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ANALYSIS OF VIETNAMESE
CUSTOMERS' PURCHASING
JOURNEY FOR A SUCESSFUL
MARKET PENETRATION OF NEW
COFFEE PRODUCT

Case BOSS coffee



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**UNDERSTANDING VIETNAMESE CUSTOMERS' PURCHASING JOURNEY
REGARDING COFFEE PRODUCT**

- Boss coffee case

The coffee industry is seen as one of the most competitive market in Vietnam. There are a lot of big players both local and international which are available since the early 2000s. However, there are still room for new players to enter. This research is providing practical information on what are key concerns should be focused regarding the marketing plan by analysing customer purchasing journey for both local and international companies which have intention to entry this market with a new coffee product.

Qualitative research is used as main methodology to explore how customers think and see coffee product in their needs, what kind of elements they concern when making purchase. The interview found that brand image and point of purchase display take an important influence on customers' decisions.

Taking Boss coffee as a case for this research, the author is giving practical recommendations for the company based on what has been studied before. So, the readers can have a closer look at how the findings can be applied into real company case.

KEYWORDS:

Ready to Drink (RTD) Coffee, Beverages, Usage and Attitude Exploration, Purchasing

Journey, influencing factors, Differentiation Factors

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ABBREVIATION

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
FMCG	Fast-Moving Consumer Goods
TUAS	Turku University of Applied Sciences
RTB	Reason to Believe
FGI	Focus Group Interview
U&A	Usage & Attitude
POSM	Point of Sales Material
RTD	Ready to Drink

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INTRODUCTION

Vietnam is the most attractive market for foreign investors because of significant increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). In 2016, the annual GDP growth rate was recorded at 6,2% and it was estimated to reach \$295,4 billion in 2020. The beverage industry in Vietnam with 6% annual growth rate is currently the fastest developing industry and the consumption is expected to reach 109 billion liters in 2020 (EVBN, 2018). Thus, this industry is seen as the most potential for a lot of local and foreigner businesses which have the attention to expand their business into Asian market.

Coffee revenue value reach the value of \$4,920 million in 2018 and is expected to increase to \$7,654 million in 2023 (Statista, 2019). Instant coffee takes an account of 14% in total and annual growth rate is predicted to increase 160% in 2023. Years ago, the market was mainly controlled by three key players – Vinacafe Bien Hoa, Nestle and Trung Nguyen. Since 2018, there are more strong competitors to join in this race. For instant TNI Corporation with King Coffee, Ajinomoto with Birdy (Vietnam Insider, 2018). Recently, Highlands – the most successful Vietnamese coffee chain (Thi Ha, 2018) joined this industry by announcing canned coffee products with 2 lines – black and milk coffee. The company recognized positive welcome by its consumers. Other giants such as Coca-cola and PepsiCo also kick start this market with canned coffee products even though this category is seen as niche compared to others (VIR, 2018).

The instant coffee industry is changing with a lot of players joining in, and it makes this market more active and developing. A lot of changes in marketing styles happen as a result of the innovation in this beverage industry (Hayden, 2018). Thus, the marketers should understand strongly the market, consumer behaviour, competitors etc., to support them designing the most effective marketing strategy in this market.

1.1 Company case

Suntory Group was founded in 1899, is among the world's leading consumer products companies. The company provide uniquely diverse beverage product portfolio from alcohol such as *Yamazaki and Hibiki whisky, The Premium Malt's beer* to non-alcohol products for instant *Ribena, TEA plus, Boss coffee* and *Suntory Tennensui water* (Suntory, 2019). From a family-owned company, Suntory has grown into a multi-national business with 299 group companies in Europe, Japan, The Americas, Asia and Oceania.

In Japan, Boss Coffee is seen as the most famous canned coffee product. In 2018, over 100 million cans were sold in Japan, makes Boss Coffee Japan's third best-selling beverage (NewYork PRWeb, 2019). Recognizing the potential in Vietnamese market, the company is planning to bring Boss Coffee as the key product to compete with other local and international competitors. Thus, Suntory needs information to create the most effective market plan to successfully introduce Boss Coffee to Vietnamese consumers. This thesis is focusing on influencing factors that Suntory should consider when making decision in marketing Boss coffee.

1.2 Motivation

The researcher has passion in marketing, especially in Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry. With the career path orientation after graduation of working in Marketing department of top multinational FMCG companies, acquiring and understanding more information and knowledge in beverage industry will impressively benefit the researcher in improving both theoretical and practical background. This will be the first step to gain marketing experience and to look back what the researcher has learnt from TUAS through course lessons and real projects.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research is aiming to help Suntory company in effectively marketing Boss coffee in Vietnam by exploring Vietnamese coffee drinkers' behaviours. The result of this research will be the rock-base for Marketing team to design appropriate marketing strategy once Boss coffee enters Vietnamese market.

