have no harm on the allergic skin, the origin of the ingredients in order to support the production chain behind the business, being careful with products that contain some ingredients that are harmful to the environment, checking how many percent the product is natural (100% natural product or with some chemical additives).

11- Have you heard of Argan oil before?

Number of responses: 60

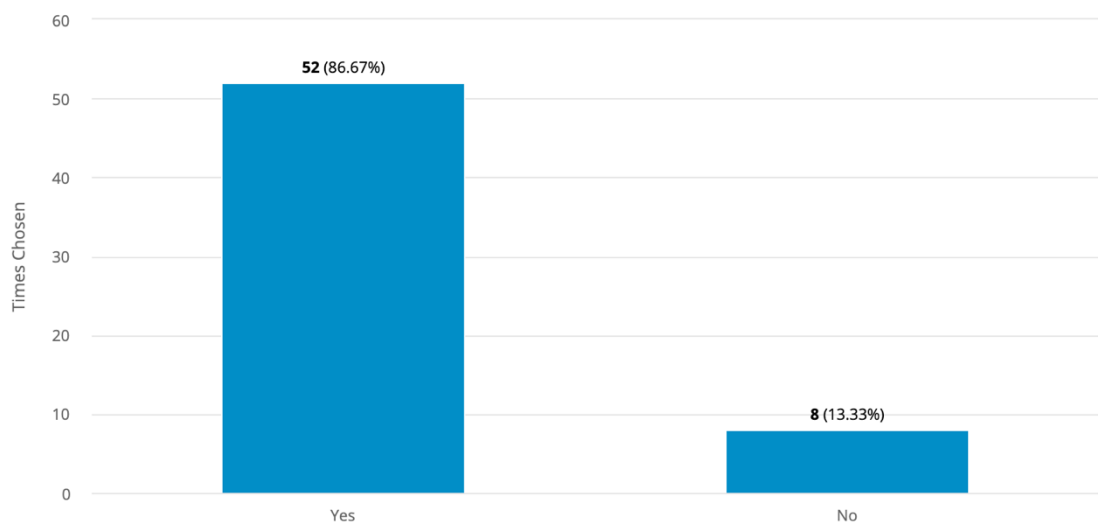


Figure 11. Question 11: Have you heard of Argan oil before?

The author mentioned in the theory part that she is interested in a specific cosmetic natural product which is Moroccan Argan oil. The last 6 questions of the questionnaire were about the perception of Finnish consumers and people living in Finland towards Argan oil. Question 11 is a close-ended question which can be answered by simple “yes” or “no”. 86,67% answered “yes” and they are the majority of the participants while 13,33% answered “no”, those persons have never heard of Argan oil and this might be their first chance to hear about it.

12- Have you used before any product that contains Argan oil?

Number of responses: 60

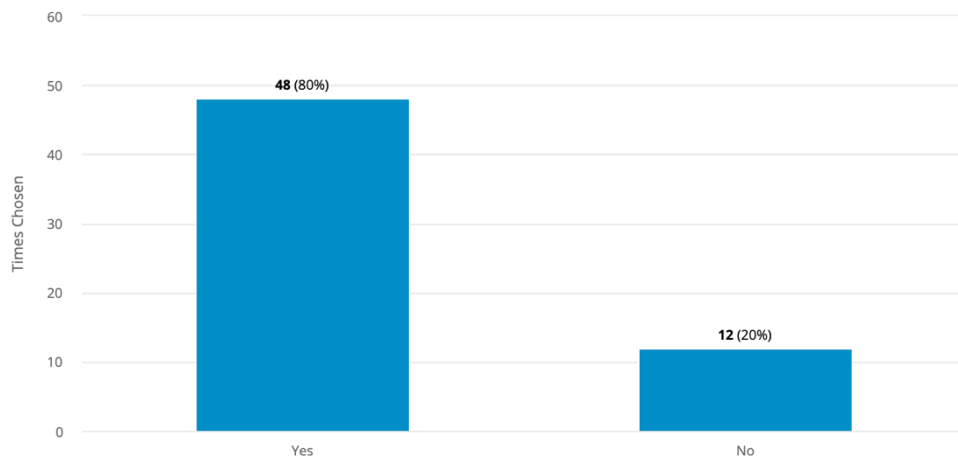


Figure 12. Question 12: Have you used before any product that contains Argan oil?

