Utilizing a Sampling Center as a Marketing Research optimization model for Vietnamese manufacturers

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Abstract
This Bachelor's thesis presents ideas and researches that suggest manufacturers considering and increasing the usability of their new products through a more innovative interaction with consumers. The study concentrates on business and consumers in two major cities in Vietnam: Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city. According to the facts of this specific market, finding a way to optimize marketing research is possibly an underrated potential. Therefore, the model namely 'Product Sampling Center' is introduced as such marketing research tool to support this reliance.

The study consists of theories about new product development, consumer behaviors and marketing research methods which can be integrated to the concept of a Product Sampling Center. Besides the above mentioned supporting literature, there are facts and statistics about trends, existing problems and related case-study in connection to the topic.

The thesis' methodology breaks down into two parts: The quantitative research reveals Vietnamese consumers' behaviors towards purchasing and testing new products, as well as showing consumers' common opinions about the idea of having a Product Sampling Center in their city of residence (N=177); The qualitative research, on the other hand, supportively provides valuable information from Vietnamese manufacture companies' point of view about the practicality of the Product Sampling Center. The combination of the two researches reflects the relationship between consumers' perspective and the manufacturers' perspective that affirms the effectiveness of the model.

In conclusion, this thesis as a research report, gives readers detailed analysis whether the concept of Product Sampling Center is positively perceived by both manufacturers and consumers. The outcome of this thesis provides valuable material for further study in this particular subject of marketing research optimization for Vietnamese market and similar markets in general.

Keywords
Marketing research, new product development, Asia, Vietnam, consumer behavior.

Miscellaneous
Hall testing, product clinics, usability testing.
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1 Introduction

Vietnam's economy and the way of doing business nowadays have been evolving greatly in the past 20 years. However, adaptation to changes in term of business efficiency seems to be rather left-behind compared to the general growing rate. In particular, the field of marketing research has not received an adequate amount of attention. This may actually be part of most Vietnamese SMEs' strategic management as their focus is towards different aspects in doing business other than investing and putting considerable effort to marketing research for new product development. However, in the long run, it may not be the best option to ignore investment in Product Research, because this action is essential for the positive reception of a new product in the market. Secondly, there always exists a gap between manufacturers - developers' perception and the end-users' perception of the same product. Therefore, it is possible that a new product may turn out to be a great disappointment to consumers, even though it receives high expectation of success from the developers. When people do not buy it, companies simply make no revenue, but a great loss instead. For those reasons, this thesis suggests piloting a Product Sampling Center in the Vietnamese market to help manufacturers minimize the rate of product failure and do business more efficiently.

1.1 Background of the thesis

What is a Product Sampling Center?

Product Sampling Centre (PSC) is a model that supports the optimization of marketing research, suggested by the author of this thesis. It is assumed to be a place open to the public; consumers can try out and test new products in certain product categories that they are interested in. The products can be at different stages of completion, from beta version to fully manufactured and launched; the manufacturers rent the slots inside PSC to perform their marketing research actions during a limited period; they can prolong the term of lease as necessary. This model is designed to connect Products, Place and People and the target group is young
people who belong to the Generation Y (see Literature Review: Consumer Behavior). Bringing this model into practice will make people get used to the idea of having a designed location for product testing where consumers can personally be in touch with companies' representatives and be sure that their voices are heard.

![Diagram](image)

**FIGURE 1 THE STRUCTURE OF THE PRODUCT SAMPLING CENTER ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR**

It is an advantage, since this concept is a complete opposite to door-to-door marketing research. PSC can be perceived as place for a collection of temporary showrooms or, it can also be seen as a highly concentrated environment full of showrooms which are not scattered all around the city. Imagine that you need to visit two showrooms of the same product category at the opposite ends of a big city for taking different samples of tiles because you are choosing materials for your dream house. You simply would like to make the best choice. Then imagine there were four or more of those showrooms that you would need to visit, they were far away apart from each other. From a business point of view, this idea is believed to give companies with a limited budget an option to reduce expenses and time spent on door-to-door marketing research, and also to reduce the unnecessary expense of having their own showroom when they do not need it all the time. In addition, it is important to note that nowadays the proportion of registered SMEs is up to 96% of the total registered enterprises in Vietnam, not every firm is able to find a good location and premises to establish their own showroom to showcase their new products. (VGP News of Vietnam's Government News Channel, 2013)
The expense for marketing researches of Vietnamese companies only took 5%, while foreign and multinational companies in Vietnam invested the 95% in the same activities (figures recorded on Q4, 2011 - Vinatest Knowledge Bank, 2012). The same report indicated that the average sum of money that Vietnamese companies spent on marketing research was only 3.6% compared to the costs of advertisements, most of which are mainly TVCs. After the economy transition (See chapter 1.4 Country profile), Vietnamese enterprises have paid more attention to marketing as a business function but they tend to associate marketing with advertising and put lots of money to it. Like a domino effect, one company followed one another if the previous company was successful with their marketing campaign (Vinatest Knowledge Bank, January 2012). On a general level, the Vietnamese marketing environment adopts many characteristics of Eastern culture, practices are carried out based on personal experience of marketers, from others' forms of accumulated experience, making business practices a shared set of knowledge that can be exploited widely. However, this resulted in some lack of systematic, thoroughgoing and especially innovative marketing ideas.

"Business organizations prefer posting their ads on television, 78% of advertisements were TVCs, the rest consists of 11% of advertisements on newspapers, 7% on journals and 4% on outdoor billboard. In Asia, the proportion is 41:25:5:11% respectively" - Do Kim Dung, Deputy Chair of Vietnam Advertisement Association (Vietmaz Business magazine, March 2013)

When marketing researches started to be practiced more and more commonly in Vietnam, at first by multinational companies e.g. Proctor and Gamble (P&G), Coca-Cola, Unilever, Nestlé etc. which gave these companies very positive market shares, the importance of marketing research was then recognized (Saigon Business Weekly, May 28, 2011). According to Mr. Truong Cung Nghia, Director of Truong Doan Marketing Research Company, marketing research methods and approaches have been increasingly developed in the World's leading countries and economies, but most companies in Vietnam still conduct their marketing researches door-to-door. Besides, when they have a certain budget and get to choose whether to launch a marketing research or an advertising campaign it is very likely to be the latter. (Saigon Times, No.33 August 12, 2010)
In door-to-door marketing research, there are several steps that need to be done for the survey to be executed. Those steps include locating the interviewers, screen them, hire them, train and brief them before sending them to the target areas. A lot of competence and preparation is required. It also takes time and costs to travel to different destinations for surveyors. Therefore, the approach of conducting door-to-door researches is rather expensive (Wrenn Bruce, 2002).