Below questions will be answered to support delivering most practical results:

- What factors lead to consumers' demand?
- What influencing factors in consumer purchasing journey?
- What factors can differentiate a new international coffee brand in Vietnamese market?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Marketing Definition

Marketing is the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011). It's a process by which companies create value for customers, build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return. Understanding target customers, the business can use marketing as an activity to identify their unfulfilled needs and desires. Marketing can quantify the size of the identified market and the profit potential (B. Neeraja, Arti Chandani's, & Mita, 2013). It pinpoints which segments the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services.

2.2 Customer-driven Marketing Strategy

Nowadays, companies are aware certainly that they cannot serve all buyers in the marketplace. As the matter of fact, the company has a wide product lines to serve many target groups. Thus, the company should focus on identifying a *market segment* in which they can create the best and most profitable relationship (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011). From mass marketing, the company step by step moves to customer-driven marketing strategy to provide the right solution for the right customers. There are 4 processes in defining the most appropriate strategy: Market Segmentation, Market Targeting, Differentiation and Positioning.

2.2.1 Market Segmentation

Consumers in market differ themselves by their wants, resources, locations, buying attitudes and buying practices (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011). There are 4 types which will

be listed to have wider view on which way we can segment the market. Firstly, demographic segmentation has variables as age, gender, family size, income, occupation, religion, race and nationality. Secondly listed name is behavioural segmentation which encompasses customers' behaviours, usage and decision making. Psychographic segmentation divides the audience on the basis of their personality, lifestyle and attitude (Hitesh, 2018). This segmentation process works on a premise that consumer buying behaviour can be influenced by his personality and lifestyle (Arieez, 2019). Lastly, geography segmentation divides the market based on the units of geography – such as location, languages used and other such basic elements which specify one geography from the other (Hitesh, 2018).

With beverages industry, an interesting finding stated that Vietnamese consumers prefer to go out in groups. Even with beer, coffee shop or any eateries, those places are set with the tone for group gathering. Very few coffee shops noticed a massive number of single coffee goers (Hao, 2017). The coffee shop and chain pie are taken care by a lot of key players as listed below Starbucks, Highlands, Trung Nguyen etc. Thus, based on the behavioural segmentation definition, there is a space that coffee brand can tap into the moments where coffee drinkers can drink coffee alone at their most convenience.

2.2.2 Market Targeting

This step helps the company to target the best market segments. Firstly, the company assesses each segment's size and growth characteristics, structural attractiveness, and compatibility with its objectives and re- sources. It then chooses one of four market-targeting strategies— ranging from very broad to very narrow targeting. The seller can ignore segment differences and target broadly using undifferentiated (or mass) marketing. This involves mass producing, mass distributing, and mass promoting about the same product in about the same way to all consumers. Or the seller can adopt differentiated marketing—developing different market offers for several segments. Concentrated marketing (or niche marketing) involves focusing on one or a few market

segments only. Finally, micromarketing is the practice of tailoring products and marketing programs to suit the tastes of specific individuals and locations. Micromarketing includes local marketing and individual marketing. Which targeting strategy is best depends on company resources, product variability, the PLC stage, market variability, and competitive marketing strategies.

2.2.3 Differentiation & Positioning

Once a specific segment is chosen to be targeted, the company must work on how to create a differentiation strategy to provide market offers for the customers in that segment (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011). A differentiation strategy required the firm to create a product or a service, which is considered unique in some aspect that the customer values because the customer's needs are satisfied (Levitt, 1980). In the marketplace, differentiation can be experienced everywhere, from the producer, marketer, merchandiser to supplier. They are putting effort in making a different offer to distinguish themselves on the market. The process of making differentiation, arranging for a product to occupy a clear, distinctive, and desirable place relative to competing products in the minds of target consumers is called positioning (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011). In positioning strategy, perceptual mapping is a common way for any businesses to understand and develop their products or services by visualising the relations of two or more attributes (Gower, Groenen, Velden, & Vines, 2010). By understanding respondents' perceptions, a visual graph was created based on those understandings to help the businesses in defining which position should they aim to.