From question 12, it is clear that the participants who answered “no” were 20%, the same persons who have never used Argan oil before but also 6,67% answered “no” and those heard about Argan oil before but did not have the chance to test it or use a product that contains Argan oil. 80% of the respondents used a product that contains Argan oil before and that is more than half of people.

13- If your answer is "YES" for question 12, can you choose what type of product did you use?

Number of responses: 51

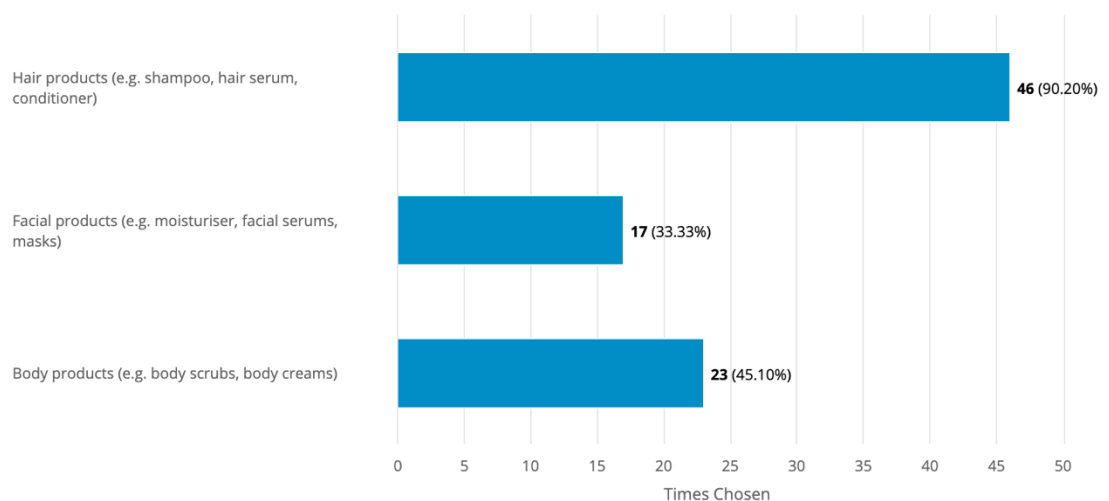


Figure 13. Question 13: If your answer is “yes” for question 12, can you choose what type of product did you use?

In order to know what kind of products the respondents are familiar with, the author included some of the most important products that a human being can use daily and contains Argan oil. The graph clarifies the product type that the respondents used before and contains Argan oil. Most of them voted on Hair products which include shampoos, hair serums, and conditioners, after that comes body products like body scrubs and body creams. The last one used were facial products like moisturizers, facial serums, and mask. The answers the author got were more than people who answered the survey that explains that one person can select multiple choices, and if he used all products, he could also vote for all of them.

Question 14 asked the respondents who used some products that contain Argan oil to give their opinion about it. The idea was to know the effect of the product on their hair, face and body. Either positives or negatives of the product, that make them express their opinion and allow the author to know what people like more and what results they have seen. The author wanted to know more about the perception of the consumers about products that contains Argan oil, and if new product will be available in Finland what it should be focused on more. The comments were almost all positives, the respondents were very happy with the results and some suggested to add more percentage of argan oil in a product because of its excellent results and moisturizing effect.

15- Are you ready to try a new natural cosmetic product that contains Argan oil if it is available in Finland?

Number of responses: 60

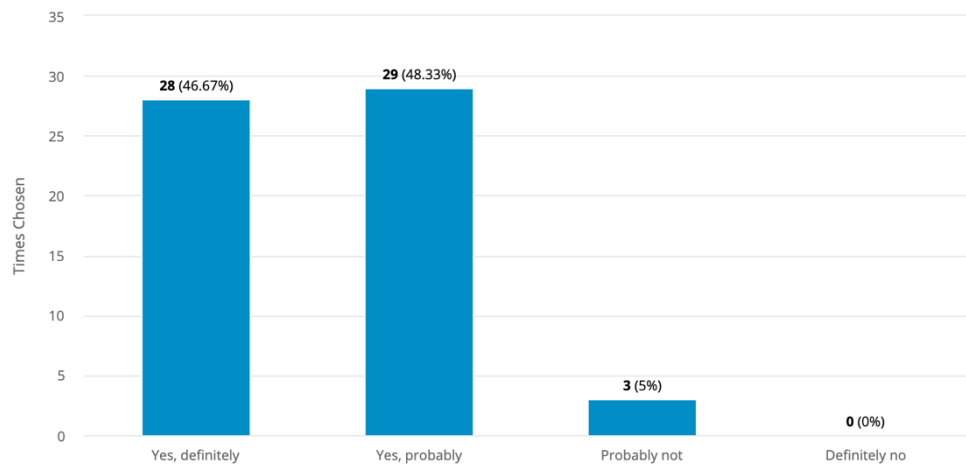


Figure 14. Question 15: Are you ready to try a new natural cosmetic product that contains Argan oil if it is available in Finland?