“This approach is very time-consuming, and required a great number of researchers especially for throughout research in a big city of 9 million people, for instance Ho Chi Minh City. The interviewers are mostly university students, and extra training is often required.” - Mr. Pham Phu Ngoc Trai, Chairman and CEO of GiBC (Saigon Times, No.33 August 12, 2010)

Accordingly, a number of Vietnamese companies, mostly SMEs, found a cheaper but "unofficial" way to develop a new line of products by practicing collective experience which they gain during the company operation in the past, as well as experience from their relatives and business forums to come up with a new product. After that, they conduct in-house marketing research by getting relatives, friends, and employees to test out the new product. This approach was widely practiced for a long time (Saigon Times, No.33 August 12, 2010). Since it is not very reliable to have a small group of people with a limited background to become representatives for the consumers in a whole city or possibly the whole country, this approach has shown its own disadvantages.

However, there are more and more companies with insights and visions and a positive attitude towards investing on marketing research:

"Marketing research is essential for new product development, especially if those products are of a strategic level and decide whether it is to win or lose. Our company comes up with 30 - 40 new products every year, carefully plans and invests marketing researches for each and every new formula, about one third of the new products receive very positive acceptance and preference in the market" - Ms. Pham Thi Viet Nga, CEO of Hau Giang Pharmaceutical JSC (Saigon Business Weekly, May 28, 2011)
All of these findings presented above show us that there is capacity for a model of PSC to be introduced to the Vietnamese market. This thesis researches and directly answers the question IF the idea of introducing a Product Sampling Center could be a success that gives more option to the issue discussed above, meaning, many Vietnamese companies can conduct their marketing research more flexibly in relation to time and place.

1.2 Thesis structure outline

The thesis is divided into four main sections which present (1) supportive theory and literature, (2) facts, statistics and information about similar activities in comparison with the idea of establishing a Product Sampling Center, (3) research methods, approaches and findings, (4) results and discussion.

The literature reviews support and give the theoretical base to this thesis. The core topics are marketing research, new product development, consumer behavior, and product adaptation. The facts, statistics, tables and figures are taken from non-confidential reports provided by research agencies operating in Vietnam, business news and magazines from both private and government websites. The research consists of a quantitative approach via an online questionnaire to survey Vietnamese consumers' buying and testing habits of new products and also their opinion towards the introduction of a Product Sampling Center in the two major cities and some interviews with some companies' representative about their opinion of how advantageous a Product Sampling Center would be to their business. The last part, results and discussion analyzes the results, discusses arisen arguments and gives answer to the research question.
1.3 Country profile

In assumption that not every reader shares the same cultural background, it is necessary to provide a general outlook to Vietnam's market regarding the influence of economy transition and relevant information about customer behaviors in this particular market.

According to the public data provided on CIA's World Fact-book (www.cia.gov), Vietnam is a Southeast Asian country, bordering China, Laos and Cambodia, with a total area of 331,210 sq km and is a communist state. The country consists of 58 provinces, Hanoi is the capital city located in the North Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh City is the most industrial and most populous city located in the South.

The French conquest of Vietnam started from the year 1858; the colonization period took about a hundred years and ended in 1954. The Geneva Accords of 1954 divided Vietnam into two parts, the communist North and anti-communist South. Through the 1960s, US economic and military aid had been grown in South Vietnam but then withdrawn in 1973 due to a cease-fire agreement. In April 1975, Vietnam was
reunited under communist rule. In 1986, to boost the country's economy, "Doi Moi" (renovation) policy was enacted and authorities have been committed to increase economic liberalization and produce more competitive industry. (CIA's World Factbook, 2012 EST.)

The year 1986 marked the start of economy transition, Vietnam "escaped" from the rigidities of a centrally-planned economy and into a market economy. Since then, poverty has declined greatly and Vietnam has worked its best to provide jobs for the labor force which is growing approximately a million people every year. However, population below poverty line is 11.3% (2012 est.), and unemployment rate in the year 2012 is 4.5%. Inflation rate in consumer price is 6.8% and GDP per capita is $3,500US (2012 est.). Authorities have set the goal for Vietnam's next transition that the economy will become industrialized and modern by 2020 (World Bank, 2012).

1.4 Objectives

The goal of this thesis is to draw a big picture about the practicality of the presented idea, whether the result of the researches would show a positive or negative reception of this model. From the result, we will find out whether it is possible or impossible to turn ideas to solid foundations for such model in the future. The main objective is not about proving that the introduction of mentioned Product Sampling Center will be an absolute success. Even if the result shows that this idea is impossible or difficult to execute, it would save a lot of time, effort and investment to business individuals or business group by showing the reasons why they should consider greatly before investing to this idea. Exemplarily, with the condition that this idea is successful, this research report will be a useful reference material to follow-up this idea to develop a concrete Product Sampling Center in the future.

2 Literature reviews

This section provides theories that support the thesis' methodology and consists of topics related to Marketing Research and Marketing Research particularly in Vietnam, new product development, product testing, the concepts of hall test and
product clinic, product adaptation and general customer behavior as well as a specification of customer behavior in Vietnam's market.

These topics are related to each other with reference to the perception, attitude and development towards new products. This is the area of limitation to every topic; therefore, it is important to note that the provided literature will be more specific and less general.

2.1 What is Marketing Research

The term 'marketing research' is usually used equivalent to the term 'market research'. However, many experts in the field of Marketing have pointed out that there is a slight difference between the two definitions. While 'market research' is for a greater range of activities that gather information about a specific market or groups of customers, 'marketing research' is more about a process which focalizes on collecting and evaluating specific data so that companies can understand the needs of their customers better. This observation of differences is necessary for addressing related topics precisely to 'marketing research'.

The classification of marketing research

As the purpose of conducting marketing research is to identify and solve marketing problem, marketing problem identification and marketing problem solving are the two classified actions. Problem identification action only answers to the question 'what is wrong, or what will go wrong'; while problem solving action answers to the question 'what should be done' and the latter supports making strategic decision in doing business. (Malhotra, 2006)

The concept of this thesis is narrow down eventually to a fraction of marketing problem solving action which is 'product research'. Product research supports these following purposes: test concept, optimal product design, package tests, product modification, brand positioning and repositioning, test marketing, and control store
tests. The idea of establish a Product Sampling Center tackles this practice of *product research* that is believed to be helpful to a great number of Vietnamese companies.