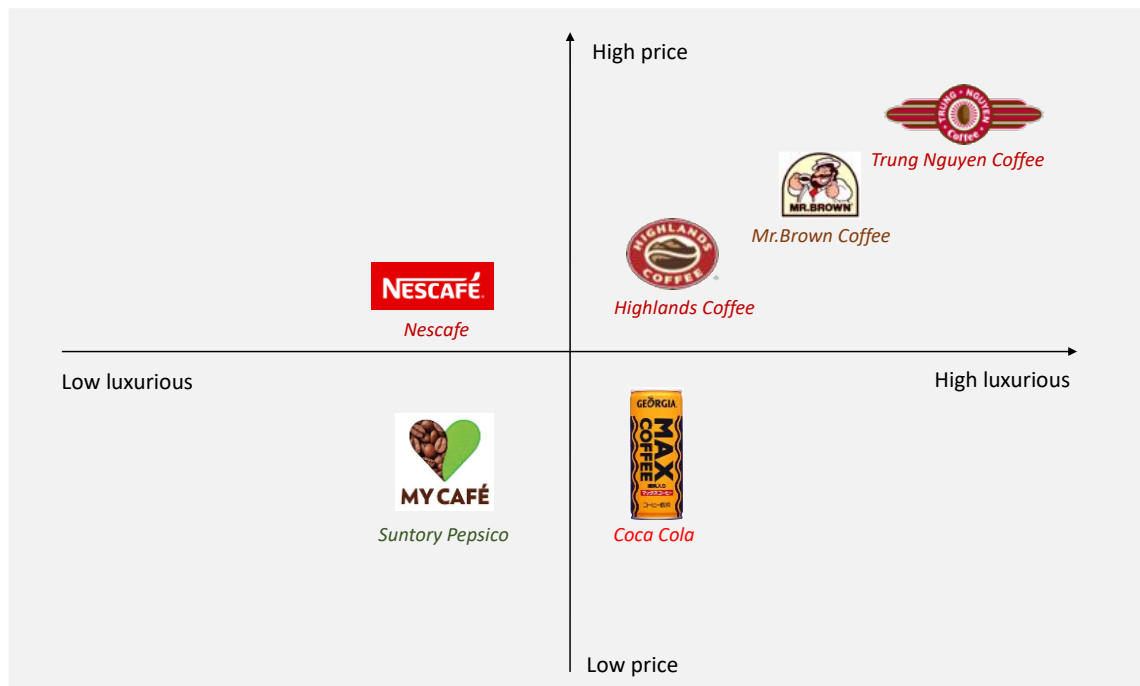


Figure 1 Coffee Brand Perceptual Mapping

In Vietnam, RTD coffee industry is hold by a lot of strong players such as Highlands, Trung Nguyen, Nestlé, Coca-Cola as mentioned above. In 2013, the giant Trung Nguyen introduced the market new RTD coffee brand in both bottles and cartons. The company targeted the brand as a high luxurious ready-to-drink product with a high price for affluent consumers while those people didn't highly appreciate this offer. As a result, two years later, those products haven't been seen on any stores or supermarket shelves (VIR, 2018). For Nestlé, the firm decided to explore the segmentation for young and dynamic Vietnamese. They promised to bring a new vitality for Vietnamese coffee beans (VIR, 2018). Up to now, Nescafé is one of the most popular ready to drink coffee brand because the company offers an affordable price with target to mass segmentation, so the customers can approach to the brand more easily than another brand.

2.3 International Marketing

Marketing role is recognized as one of the most considering parts in any businesses' operation. In global expansion, businesses often assume that what works at home would

work everywhere which leads to their lost in first entrance to new international market (Ibrahim, 2018).

With local market, marketers do researches with fairly homogeneous markets within a single country. However, international researchers deal with diverse markets in many different countries. These markets have great differences in their levels of economic development, cultures and customs, and buying pattern. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011)

2.4 Creating Competitive Advantage

Marketing as previous mentioned, is the activity of creating and bringing the value to customers in order to gain value from them in return (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011). While your company is doing marketing activities, your competitors are doing so. Understanding your customers deeply and carefully will benefit your company in finding the best offers you can make for. This process can be screened through 3 steps: Competitor Analysis, Competitive Strategies and Balancing Customers and Competitor Orientations

2.4.1 Competitor Analysis

This process firstly begins with identifying who is the main competitor in the same market. In simple level, the competitors are companies which produce the same products with what your company is offering. For example, Coca Cola – one of the leading beverages manufacturer in the world. It's no doubt that Pepsi is the strongest competitor of Coca Cola based on market share, distribution channel and excellent marketing campaign (Pratap, 2018). More deeply identifying, competitors can be widened to substitute products that consumers are willing to change when your products are not available. For example, with coke products, people may drink Ready-to-drink tea, energy drink or milk tea when your product is out of stock (Pratap, 2018). The more detail when identifying competitors, the more information and understanding

your company gets regarding competitors' objectives, strategies, strength and weaknesses. Then, the company can determine the best way to win on the market.