Figure 14 shows how many respondents will try a new natural cosmetic product that contains Argan oil if it is available in Finland. 46,67% answered yes definitely, 46,77% answered yes probably and 5 % answered probably not but no one answered definitely no. Most people are ready to try it and the rest 5% might change their minds someday if they came across the product. The majority is interested and wants to try and that matters the most.

16-How willing are you to switch your current skincare routine to a new skincare routine based on Argan oil and 100% natural?

Number of responses: 54

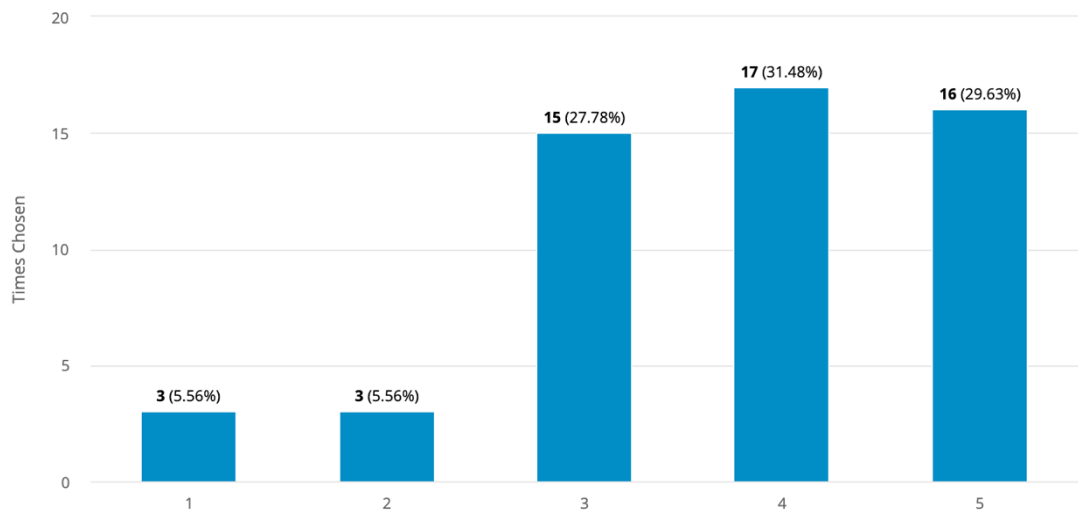


Figure 15. Question 16: How willing are you to switch your current skincare to new skincare routine based on Argan oil and 100% Natural?

Question 16 was the last question of the questionnaire survey, the author used rating scale for that questions, she included 5 stars and the more stars the respondents choose the more willing he or she is to switch their current skincare to new skincare routine based on Argan oil and 100% natural. 31,48% chose 4 stars, 29,63% chose 5 stars and there is not a big difference between those two categories who voted 4 and 5 stars. Up to 27,78% selected 3 stars which is a good rank. The percentage of people who selected one star and two stars was the same 5,56%.

8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was carried out with the aim of facilitating the relationship between the producers of natural cosmetic products based on argan oil and the Finnish consumers.

Argan oil is very rich oil and very beneficial for health and for general well-being and in addition, it is oil which requires a lot of work in its extraction. Despite everything, its marketing is a big challenge especially in countries which are not familiar with it either in cooking or in beauty. Finnish consumer is one of the most recent targets of argan oil and products derived from it.

The objective of this thesis was to study Finnish consumer behavior towards natural cosmetic products in general and towards Argan oil cosmetic products in particular. Then to achieve this goal, questions were asked directly to the Finnish consumer. A questionnaire of 16 simple questions has been sent to a group of persons via E-mails, Facebook, and WhatsApp.