**FIGURE 3 THE PRODUCT SAMPLING CENTER AS A PRACTICAL APPROACH OF MARKETING RESEARCH**

* This is a simplified self-generated illustration based on Malhotra's classification of different kinds of marketing research. The above figure shows where the model 'Product Sampling Center' is placed, as a concept to facilitate Product testing process which belongs to 'Product research' category. Product research is only one of many other practices that belongs to 'Problem solving' approach.

### 2.2 Marketing Research in Vietnam

The definition of marketing research as discussed earlier is rather general and universal. Regionally, marketing research in Vietnam, as a developing country, has some of its own traits that are non-identical in comparison with marketing research in developed and highly practical business environments.

It is crucial to note that due to the influence of economy transition, the flexibility of Vietnamese companies in adopting different marketing approaches is not high. The companies are slow and resistant to changes while the market is evolving rather fast. Vietnamese consumer behavior as a characteristic that defines the market has been developing; the quality of lives is much improved. Therefore, the demands become greater and greater by time. Nowadays most Vietnamese companies still rely on TVC as the main marketing approach, making their products become known, spent an unreasonably big amount of budget on that without paying much attention to product development and marketing research for new products. (Vietnamnet Bridge, March 18, 2013).
According to Elizabeth Pisani on the Asia Times (1996), in the early 90s, Vietnam barely has markets. In the year 1993, altogether expense for marketing research in the whole country was only US$400,000. Just two years later in 1995, the amount had increased to US$3 billion and it was expected to be doubled up in the coming year. However, the report also says that at this time the investors were mainly multinational foreign companies. For the launch of a new product, it could be as simple as meeting up a journalist, having the deal over some drinks and the introduction of that new product would be all over the pages in the mean time. (Asia Times, Chamber World Network International Ltd. 1996). It is said in McKinsey Quarterly report that family-owned companies have taken a large share of the number of Vietnamese enterprises in the private sector. However, they have not taken long-term value and bottom-line profit into consideration; instead, they tended to seek ways to increase top-line revenue. The approaches and practices were not so systematic, professional and well-plan; they were quite spontaneous, and only came up when there were already existing problems that seriously need to be solved. The practicality of marketing research of the state-owned enterprises shared some similarity with the family-owned business. Even though it is less complicated to get professionals with international standards with government’s funding, due to political background, state-owned companies have been resistant to adopting marketing practices from Western countries (McKinsey Quarterly: Taking Vietnam Economy To The Next Level, March 4 2012).

2.3 Product testing in marketing research

Nowadays the competition in doing business has been increasing, manufacturers and companies know that their competitors will be able to get more market shares when they introduce products with more attractive and advanced features. Therefore, an urge to get more in touch with what end-users needs is created. It is crucial to adapt to the practice of NPD process for the survival of any enterprise (Trott, 2008)

Product testing as an approach of problem solving function of marketing research contributes to the process of innovation for new products. It is said that for a new product to be successful after being launched, it has to go through precise and
conscious planning, which is a systematic process consists of eight stages. The stages are Idea Generation, Idea Screening, Concept Testing, Business Analysis, Product Development, Test Marketing, Commercialization and Monitoring and Evaluation. (Stone and Desmond, 2007, p.240). Approaches of product testing have been present in the third stage of this innovation process. In order to come down to the third stage of testing the new concept or a feature of a new product by following the process step-by-step, the company has to go through two stages of Idea Generation and Idea Screening. According to Stone and Desmond (2007), a large share of new ideas has come from the employees of the company who are mostly from research and development department; other sources of ideas are from other stakeholders who are competitors, consumers, distributors and suppliers. This is the stage of Idea Generation, one company needs to collect as many ideas as possible, the more ideas they get the better ideas they can find. It increases the chance of getting innovative and useful ideas when they come to the stage of Idea Screening. The second stage Idea Screening indicates selection of the best ideas in the whole collection of received comments and suggestions for a new product from the earlier stage. These two first stages define the main features that the new product will possess. However, the new product needs more positioning concepts to it, in order to satisfy the target market. Therefore, it needs to be sent out to be tested by the potential consumers. The Product Research activities make sure that the new products meet the needs and expectations of the end-users before the more expensive process of mass production and distribution (Proctor, 2005).

When a new product is introduced to the potential consumers, the concept of co-creation can also be test. According to the case and the insights shared by Satu Miettinen (This is Service Design Thinking, 2012), the end-users are the ones who know best about what satisfies their needs, what they value more in a product and how much they can afford. We want to achieve an optimization where buyers are willing to pay and are greatly delightful for what they get.

An actual case of a nationally well-known Vietnamese manufacturing company specialized in producing lights and lighting devices namely Dien Quang is a good example of how co-creation effectively works. The company introduced the water resistant compact lights for outdoor uses as their new product line. These products
was initially designed to sustain high level of humidity and was meant to target farmers, as in their design planning and marketing campaign. Undoubtedly, the target group is rather large as agriculture still plays an important role in the national economy. However during the time the product line had been on the market, many other consumers who didn't belong to the initial target group found this product beneficial and useful for their own needs. By discovering a larger group of target consumers through research and studies about local consumer behavior, the company then adjusted their marketing communication to make the product more known to an extended target group and raised their product visibility. Since then, the product line has became more profitable (Dien Quang Archive News, September 2011: Saigon Business Weekly Online. Business Interview May 28, 2011).

This case is a positive and up-to-date example of how important it was to pay attention to what the consumers said and to look closer to consumers' actual needs rather than defining and categorizing them by common demographic data such as age, social classes and income etc. or by specified professions. Those limitations which were unilaterally created by the companies might help them predicting the target group. These practices used to be exploited, and they seemed to work out in some cases. Nonetheless, when a product actually enters the market, it is necessary and even crucial to readjust the target group as well as reposition the product according to actual environment through effective means of follow-up marketing research. Today we need to adopt the changes that help us staying in the race, we certainly cannot win battle by losing small fights.

2.4 Product adaptation

The case presented in the last chapter shows us how co-creation works on an underestimated product in its potential market. Going from pole to pole, this chapter provides literature reviews and cases about the overestimated products. We will examine the key factors and reasons related to the failure of a new product as an approach to emphasize the importance of product adaptation. When a certain product needs to adapt, it means that this product may be wrongly positioned at the time. The acknowledgement of existing faulty features in a product is a very
important foundation for product adaptation. It helps detecting a technical malfunction or a misleading message that an incomplete product may has.