In Vietnam, Highlands and Trung Nguyen are two key local players which owned a wide coffee product line. For Trung Nguyen, it is the most well-known and easily accessible Vietnamese coffee, with many blends to pick from Trung Nguyen Legend Coffee, Trung Nguyen Creative 1 Culi Robusta, Trung Nguyen Premium Blend Coffee, Trung Nguyen Creative 2 Robusta Arabica. Besides that, more than 2500 Trung Nguyen Legend branded shops both in Vietnam and abroad to serve a special space where people "dedicated to coffee, especially for coffee" (Brambati, 2015). Its canned coffee thus gained a halo effect from the company's prestige, but canned coffee is currently not Trung Nguyen's key product in both local and international market. The familiar view can be seen in Highlands Coffee brand. With nearly 300 coffee locations in 21 provinces and cities in Vietnam. It provides a Vietnamese comfortable and socializing café environment for the customers to conveniently enjoy the deliciously bold coffee and tea products. Highlands canned coffee is not targeted as key product either. Thus, there is a chance to differentiate when a new company brand put canned coffee as its key product the canned coffee line can be recognized as a potential space to tap into.

2.4.2 Culture in Differentiation

After clearly defining what competitors are doing, this step is to design which direction to create competitive advantages through delivering superior customer value (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011). The process that a company uses to make a product or service stand out from its competitors in ways that provide unique value to the customer is named differentiation. Differ a product or a service means making the customers precept it different or better than other offer, especially when the customers are in their purchase moment. Additionally, differentiation ensures that other competitors don't copy the product or service easily (Lumen, 2019).

et's think of the structure of a marketing message, it includes 2 parts: reason-to-believe and product/brand benefits. Reason to believe (RTB) simply explains why the customers should believe in the product, what makes all the claims and messages are promising and trustworthy. Those can be stated commonly by giving Science provided, Previous research, Category longevity or expertise or Awards, accreditations, seals of trust/excellence (Sullivan, 2019). Then, the brand/product benefits part include two options of stating the message: rational or/and emotional benefits. Rational benefit leverages a product's attributes and features to demonstrate its outcomes and performance. For example: Before using product X, you took 2 hours to complete washing clothes, but after using product X, it takes only 1 hour. Besides that, emotional benefit gives a view of how customers experience the product/service by demonstrate how they look or feel after trying or using. For instance: Before using product Y, you were always tired of washing clothes, but after using product Y, I feel less tired and not afraid of washing clothes anymore. By combining those two parts RTB and benefits, the marketers would have a solid basis to create an attractive message. A marketing message is an opportunity to introduce a new product/service to people through content. It's an organic way to give a human face to the brand and cultivate a more genuine relationship with target customers. One of the most effective way are to understand and use effectively culture element to create the closest relationship with the people that the company is aiming to (French, 2019).

In this research, Vietnamese culture regarding buying behaviour is concerned to be clear. Based on a recent report from Kantar, more Vietnamese consumers prefer international and imported products. They claim that international products are generally of higher quality and they are willing to buying international brands if the price is the same as the local ones (Kantar WorldPanel, 2017). The product's origin is also concerned by Vietnamese Consumers when they decide to buy an imported product, especially countries from Asia for instance Japan, Korea and Thailand. Thus, if the company owns a trustworthy prestige such as Japan or America or Europe, it should consider this point to put into introduction message.

2.5 Purchase Journey

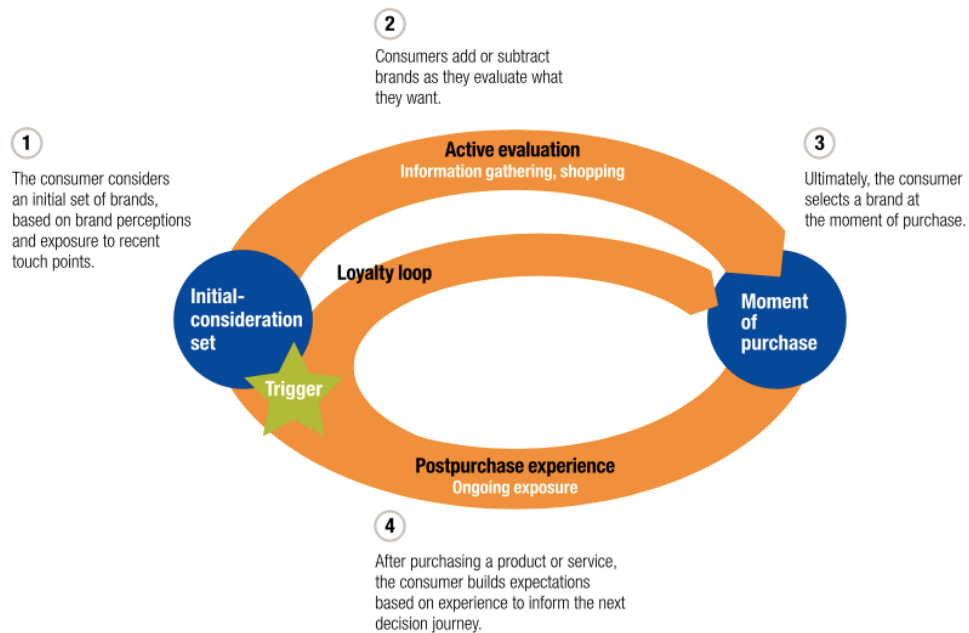


Figure 2 Decision Making Process (David Court, Mulder, Jørgen, & Vetvik, 2009)