This chapter is a summary of the research finding from the theoretical part and empirical part. This part is helped the author to get some answers to the research objectives. The finding allowed her to understand the characteristics that affect Finnish consumer behavior, the factors that influence them and the perception of Finns towards cosmetic natural product and to know their interest in Moroccan Argan oil. The questionnaire emphasized the theoretical part. This means that all the answers the author got from the survey were supporting the research questions.

The majority of interrogated persons were women representing 81.67% against 18.33% of men. Half of them were very young aged 18-24, followed by 31.67% aged 25-34. 21.67% of the middle-aged person and just 3.33% of mature persons.

The participants to this questionnaire were geographically situated in the region of the southwest of Finland; 35% in Uusima and 23.3% in the Satakunta region and just a few persons in Lapland and Northern Ostrobothnia in the west region.

The majority of the interrogated people were already quite close to the field of beauty and cosmetics as barbershops and beauty salons, clients, and natural beauty products sellers and consumers. In fact, this category is in addition to being knowledgeable in the field and in people's tastes, it has a great influence on the general public in terms of beauty.

From figure 5, it was clear that Finnish people were familiar with natural cosmetic products. The question was about how familiar Finns are with natural cosmetic products. Most of them answered that they are somewhat familiar and that explains their relationship with the nature, only few people answered that they are not familiar with natural cosmetic product, those people maybe are not even using cosmetics in their daily life or they never tried some cosmetic natural product.

Figure 6 and 7 were asking the respondents either if they buy natural cosmetic products from the local brands or international brands. The two graphs are visibly showing that almost half of people buy sometimes from local brands, and approximately same results for people who buy from international brands. This explains that Finnish people are giving chances to different brands, it does not matter if it is local or international, the important is that they get convinced and like the product.

In order to know consumer buying behavior, figure 8 is showing how Finnish consumers make decision while buying a natural cosmetic product. The question was asking Finns if they either make decision at the time of purchase or beforehand. This was facilitating for the author and persons who would be interested about this research topic to know what they should focus on and what to study more while selling a cosmetic natural product in Finland or starting a green business. The results of this answer were showing that half of people are usually deciding beforehand, they do research about the product and check which product suits them more, also advertisement is playing a big role in promoting any product. They can make the decision then at home before purchasing, this links us to question 9 in figure 8 where the author asked the respondents on how important the opinion of their friends and family is while purchasing a product. Almost half on the respondents answered that the opinion of their friends and family is somewhat important and low percent of people were strongly influenced by their family and friends which makes them affected by the social factors.

The respondents were asked about what factors matter for them more when buying a natural cosmetic product (figure 10). The quality was the most factor that the respondents focused, as the author mentioned before in the theory part that Finns priority in a product is the quality. The findings showed that environmental safety was the second

factor that Finnish people care more about than the fair-trade certification and the price. Most Finns have high personal income that explains why price is not selected as a principal factor. Last ranked matters were the image and the packaging, country of origin and the brand, in contrary with the theory where it is pointed that the second important factors in a product was the country of origin and the brand image. Without forgetting that consumer behavior involves exchanges which explains not having 100% identical results with the theoretical part.

Figure 11 was representing the cognition of Finnish people for Argan oil. This question was answering one of the research objectives questions. The results were surprising because the majority have heard about Argan oil and they have been using it in some products. Many products in the market contain Argan oil as one of their main ingredients. The market is growing, and many people are always looking for innovating their products and supplying them with rich natural elements. The more used products which contains Argan oil were hair products, followed by body products and then facial products. More than half of the respondents gave their honest opinion about those products that they used and some of them used pure Argan oil. Most comments were positive, and the respondents have seen good results, especially on their hair. They described products that contain Argan oil as savior, the oil helped them to solve their hair loss problem, moisturize and hydrate damaged hair, made it shiny and soft.

Figure 14 and 15 were an answer to “would Finnish people be interested in buying Moroccan Argan oil?” in an indirect way. All respondents were ready to try new natural cosmetic product that contains Argan oil if it is available in Finland, a small percentage was not sure about it, but this does not make noticeable changes in the results. Many respondents were ready to switch their entire skincare routine to a new skincare routine based on Argan oil and 100% Natural, that explains that they are ready to buy new natural cosmetic product. The selection of three stars in the answer is considered as good sign for the author as the one doing this research the higher rank was 5 and rank 4 was given by most respondents as well.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this thesis was about the study of consumer perception towards natural cosmetic products and especially Moroccan Argan oil. This thesis is giving worthy information, it is facilitating for the reader or persons who will use this research as one of their sources to understand Finnish consumer behavior more. Business owners who want to invest in natural cosmetic products could focus more on the quality, sustainability and fair-trade certification of the products since those are the most qualified factors by Finnish respondents. Some groups already have an idea about the Moroccan Argan oil products but increasing the awareness would be beneficial. Focusing on advertising and campaigns would help to target a bigger audience and consumers.