In a research report written by John B. Lord (CRC Press Inc., 2000) provided the Infoscan data conducted by IRI Pacesetters from the year 1996 showing that 72% of new product and 55% of line extensions failed. In addition, the report also stated that larger organizations and well-known companies performed better (by 76% of success rate) than small companies (only 11.9% success rate). The illustration below is created by Greg Osuri (2010) using a different source of data dated approximately at the same time period. The data which Osuri used for his illustration had been collected and analyzed by Stevens, G.A. and Burley, J. in 1997.

![New Product Failure Rates Illustration by Greg Osuri (2010)](image)

**FIGURE 4 THE NEW PRODUCT FAILURE RATES ILLUSTRATED BY GREG OSURI (2010)**

Another reliable product development study conducted later in 2010 by the Product Development Institute (PDI) showed the result from a quantitative research from 257 organizations. The percentage of successful new product launched by large organizations and SMEs has changed noticeably in comparison to the data provided above. The success rate of the top-performing organizations dropped to 62% while the bottom SMEs has a success rate raised significantly to 45% (PDI and APQC, December 2010). However, this comparison is only approximate to give the readers a
big picture of product failure trend. We should note that the percentages may be incompatible in some cases if the total amount of 100% in counting units was not clearly provided (e.g. 10% of 10 units are not equal to 10% of 100 units). This means, for instance, 45% of success rate of new product launched by bottom-performing companies would not be a very strong indicator to provide a fact that the situation had greatly improved comparing to the year 1996. It simply could mean that those SMEs launched much less products and the number of successfully launched products stayed the same, hence the success rate increased. For a more thorough analysis and in-depth study for this matter, we need precise statistics and facts that are up-to-date to today's situation. However, it seems that this kind of information is still missing or not publicly available nowadays.

Why does a product fail?

An underestimated product when sustaining its stage of being underrated does not bring money to the business as it supposedly should have, as we can see from the previous case of Vietnamese compact lamp manufacturer. This action results in a certain loss in profit, a business could actually earn more profit if they are conscious about their product's hidden potentials. An overestimated product, on the other hand, causes loss in a more direct and devastating way, it is a completely different kind of loss, since the investment to product design, manufacturing costs, marketing expenses from whole process of creating the product to the point it is distributed has to be spent in advanced without any clear assurance that the product would bring as much profit as it was expected to. There were many big and costly mistakes in the business history of even strong and well-known international companies (e.g. Pepsi, Microsoft, Coors, Colgate etc.). There is a common tendency for developers and manufacturers to put pretty much more unrealistic expectation into a new product. Between losing money we do not think we would have and losing money we once had in own hand, which one should be better prevented? In most cases for underrated products, the follow-up marketing researches can be done after the launch and still help the product finding its right position in the market, or in some case finding more suitable markets for a certain product. It seems more likely a harder costly problem to be solved for an overestimated product; therefore, we need to know the main reasons why products fail. The common reasons discussed below
are considered and chosen from countless business mistakes that resulted in product failures according to Harvard Business Review's Magazine (Schneider and Hall, 2011) and precise categorized reasons of product failure by John B. Lord (2000). For each given reason, there are cases that refer to a particular subject of product failures.

Reason 1: Timing and lack of preparation

A common marketing research failure in relation to false timing and lack of preparation is reflected from the following case of Windows Vista, one of Microsoft’s computer operating system. This is an example for overestimation of a product's potential which led to a significant financial downturn of Microsoft Company in the year 2007. According to an article written by David Goldman on CNNMoney (2009), Microsoft’s operating system Windows Vista was a great disappointment for both users and the company itself soon after its release on January 30, 2007. Microsoft did not observe such a sales fall for the last twenty three years since the company came out as a public company: The introduction of Windows Vista was expected to bring $14.1 billion US dollars for Microsoft. In an interview with NBC News earlier in the year 2006, Bill Gates, Microsoft Corporation's Chairman believed that he was investing in the key-cash generator. Before Vista's official launch, the company spent another $500 million US dollars on a global marketing campaign with a goal to reach impressions of 6.6 billion (Loren Baker. Alpha Brand Media. 2007). However, it turned out that the sales rate in the department which produce this operating system fell by 16% compared to the previous quarter, the end-users showed that they were very unenthusiastic about using Windows Vista despite the fact that Microsoft had invested eight to nine billion US dollars to develop both Vista and the later version of Microsoft’s Office.

The failure was very unfortunate for Microsoft to withstand. Before the product launch, Chairman Bill Gates stated that he would definitely delay the release of Windows Vista if the testing of beta version proved that there was any shortcoming. However, the demand from Microsoft users somehow put more pressure to the company to release the product as quickly as possible. Steve Ballmer, Microsoft CEO’s during an interview with NBC News, showed his assurance to Microsoft's customers that they would never experience such a lengthy wait as they were
enduring while waiting for Vista to come out then (NBCNews.com, 2006). This statement shows that the company's top-notch managers were highly concerned about pushing the release date of the product intensively and therefore, made a mistake that they later on regretted: the system was instable and incompatible, performed slowly and the product activation was very problematic. (Charlie Demerjian. The Inquirer, 2007).

From Microsoft's failure, there surely are plenty lessons to learn. The pre-launch marketing campaign had certain elements that influence the demand and the expectation of customers. In preparation for a launch, it is crucial to get as much attention to a product before its release to the market. However, the company should keep their own stand against the consumers' push and eagerness, to have realistic belief in their product whether it is fully ready or not, especially for large and international companies with a lot of loyal customers to please and keep up with. Despite the fact consumers would be rather disappointed if it took too long for the products to be available in the market, a truly blockbuster with a perfect compatibility between price and value can eventually win consumers back. Consumers nowadays are actually very conscious and they will realize that the product was worth waiting for sooner or later.

**Reason 2: The role of ego in product failure**

There are probably many and many ideas being created by human minds each and every day. Some of them are good, some of them are practical, some of them bring money but some of them just had better stay only in our imagination. In product design process, biases can be very dangerous especially if the biases are in the mind of product creators. It means that the viewpoints of users who actually will be the ones paying for the product are neglected, or ignored. A belief that the product designers have in their products are not a strong indicator for the products' success in the reality.

The next case of AT&T reflects the role of ego in the company's failure with their picture-phone which was launched and re-launched for many tries and still be unsuccessful. AT&T introduced the picture-phone for the first time in 1964 but only launched the product 6 years later in 1970. The sales witnessed a drop in 1973
because of a lack of demand. After AT&T, other companies in the same industry started to follow this fad and launched their own versions of picture-phone in the following years of 1982, 1986 and 1991. The whole idea of a picture-phone was not received very well by the consumers and there was certainly no demand for such creation, people didn't find enough value in buying the products. However, being the first to launch the product line, AT&T tried again and re-launched the products domestically in 1992 but still received the same reaction from the market. Not stopping there, the company announced the plans for another re-launch in 1996. (Wall Street Journal, June 19, 1995. Case interpreted by Schultz, 2001).