When it comes to final decision on buying a product, consumers take a complex process from researching, considering, comparing and making decision. However, consumers are moving outside the marketing funnel by changing the way they research and buy products. Here's how marketers should respond to the new customer journey. The decision-making process now is a circular journey with 4 steps, initial consideration set, active evaluation, moment of purchase and post purchase experience. (David Court, Mulder, Jørgen, & Vetvik, 2009)

In initial consideration stage or it can be called as awareness stage, the prospects have no association with a new brand, so they proactively and passively look for information. There are many sources that consumers can gather conscious and subconscious impressions such as advertisements and medias. A 15-second-TV ad which played on LED screen at a mall or on a building elevator can catch their attention and stick in their mind. Besides that, according to Nielsen's Global Trust in Advertising Survey, 92 percent of people trust recommendations from friends and 70 percent of people trust the online opinions of their fellow consumers (Nielsen, 2012). These reviews and opinions help

buyers narrow down the brands they'll ultimately buy. With the digital development in the last 10 years, it is shown that online channel creates more touchpoints for the trigger than offline channel (KPMG, 2017). Ecommerce is seen clearly far from being an online-only affair. Both online offline channels are effective in creating consumer awareness and demand, especially when they are used together.

After being aware of which products/services the market is offering, the customers will search for more detail information once they realize their pain points. They tend to start reading reviews, learning the features, making comparisons, asking for opinions, and using the internet to research their options in detail. This phase of the process can be lengthened or shortened depending on the value of the product (Vu, Nguyen, & Tran, 2018). This is call active evaluation stage. Once customers have their options narrowed down to just a few brands, they will return to research stage. The research activities in this stage will be diving even deeper into each specific offerings of each option to see how they can address their particular pain points. A lot of prospects will be analyzed regarding pricing, benefits, products features, brand image (KPMG, 2017).

In the moment of purchase stage, the customers had clearly educated themselves and defined their problems. They are aware of the various solutions available on the market and have probably read a few comparison pieces critiquing each approach. In this moment, they look for who can provide that solution. It was researched that consumers hold off their final purchase decision until they're in a store. Merchandising and packaging have therefore become very important selling factors, a point that's not widely understood. Consumers want to look at a product in action and are highly influenced by the visual dimension: up to 40 percent of them change their minds because of something they see, learn, or do at this point—say, packaging, placement, or interactions with salespeople. (David Court, Mulder, Jørgen, & Vetvik, 2009)

After the customers decide which products they will buy, that's when the real battle begin. The postpurchase experience shapes their opinion for every subsequent decision

in the category, so the journey is an ongoing cycle (David Court, Mulder, Jørgen, & Vetvik, 2009). In beverage industry, this stage is not seen clearly compare to other industries for example beauty or healthcare.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Exploratory Research

After understanding about the research's topic and purposes, the next step is designing a proper way for the research. Theoretically speaking, the research design could be either descriptive or explanatory or exploratory, depending on each specific purpose (Saunders, et al., 2009). It could be explained that **Exploratory research** is to seeking insights and understandings of a problem through different approaches. Depending on the way that researchers approach the problem, some further explanations, alternative kinds of action and potential solutions should be given out to better solve current issues (FluidSurveys, 2014). On the other hand, **Descriptive research** is aiming to portrait a clear picture of a formulated hypotheses through a pre-planned design. It is about examine and evaluate the hypotheses through secondary data and surveys and panels (Shuka, 2008). Lastly, **Explanatory research**, also called as Casual research, is more likely to focus on determining cause and effect relationships between variables (Saunders, et al., 2009).

Since it could be seen on the research question and literature review part, the beverages in general and coffee industry in specific is understood clearly by local players, but for the international manufacturers, very few key insights for them to differentiate themselves on the market. So, the author decided that exploratory study was mainly applied in this research.

3.2 Quantitative Research and Qualitative Research

There are now two main methods of researching: quantitative and qualitative. Those are used widely in many fields especially in business to implicate data collecting techniques and analysis procedures (Saunders, et al., 2009). Quantitative is a method which allows collecting, analysing numeric data through distinctive data collecting techniques and analysis procedures. For examples, quantitative method is recognized when numeric data is collected through questionnaire surveys and analysed through graphs and diagrams. By contrast, non-numeric data is used and generated under qualitative method.

In this research, the goal is to deeply understand which factors lead to consumer's demands and to find out key factors which influence their buying journey, in order to support the businesses in effectively marketing new coffee product in Vietnamese market. Thus, the author decided to use qualitative research to deep dive in understanding consumers' buying behaviours.