Nowadays social media platforms are highly influenced by beauty influencers such as beauty bloggers and vloggers. Finnish beauty vloggers have thousands of subscribers which make them impact on the audience and make them trust them more. Those can in the future have a partnership with interested people who wants to start a green business in Finland concentrated on Moroccan argan oil products.

After the good results from the research findings, maybe the market entry should be the next step for interested entrepreneurs or companies where they can plan how to import the Moroccan Argan oil and sell it in Finland or use it as the main ingredient of a certain Finnish or international product with high-rate percentage. Especially because the Finnish market is encouraging investment in the green business and that is considered as a very good chance.

10 FINAL WORDS

This thesis was very beneficial for the author, she gained a lot of knowledge while writing it, she came across different books with rich information which will help her in her future studies and career as well. This market research was an opportunity for her to conduct a survey for the first time and getting familiar with the website used for analysis. Making a questionnaire was very challenging since it must be simple and

clear in order to get answers to all the questions. Also, it should be supporting the research objectives which was an important goal for this research.

It is normal that the author faced many obstacles while doing this research. An example of that is the lack of information on the English websites, only little sources were available for this theme. In addition to that, time, which was a very important factor and having a tight time for market research was not easy, not knowing how long will take to get the answers back from the respondents was stressful.

A good point of this research is that the author learned widely about the natural cosmetic products in Finland, the factors and attributes that Finns evaluate, and what effect on them the most in their everyday life. The author gained some communication skills while trying to reach people in order to get responses to the questionnaire, which was a big plus for her.

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APPENDIX

Dear all,

I am Hanane Abouabassi, a third-year student of International business in Satakunta University of Applied sciences.

I am interested in natural cosmetic products and especially cosmetic Argan oil which is produced in traditional way and 100% natural. By answering the questionnaire, you will help me find out if new products that contains Argan oil are available in Finland in the future would you be interested in buying them and using them or not. Answering the survey will only take 5 to 10 minutes, I really appreciate your input!

1- What is your gender?

Male

Female

2- Which category below includes your age?

15 - 24 years old

25 - 34 years old

35 - 44 years old

45 - 54 years old

55 years old or above

3- In which region of Finland are you living ?

Uusimaa ▼

4- Are you answering to this survey as a consumer or as a business professional e.g. barber shop, beauty salon, natural products store?

Consumer

Barber shop/ Beauty salon

Natural products store

5- How familiar are you with natural cosmetic products?

Very familiar

Somewhat familiar

A little bit familiar

Not Familiar

6- How often do you buy natural cosmetic product from local brands?

Very often

Often

sometimes

Seldom

Very rarely or never

7- How often do you buy natural cosmetic product from International brands?

Very often

Often

Sometimes

Seldom

Very rarely or never

8- When buying a natural cosmetic product, do you make decision at the time of purchase or beforehand?

Almost always beforehand

Usually beforehand

Almost always at the time of purchase

Usually at the time of purchase

9-How important is the opinion of your friends and family on your purchase of a product?

Not at all important

Not very important

Somewhat important

Very important

Extremely important

10- When it concerns natural cosmetic product, which of the following factors matter for you?

Type some text...

	Not at all important	Not very important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Country of origin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Packaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Story behind the product	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fair trade certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Price	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If something else matters to you in a natural cosmetic product please write it in the box below

11- Have you heard of Argan oil before?

Yes

No

12- Have you used before any product that contains Argan oil?

Yes

No

13- If your answer is "YES" for question 12, can you choose what type of product did you use?

You can select multiple options.

Hair products (e.g. shampoo, hair serum, conditioner)

Facial products (e.g. moisturiser, facial serums, masks)

Body products (e.g. body scrubs, body creams)

14- Tell us about the positives / negatives of the product you chose in question 13

15- Are you ready to try a new natural cosmetic product that contains Argan oil if it is available in Finland?

Yes, definitely

Yes, probably

Probably not

Definitely no

16-How willing are you to switch your current skincare routine to a new skincare routine based on Argan oil and 100% natural?

The more stars you choose the more willing you will be