The case represents a need bias create by overconfidence of product creators. According to Schultz, need bias is the gap between actual consumer needs and product designer's perception of customer needs on a managerial level. The actual consumer needs, defined by the term "stated consumer needs" are statements directly from consumers, what they say about the product. This kind of data can be obtained from marketing research studies. To avoid failures related to the ego and overconfidence, every product designer should not be unilateral and not only wrapped up with their own ideal in a product; they should go out of their mind and simply seek for a realistic target group with defined demands. It means that instead of adopting a classic 4Ps analysis, the product designers should work on enhancing meanings and increasing consumers’ emotional attachment to a product (Lockwood, 2010).

**Reason 3: The product delivers confusing message, restrainedly strong branding**

The following cases of Coors and Colgate as an example for mistakes that led to product failure in connection to the delivery of confusing message by keeping the lead brand name for completely different product lines.

Since 1873, Coors as one of the leading beer brewery has used the Rocky Mountain's spring water for brewing their iconic beers that became many people's favorite. In 1990, Coors introduced "Rocky Mountain Sparkling Water" using the Coors logo and brand name of their phenomenal alcoholic product line. The product was soon discontinued due to the fact that Coors' loyal customers were so used to the brand's image of alcoholic drinks, and the new drink simply didn't seem to be very appealing
to them at all. (Daily Finance, AOL.com). However, in 2009, according to CNN Money, an anonymous woman wrote about her own perception of the product for Woman’s Day dot com, showing the fact that the product was once her favorite and it was unfortunate for the product to be discontinued. "That Coors Sparkling Water was the best sparkling water I ever bought. It was very wet, and thirst quenching. When we heard it was being discontinued, we bought up every case we could in town, but alas, quickly drank through them. Almost 20 years later, and I still miss it.” – She said. In 1990, Coors officials talked optimistically on Business Day of The New York Times about their coming new product of bottled beverage: Rocky Mountain Sparkling Water. They believed that this product would diversify the company’s beverage line and give their customers new options. Adding to the company’s view about their own opportunity in the new product introduction, Coors officials also stated that the product was expected to reduce the country’s alcohol consumption, so it was launched with a socially good reason behind it. The idea was not bad; the product has its own good value that was verified by consumers who actually gave it a try. The only problem was that it was confusing to connect an established and phenomenal brand’s image which has totally opposite specifications to the new product, therefore blocking its own opportunity to be tried out by a larger group of consumers.

Another case to represent product brand extension failure is the introduction of Colgate’s Kitchen Entrees (Haig, 2003). We surely do not find that idea very appetizing if you know that Colgate’s is a strong renowned brand for its dental care products. The simple idea for this product was that consumers could have a Colgate meal and then brush their teeth with Colgate products. The company also tried for bath soap, wanting to make Colgate a friendly brand that would be present in consumers’ daily lives more frequently. However, none of these product extensions were successful.

**Reason 4: Poor concept and bad differentiation**

A marketing fad is never a success assurance for launching a new product, yet so many companies have fell for it without a proper marketing research. The next and last case is about Pepsi’s failure in differentiation by applying an inappropriate
concept to their new product back in the year 1992, namely Crystal Pepsi. There were two famous marketing fads in the America around 90s, which were the "mini" fad and the "clear" fad. Crystal Pepsi was introduced to cola lovers with an image of purified, caffeine-free alternative for the normal cola. It tasted the same and carried the message of purity and health. The truth was that cola lovers hardly cared about healthy issues and healthy people hardly drank cola, therefore the new product was not appealing to any of these groups. Another fact was that Coca Cola's and Pepsi's mainstream cola drink with its traditional dark color had already established a defined product specification, it had to be dark, it had to taste like cola and it was with caffeine. The resistance to new products was tested out in this case: Crystal Pepsi was in the American market for about a year, from 1992 to 1993 and then discontinued (Zyman, 1999). When making a purchasing decision with their own money, consumers chose a product that they were already familiar with because a crystal clear cola drink with exactly the same taste with the normal cola was definitely not a distinctive differentiation. Hence it was not convincing enough for consumers to make an alternative in purchasing. David C. Novak was credited to the introduction of Crystal Pepsi concept. For an interview in 2007, he admitted that it was the best idea he had ever had, and it was the worst executed one on the other hand, but still, was a huge learning experience: "Once you have a great idea and you blow it, you don't get a chance to resurrect it" - Novak said. (Flaim, 2007). The traditional Pepsi drink still have a constant number of bottles sold every day until now, this case emphasizes a lesson summed up in one saying: "If there is no problem, do not try to fix it". The cola drink has reached its position to be a great and well-established norm, so the image of it can hardly be more successfully replaced.

All of the cases mentioned above emphasizes the importance of marketing research for the success of new product's entrance. In most cases, on a managerial level, the design of products and the decision to launch them with a great expectation became very unilateral when managers, designers and product developers would rather assumed how consumers would perceive the products to actually find out what consumers had to say about it. We, as consumers, surely do not spend for cool things that are useless, or things that do not give any value to us. We seriously need proper
and effective marketing research methods, the kinds that involve consumers sharing their opinions about the products before their official launch.

2.5 **Consumer behavior and its impact to new product development**

In the previous chapter, the role of consumers and their opinions about a product were mentioned as an essential to every business. Consumer behavior is the study of how the consumers react in situations requiring making choice of purchases, acquiring purchases, using the products, and disposing of the products. In some cases, the study is also about finding ideas and how to satisfy consumers’ needs (Kuester, 2012). Shifting to this chapter, we will specifically consider consumers as individuals and go through different profiles of consumer behavior categorized by generations, gender and personal experience. The focus will be on the age group that represents the target group of Product Sampling Center model i.e. Generation Y, an analysis of the importance of female consumers as decision makers and how personal experience can contribute to the process of new product development.

**The generations and shared values within them**

According to Strauss and Howe (2000) in their book "Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation", in general, there were four generation types with shared characteristics within each generation showing that individuals who belong to a certain generation archetype possess somewhat the same values, believes, attitudes and lifestyles. Broadly speaking, those shared characteristics are useful to understand each generation’s perception towards a situation, an event or an object. Precisely, this theory is practical for business-oriented thinkers in order to find the right trend or the right position for a product when targeting a particular age group.