3.3 Collecting Data Methods in Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is aiming to have richer information to get deeper insights. There are five common method to collect qualitative data which were explained below.

Table 1 Data collection methods in Qualitative Research

Data Collection Method	Description
Body Mapping	A creative form of data collection in which a life size body map of the participant is created that represents their life history, physical sensations, and personal journey

Diaries/Journals	Personal accounts of experiences and reflections written in either an electronic or video/audio format
Focus Groups	A “group interview” with the objective of identifying and examining how participants interact with each other while sharing their accounts of a common experience
Interviews	The investigators allow participants to express their feelings and thoughts freely or through a set of guided questions
Participant Observation	Investigators record observations regarding the behaviours of individuals in particular settings or events
Photovoice	The use of photos to communicate feelings and experiences relevant to a particular phenomenon

(Bismah Jameel, 2018)

In this specific research, the author used Focus Group Interview (FGI) to collect data. According to Denscombe (Denscombe, 2007), “focus group consists of a small group of people, usually between six and nine in number, who are brought together by a trained moderator (the researcher) to explore attitudes and perceptions, feelings and ideas about a topic”. This method provides a more natural environment where all participants are interviewed while they are influencing and influenced by others - just as they are in real life” (Casey & Kueger, 2000).

In this study, the author was the moderator who prepared the question list and directly interviewed the groups. Because of the limitation in recruiting process, the coverage

area is only in Ho Chi Minh city, the biggest city in Vietnam with 2 groups, each group contains 6 respondents. They were invited to the interview which lasted for 90 minutes. The author asked the respondents' permissions for recording the discussions. Then all the audio files were converted to word transcript to support analyzing activities later on.

3.4 Respondents' Profile

The respondents are coffee drinkers who are above 22 and years old and have personal income above 11 million VND, approx. € 500. They have coffee drinking habit from 3-5 times a week and open to share their thoughts regarding coffee products. The author didn't interview respondents who are backgrounded from marketing, Public Relations (PR), Journalist or Production to avoid bias perspectives because this research focused on understanding how mainstream target perceived coffee products.

3.5 Flow of Interview

Before the interview, the moderator should remember in advance all the objectives of each part of the interview, so during the discussion, the moderator can both ask questions, listen to the answer and observe the respondents' reaction and interaction. There are 3 main parts which need to be fully asked during the discussion.

Firstly, the author asked them about their normal daily working life to find out which elements lead to drinking coffee demand. Specifically, from which situations those elements begin, where they happen, when they occur and what do consumers feel at those circumstances.

After the root of demand was defined, the second part will contain questions which explain the influencing factors in consumers' purchasing journey by asking question about their buying behaviour. This part finds out important factors that the business can

consider when decide production activity, marketing strategy and other related processes.

Finally, all the interviewees will be asked again those questions and let them examine which factors they remember the most about a coffee brand.

Table 2 Flow of Interview

NO.	SECTION	OBJECTIVE
1	Introduction and Warm-up	Building rapport with respondents before officially start
2	Usage & Attitude (U&A) Exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their current habits/attitude how they deal with the situation • What products they current use to cope with struggles. Why?
3	Purchasing Journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes them choose a coffee product? • When/ why/ how they see the product fits into their life? • Which product they will replace? Why?
4	Different factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check consumers' overall preference, purchase & usage intention
5	Wrap-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final questions

3.6 List of Questions

3.6.1 Warm-up and Introduction

- Since I have told about our purpose of the interview, could you tell us about yourself? Your name, age, and occupation?
- Look at your lifestyle now, what do you feel about life at the moment?
- Tell me a little bit about your routine on weekdays/weekends, your leisure time?

3.6.2 U&A Exploration

- During the whole working day, how will you describe your everyday work life? is there any moment make you feel unhappy/frustrated What are best parts/happiest parts? What are parts make you dislike the most?
- When and Where is it?
- Please describe specifically the situation at that time.
- What in it make you feel unhappy/frustrated? (reasons why they are unhappy)
- Describe clearly how do you feel in those situation
- So, what do you usually drink in such frustrating situations? (Ask for each time and Moderator will note if respondents mention coffee/ED/RTDT)
- How does it make you feel when you consume it?
- How do you feel when drinking it?
- How can it help you to...?
- What are its benefits?
- How do you feel after drinking it?
- Substitute

3.6.3 Purchasing Journey

- From where you know about your current used coffee?

- Please list 3 factors that you often consider when you decided to buy a coffee product?

Asking for each factor

- What makes you think it's the most important?
- What do you think if a product doesn't have that factor?
- Which factor makes you impressed the most from a coffee brand?

The moderator shows the respondents different coffee brand name and let the respondents speak out the factors they impressed the most.

- What will that factor benefit you?

3.6.4 Different Factors

- For a new coffee brand from a foreign country, which factor do you think they should put into the product?
- For example, a Japanese coffee brand is entering Vietnamese market, which factors do you think the company should marketing itself?
- How can those factors benefit you?

3.6.5 Wrap up

- Thank you for all your sharing.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Root to Demand

During the whole working day, it was experienced 2 types of problems, from small to big scale, we can classify and group them in to Small and Big. Small issues can be unzipped pants, traffic jam while commuting, long queue waiting for elevator even noisy colleagues next by. On the other hands, big problems are more related to work performance, ex. Complaints from Boss/manager or demanding customers. In those situations, the need of feeling releasing stress, feeling motivated and encouraging is arise in respondents' minds.

After finding out that Releasing and Motivating are two main needs when they have troubles at work, the research outcome also explored on how the respondents responded in each situation in terms of what drink they were looking for. There were 2 beverages that the author could summarize: coffee and tea. With the need of releasing stress, tea plays a dominant role in delivering calming attitude. Meanwhile, coffee is used in both needs when the respondents are in a demand of stress releasing and motivating. It's a little similar to Japanese coffee culture, where drinking coffee means being a sit down, relaxing, and socializing drink emerged (Waka Coffee, 2019). Additionally, some coffee attributes were highlighted in order to respond to those needs, which are Caffeine, Sweetness, Bitterness, Aroma, Milk and Coffee Harmonization and Products are chilled.

In this part, we found out that Motivating is formed as coffee category code and well-educated by drinkers. On the other hand, Tea is more understood as bringing up Releasing benefit. To find out a way that coffee can support people in serious problems, we look back at those situations, to find out whether coffee can help them more relaxing or comfortable. Finding a way to emphasize coffee benefit in marketing concept can gain success for new coffee brand in Vietnam.

4.2 Customer Purchasing Journey

4.2.1 Initial Awareness

There are 3 main sources where the interviewees usually refer when they choose a beverage brand to make purchase. Firstly mentioned, Brand Used Most Often (BUMO) is the most mentioned answers when the moderator asked which brands they usually used. For the respondents, the brand credential in terms of brand image, ensured product quality and safe coffee bean origin are key factors that hold them using the same brand for a long time. They saw the brand was advertised on TV commercial, on social media platform such as Facebook, Instagram and Youtube. Sometimes, they recognized the brand from digital billboards which were placed on their commute. Besides, friends' or colleagues' references are having certain influence on their impression about a coffee brand.

4.2.2 Active Evaluation

4.2.2.A Packaging

As the brand preference is seen as the most influencing factor to make a strong impact on purchasing decision, package design is mentioned as the impressive factor when the respondents are in front of coffee shelf. They said that they might not buy the new coffee which has impressive package at the first time they saw it, but the image was stick in their mind. And then in the next time or third time, that brand had a chance to be one of their consideration. Specifically, color is the most essential factor to illustrate specifically motivating impact. Choosing the right coffee and milk color which are combined smoothly can show harmonization taste. This can bring a relived feeling and cheer up the current mood for users.

4.2.2.B Coffee Flavour

As previous analyze on Needs and Packaging, we set a standard for product taste to respond correctly with the expectation on bringing up expected benefits.

Firstly, customers expected the coffee can enhance their mood. Through drinking coffee, they hope to feel bitterness and aroma to help their have mental clarity and spirit enhancement. Thus, the product should be bitter and aromatic at from the time open the can until they finish drinking the coffee.

Secondly, instant wake up is what they expect next. In this benefit, there are some specific requirements between milk coffee and black coffee.

- Milk coffee: consumers can smell milk aroma, also fatty and sweet taste from milk. Additionally, they need fatty and sweet after taste. All of those elements can help them to lightly feel the sweet and fatty aroma
- Black coffee: consumers can feel pure coffee aroma, can taste sweet from sugar and bitterness.

Finally, self-encouragement is what they expected from a coffee can. The coffee should be chilled with a balance between sweet, bitter and fatty. The texture is not too thick or diluted to bring up the enjoyment after tasting.

4.2.2.C Coffee Origin

Even though Vietnamese coffee bean quality is well recognized, 8/12 respondents said that if they know that coffee is international brand, they tend to higher evaluate the products from that brand when compare to a local coffee bran. Specifically, when they see Japanese words or "US coffee" label on the packaging, Safety Assurance is raised in their mind thanks to the credential of those countries regarding coffee product. They

perceived that Japan is famous for high quality technology and US is the country of the most well-known coffee chain – Starbucks. As the halo effect, the products which were imported by those countries have higher trust from respondents.

Moreover, the coffee bean origin is considered as influencing factor. They reminded of 100% pure coffee bean factor that they saw on the packaging. That also a plus point for the brand when it mentioned specifically coffee bean origin.