There is no exact time period to define the start and the end of each generation, since the terms for these generations started out in the United States of America and nowadays, the range has had cultural and national variations in range since when they became more popular to consumer studies all around the World:
The term "Baby boomers" or the "Elderly" first appeared in the Washington Post in 1970 according to the Oxford English Dictionary, addressing to people who were born from 1943 to 1960 and spending their childhood in the Post-World War II, while in Canada the age range is between 1947 - 1966 (The Globe and Mail, 2006).

The term "Generation X" was introduced for the first time by Robert Capa, in the early 1950s, but was only made popular in 1991 by Canadian novelist Douglas Coupland. The book, namely "Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture" were about young adults' lifestyles in the last few year of the 1980s. Generation X addresses to people who were born from 1960 to 1985. (Coupland, 1991)

Lastly, "Generation Y" or sometimes referred as "Millennials" is a term to define a group of people born between the years from 1986 to the early years of 2000s. This term was firstly used in a magazine article in 1993 published by Advertising Age (August 30, 1993. p. 16).

Generally and inventively speaking, we can find some objects that are familiar to people from each generation, e.g. a radio as a common invention for daily use for "Baby Boomers", a television for "Generation X" and the Internet and a cell-phone for "Generation Y". Respectively, we know that these technologies and inventions became available to people in different countries at different time. For instance, the first commercial cell-phone sold in the U.S in 1984 was the "Motorola DynaTAC 8000X" (Motorola History Timeline, 2011), while the mobile phone network has only became commercially available in Vietnam since the year 1993 (VietnamNet, 2013).

In connection with the introduction of advanced technology in each country, an assumption that generations' ranges in the developing countries start and end later in comparison to the developed countries, was stated by many authors and professionals (Armour, 2005; Braid, 2007; Sheahan, 2005; Warner, 2010).

The figure shown below is a chart created by Professor Prashant Mehta, National Law University of Jodhpur, India to illustrate differences between three main generations that are most influential in today's society and economy using theory and distinctive descriptions of these generations from Strauss and Howe's resource mentioned above at the beginning of this section.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Generation X</th>
<th>Generation Y</th>
<th>Elderly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consumer Type</strong></td>
<td>Sincerity appeals</td>
<td>Smart and aware</td>
<td>Motivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role in Family</strong></td>
<td>Decision makers and Information Gatherers</td>
<td>Strong Influencers</td>
<td>Decision makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Habits</strong></td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>TV and Internet</td>
<td>Newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purchase Behavior</strong></td>
<td>Materialistic</td>
<td>Savvy, Pragmatic</td>
<td>Narcissist, Consumption oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technology</strong></td>
<td>Use technology</td>
<td>Assume technology</td>
<td>Have technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Price vs. Quality</strong></td>
<td>Price Oriented</td>
<td>Value Oriented</td>
<td>Conspicuous consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude towards brands</strong></td>
<td>Rebel against hype</td>
<td>Rebel against hype</td>
<td>Response to image building type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Loyalty</strong></td>
<td>Attitude of getting the best deal</td>
<td>As long as convenient</td>
<td>Brand loyal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diversity</strong></td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>Celebrate</td>
<td>As a cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shopping behavior</strong></td>
<td>Individualistic and self-reliant</td>
<td>Individualistic and self-inventive</td>
<td>Mass movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appealing themes</strong></td>
<td>Beverages, snacks, footwear and music</td>
<td>Entertainment, clothes and accessories, health</td>
<td>Groceries and household necessities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 1** PROFESSOR PRASHANT MEHTA’S COMPARISON CHART BETWEEN GEN X, GEN Y AND THE ELDERLY

The bar on the left hand side provide some parameters such as purchasing behaviors, shopping behaviors, product loyalty, perception of price and quality to name a few. From the comparison chart, we can clearly see the differences between the generations that summed up Strauss and Howe's theory to understand consumer behaviors. Consideration to these age groups, especially to the Generation Y, is a very essential consumer behavior study for new product development, as the development process involves evolutionary changes that have very much to do with time and generations. We have witnessed the rapid development of technology that
makes almost everything faster and more convenient, and Generation Y nowadays is
the driving force for all the changes that were made by them and to serve them
(Draves and Coates, 2004).

According to Twege (2006), these people in Generation Y are more aware of
themselves, show more interests in recent trends. Their spending are more freely
and inclined to fashion and style, prioritize convenience and reduced shopping time
by coming to the supermarkets and big shopping malls to shop for all in one place.
Before making purchases, they spend less time to discuss with other people but
rather express self-confidence by looking for information through extensive channels
such as the Internet, social medias, TVs and magazines. Therefore, the new product
development process is influenced greatly by this generation. More advanced
technologies are introduced, more creative marketing campaigns are planned,
smarter communications, all of these create needs and reasons to buy.

In addition to the theoretical basis about consumer behavior by age groups and
generations, we also have different perspectives and views of how consumer
behaviors can differ in relation to gender and personal experiences which we will
shortly discuss in the following section.

**Consumer behaviors by gender and personal experiences**

The study about consumer behaviors related to the difference between genders has
been examined by researchers for more than four decades (Palan, University of Iowa,
2001). Consumer behavior study is not only useful for finding out which factors
capture attentions from which of the two genders, but also for applying marketing
methods to target the right audience. According to Dr. Noel (2009), the reactions
towards marketing stimuli between men and women were different because of their
roles in the society historically of which men were dominated by agentic goals and
women by communal goals. This means that men were expected to play dominant
and assertive roles while women, in contrast, were the ones who established
relationships and took care of the family. However, the situation had been changing
since the 1950s and today we can see a society in which men share some of the
communal goals and women are taking on more and more male-dominant jobs, and becoming more and more independent.

Particularly in making advertisements, consumer behavior study related to gender difference was practically applied. For instance, the uses of gender representatives for advertisements have been discussed very much whether portray of male or female model should be used for a certain product (Caterall and Maclaran, 2002). In general, female consumers are very influential in making decision of to-go or not-to-go and to-buy or not-to-buy. For instance, women make or influence approximately 85% of all purchasing decisions, and they purchase slightly over 50% of traditional male product (Walter, The Next Web, 2012).

However, based on precise psychology studies, modern marketers support and rely more on the theory of gender identity in applied consumer behavior studies nowadays (Noel, 2009). Gender identity is a common term in psychology, it explains that both masculine and feminine traits are believed to co-exist in one individual. When one person displayed different attitudes and traits, he or she would appear as more masculine or feminine (Gill et al., 1987). Consequently, we could have more and varied types of consumers from masculine female to feminine male in addition to traditional concept about male and female figures that we have discussed earlier in this section. This study suggests a wider scope of practices and it seems to be more accurate in the reality, since the consumer profiles and personas have been evolving greatly since the introduction of new technologies which have form many diverse lifestyles. There were many inventions that helped doing the chores faster, people started to have more time for leisure, for work and for their families and friends.