With Boss coffee, the company can take advantage of Japanese advanced technology as an additional value for BOSS coffee and signature Japanese factors should be used effectively to emphasized high quality coffee inside. Coffee bean quality also needs to be present to gain positive look from drinkers.

4.2.3 Moment of Purchase

The respondents all agreed that they usually pick the preferred brand that they usually drink. They would switch in some special cases. The first case would be there was a sample booth for free trial at the store, if they found the sample fit their taste, they would choose to purchase that coffee to drink more. However, the chance for customers trying samples at coffee booth is not highly positive because customers are mostly visiting time at the store is just short moment for their time saving and convenient purpose. The second case is more about mentally switch than immediate physical switch. When they saw an attractive package, which was specifically described as including new colors and having signature of foreign origin, the respondents admitted that they would definitely try it for the next time. As a consequence, it's certain that there is a positive chance for a new coffee product to win other competitors at the moment of purchase.

4.3 Different factors

The local coffee market is full of strong competitors, thus a product with a unique image can attract customers at the first sight. The respondents reminded of a special case on coffee that made them impressed the most. The concept of coffee with energy drink with the brand Wake Up 247 from Masan Consumers Group is holding respondents' Top of Mind (TOM) position regarding the most special coffee. One respondent explained that the need of drinking a carbohydrate drink to feel fresh, yet the drink can contain caffeine to feel awake with coffee aroma, is a complex need. However, this product is a perfect and unique in the market, which can adapt to complex needs from customers. At this time, the product is highly welcomed and consumed by both traditional coffee and energy drink users in Vietnam. The respondents saw the brand as highly adaptable with consumers' changes, so they were more willing to try this new product.

Understanding customers' needs and responding wisely can help the company in gaining new customers by expanding their product lines, as well as showing them that the company is listening and caring what its consumers are concerning. This factor increases brand image by creating an emotional connection with its customers.

In Japanese market, a tea-slash-coffee drink got commercially distributed in 2018 was a shock in this market. The product is from the biggest drink companies, Asahi Soft Drink Co., with the slogan of "Life... it's all about having fun!" (Vlisides, 2018). The product is a mixture of tea and coffee, which solved the problem of confusing between coffee and tea. However, the feedback it got from users were not positive. Most people who tried think that the flavor is not good enough from them to switch completely from tea or coffee to use this coffee tea.

This can be a lesson for Boss coffee when they want to enter Vietnamese market with a canned coffee product. Finding a concept is first step but there are further processes need to be worked on to deliver the most appropriate coffee product to Vietnam.

CONCLUSION

The thesis is conducted to giving a detail information to create a proper marketing plan for a new company which has consideration to enter Vietnamese coffee industry. There are many aspects to research on, the author decided to study on the marketing aspect, in order to understand what are influencing factors on customer's purchasing journey. Thus, the result can support the marketer in identifying which direction should be focused on to successfully introduce a new coffee product. Specifically, the research questions are:

- What factors lead to consumers' demand?
- What influencing factors in consumer purchasing journey?
- What factors can differentiate a new international coffee brand in Vietnamese market?

As the literature part explained how important of understanding customers' needs in marketing process, giving a precise answer for this question can support the marketer in improve the solutions in further steps. The research findings regarding this question is that when customers want to release stress and motivate themselves, the needs of coffee appear at that time. So, the context of coffee demand can be seen and built up based on this finding.

When the needs are rising, the marketer should create effective channels so that customers can be aware of the available of the product. The technology progress has created a lot of changes in the way how advertising approached customers, and vice versa, customers are more active in looking for new products' information by searching on internet, seeing ad on varieties media channels on electric billboard while commuting etc. The entrance of new advertising should be effectively designed to create attractive first impression for the audience. It will influence positively the customers' considerations when they have coffee demand arise.

Even when the customers have already had a chosen brand in their minds, a fact that they are still affected by the shelf display at the supermarket. Taking this finding as a point to improve marketing plan, the marketers should also focus on creating Point of Sales Materials (POSM) strategy. It can be discount on pack, trial drinks, attractive trade marketing tools. Those can create an influence for customers in recognizing a new coffee product on the familiar shelf that they have seen previously.

There are many options to differentiate a new product on a competitive market. It can be utilizing the brand image if the brand is internationally well known, or it can be an innovative formula mixture. However, there are successful and fail cases for those options. As Boss coffee is a very famous Japanese brand both in Japan and US, the company can consider in taking advantage of the brand prestige and Japanese technology halo effect, to create a professional image when enter Vietnamese market.

The research is conducted on a limited source of interview, so the result cannot be generalized for wider use. However, the study is specified in understanding coffee needs of a certain group of customers. This can be a source for further research on understanding Vietnamese coffee industry to successfully launching a new product.

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