Consumers' perceptions of products and services are also reflected from their personal experiences, or more accurately their memories after the interaction with the certain product or one product sharing similar functions and value with others. Psychologist Daniel Kahneman gave a speech at TED conference about how our memories and experiences can be very different. He said that it was the memories which affect our decision later, whether or not we want to purchase the product or
to reorder the service again. Our experiences have very little influence on that decision:

“We actually don’t choose between experiences, we choose between memories of experiences. And even when we think about the future, we don’t think of our future normally as experiences. We think of our future as anticipated memories.” -- Daniel Kahneman, TED Talks. February 2010

In the same talk, Kahneman gave an example about restaurant dining to indicate that our memories had a great influence on our perception of how good a product or service was, providing that the settings including perfect food, wonderful atmosphere, beautiful table displays were only the circumstances that we experience. When an unexpectedly negative event occurred, for instance, the waiter accidentally spilled the coffee onto our lap, it created a bad memory, associated with the negative experience itself. Kahneman pointed out that the bad memory would not only prevent us from coming back to that particular place but also cause us to share about it to other people when we were asked about how our dinner was. (Narrated by Peter N. Murray, 2012 on Psychology Today)

From this insight, we should note that a product or service being used by consumers only give them experience. In contrast, building up positive emotional bounds between consumers and a product or a service would create a good memory that would balance or even win over bad memory if there was any.

In conclusion, the literature reviews of consumer behavior in this section provide the concrete premises and foundation to the making of thesis research. The knowledge of consumer behavior is very important, especially when thinking about piloting a marketing research model that must provide the consumers the best memory of their experience through the interaction with the products, the services in a public place, with the company representatives as well as other consumers.
2.6 Consumer behavior of Vietnamese people

In a report by Nguyen, Kwon, Lantz and Loeb featuring in the journal of International Marketing (2003) about the purchasing behavior of Vietnamese consumers as a representative for urban impulse buying behavior of consumers in transitional economy, it is very interesting to note that despite cultural differences consumers from transitional economies e.g. Vietnam may share some common behaviors and propensities with consumers in advanced economies (Journal of International Marketing, 2003). Following the same pattern of other transitional economies, Vietnam's economy witnessed a rapid growth in the middle class particularly in big cities (Speece and Nair, 2000). Through the media, the Vietnamese middle class was more and more exposed to Western products and lifestyles (Cui and Liu, 2001).

We can reflect on previous chapter and associate Vietnamese consumer behavior of young people in their twenties nowadays with Emre Olcer's opinion about Vietnamese consumers:

"Consumers are very price conscious at the moment, but they purchasing decisions also very much depend on product quality, their income and market sentiment" -- Emre Olcer, General Manager of P&G Vietnam (Business Report of Vietnam Economic Times, July 2012)

Olcer's opinion showed us the similarity in definition between today's Vietnamese consumers and the general shared values of both generation X and generation Y. The inclination was more on generation Y since Olcer stressed that Vietnamese consumers' decision depended on the quality of the products, as well as their income and how they view the market.

These foundation and findings about Vietnamese consumer behavior affirm and connect Vietnamese consumer behavior to the literature reviews of Western consumer behavior. It is an important linkage to be made because the studies related to consumer behavior in Vietnam were rather limited. Accordingly, this approach makes sure that all of the supportive materials are relevant and appropriate to the topic of this thesis.
3 Existing approaches

In order to build up stronger foundation for the idea of establish a model of the Product Sampling Center, the author has collected additional data, facts and statistics as well as conducting a pre-research interview. All details of the collection of mentioned data are presented in this chapter.

3.1 Similar projects and cases

In April 2011, a campaign supported by the collaboration between the Vietnamese Business Support Association (BSA) and the Vietnam's Good of High Quality Association, namely 'Month of New Products' was run in popular supermarkets in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. The venues belong to Co.op Mart and Big C supermarket chains. The visitors to the event were also consumers who went shopping on the premises. The time scheme was from 8:30a.m. until 9:00p.m. daily, with the participation of ten seeded companies in consumer goods manufacture. (Campaign Report of BSA's projects. Vietnamese Business Support Association News, 2011)

The campaign was carried out throughout the month of April, the first two weeks in some Co.op Mart supermarkets and the last two weeks in some Big C supermarkets. The event includes activities such as sampling and testing of products, interactions with public figures and celebrities who are ambassadors and representatives for some brands, lucky draw for a free give-away, speeches, game-show and video clips displayed for the presentation of the new products featuring in the event. The products showcased at this event did not officially enter the market at that moment, as this was the last step of product testing before their actual launch. Some manufacturers also worked in cooperation with each other by showcasing their products together in one action, e.g. Kim Hang INOX pot, Namilux stove, Tai Ky food for food preparation, and Minh Long Ceramics for food presentation.

The concept of this case event is almost identical to the concept of a Product Sampling Center, except that the time span of campaign was only temporary. Nonetheless, the insights from this existing campaign provide very practical and
useful information regarding customers' reception and reaction to the approaches that were already performed at the campaign's event.

**Campaign Outcome**

According to the Big C supermarket chain's external executive officer, Ms. Duong Thi Quynh Trang, 95% of the goods sold by Big C are domestic products from Vietnam; and Big C supermarket chain's contribution to this event, by providing a venue for the 'Month of New Product' campaign, was essential to bring manufacturers and consumers closer together. This activity help manufacturers to build trust as the companies’ representatives at the events were mostly managers or leaders from product development department, resulting in many companies claimed that they got more in touch with the actual needs of their customers.

During the time of the event, Ms Ho Trang, Marketing Executive Manager of Rang Dong Plastics Company shared her opinion at an interview about her concern for launching a new product: "Besides difficulties of bringing ideas together and come up with a new design, most of manufacturers like we are, really concern about the approaches for entering a new products to the market". She also stated that this kind of campaign had been a great help and reduced the difficulties that a majority of Vietnamese manufacturing companies had been facing. (Business Support Association News. Campaign Summary April 20, 2011)

From consumers' - visitors' point of view, according to a collection of customer satisfaction follow-up survey, this campaign was a chance for them to speak out and communicate their need with the companies' representatives, as well as receive advice on product choice and usage that would best suit their needs. With a total number of three thousands visitors daily, one third of the total daily visitors took part in the game-show and pop-quiz about the new products, three hundreds freebies were given away daily as rewards, and approximately two thousands visitors participated in product trial and sampling, this campaign had been a successful foundation to develop the concept of a Product Sampling Center.
3.2 Facts and statistics as supportive elements to the design of thesis' researches

The facts and statistics which are presented in this section assist to the conduction of the quantitative and qualitative research of the thesis. These figures are elements which support the formation of the survey and interview forms. Information of previous studies are traced back a few years ago to detect changes in consumer's behavior and perception, as well as manufacturers' practices of conducting marketing researches. Relevant issues, such as the attitude and perception of the locals towards domestic and foreign products, shopping habits of Vietnamese people in big cities and shopping trends of young people in their twenties, are the theoretical base about customer behavior for the conduction of survey questions. In addition, reports regarding shared insights of credible business magazine with managers in the leading companies in Vietnam are collected to generate ideas for the interview questions in later part of research methodology.

Facts and statistics that utilize quantitative research questions

In this section, information was adopted from general research banks of FTA Research & Consultant and Nielsen Vietnam; the information is published online and is non-confidential. These two firms are the leading marketing research companies in Vietnam, serving big names of both national and multinational enterprises.

FTA Research & Consultant, based in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam, has been operating in the field of market and marketing research for 10 years, having their representative offices in the major cities all over the country. In 2009, the company became the first among Southeast Asian marketing research companies to receive ISO 20252 certificate from British Standards Institution (BSI) (FTA Research & Consultant. Company Profile from VCCI - Vietnam's Chamber of Commerce and Industry)

Nielsen Vietnam is a branch of Nielsen International, a credible multinational marketing research company based in New York, U.S.A presenting in more than 100
countries in the World. In Vietnam, Nielsen Company was founded in 1993 and has been one of the leading marketing research companies in Vietnam (vn.nielsen.com)

Nielsen Vietnam conducts a quarter of a million interviews every year. Since 2004, the company has had a continuous monthly Retail Audit service covering 90% of the urban population as well as regular rural measurement (Nielsen Vietnam Pocket Book 2012)

**Evidence n.1**

According to a research report conducted in October 2009 about the *attitude of locals towards domestic and foreign products* in a 15-page report, it is remarkable to know that consumers' recognition for a brand or product does not associate with level of preference (FTA Research & Consultant. Report #8. October, 2009); the report shows that the consumers mostly prefer purchasing imported products because of the high quality, practical designs, product and brand reliability and worthiness. However, most of the consumers still purchased domestic products for the reasons that the price was affordable, and the quality is still acceptable. 71% of responses showed that they relied on domestic products with 'Vietnamese high-quality goods' label (see Abbreviation and Terms Explanation for more details). In the same report, consumers wished that domestic products could have better quality, more functional and varied designs.

The role of evidence n.1 in thesis research

This evidence triggers the idea of making question that combines the reaction when consumers associate 'Vietnamese high-quality goods' label with their perception about 'price versus value'. It also questions their loyalty towards home brands.

**Evidence n.2**

In another research provided by Nielsen Vietnam to go through some remarkable and useful research questions provided in Vietnam's Good trends Study 2011. The number of respondents is three hundreds equally from two biggest cities in Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City is the representative of city in the South and Hanoi capital
represents urban shopping habit of people from Northern Vietnam. The result is illustrated in the figures below.

![Figure 5: Nielsen Vietnam's Good Trends Study 2011](image)

* Significantly higher percentage

*Source: Nielsen Vietnam. Public reports 2011*

In figure 5, both current situation and trend of local products purchasing habit are presented. For the option 'I already purchase more local products', there is a significant difference as shown in the percentage between the two cities; only 2% of respondents from Ho Chi Minh city (HCMC) said that they purchased more local products in their daily life, the percentage in Hanoi is very much higher (14%). It actually is relevant, considering the facts provided in earlier section of this thesis (See 1.4 Country profile), residents of Ho Chi Minh city were more exposed to the idea of purchasing Western products and experiencing the use of imported products during the French colonization and American imperialism, while people in Hanoi prefer home brands. For the purchasing trend, there is a sense of uncertainty towards purchasing more home brands for people who reside in Ho Chi Minh city.
The role of evidence n.2 in thesis research

Supporting evidence n.1, evidence n.2 facilitates the formation of question n.11a and n.10b. It is about the reaction of consumers to 'Vietnamese high-quality goods' label (see abbreviations and terms explanation for definition of this label).

Evidence n.3

The next research result is also provided by Nielsen Vietnam in another report in 2011 about grocery and consumer products purchasing habit of residents in the two biggest cities in Vietnam: Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Figure 3 shows that nowadays consumers in Vietnam and particularly in the urban areas are more aware of supermarkets' private brands as an option for substitution. Brands belong to Big C, Co.op Mart and Metro are among the top three most recognized. Besides, 95% of respondents showed their consciousness towards purchasing products that are more healthy.

The role of evidence n.3 in thesis research

This evidence facilitates the generation of Question 10a, 9b and 18. Question n.10a and 9b in the thesis quantitative research are the same; however, they are presented in different sections based on respondents’ segmentation when they make certain choice. These questions are about preference in choice and attitude between domestic and foreign products. The supermarkets' private brands are 100% domestic.

An element of question 18 is about restriction to try new product, one of the given hints connects to the awareness in purchasing products that influence consumers' health.

Evidence n.4

Particularly in Vietnam, the first supermarket named Minimart, which was a state-run enterprise, was opened in 1993. However it was very soon closed after only four days of operation due to insufficient stock levels; the demand was so great even though retailing price in this supermarket was between 20 - 30% higher than traditional retailers (Venard, 1996). This failure, as a matter of fact, indicates great opportunity, and in fact a few years later, several supermarket chains were introduced in Ho Chi Minh city, following by the entrance of supermarket chains in Hanoi some years later (Cadilhon et al., 2006).

Nearly seven decades before the introduction of supermarkets in Vietnam, the World's first true supermarket chain 'King Kullen' was opened in the United States of America on August 4, 1930 (The place where supermarketing was born, Mass Market Retailers 19, no.9, June 17, 2002, pg. 172).

These bonding facts imply how Vietnamese manufacturers whose scope of business is on fast moving consumer goods (FMCGs) start utilizing the approach of giving away product samples at supermarkets by following the trend which has been successfully practiced in Western countries, due to the similarity in the nature of business environment within supermarket's premises. This practice is a common benchmarking process that has been applied openly and it is very hard to track down which company was the first to apply this practice in Vietnam. However, the
outbreak of product sampling in supermarkets reached its peak and became most popular in the beginning of 2000s (Tran, University of Finance and Marketing, 2010)

In the same report of Tran, some customer behavior aspects were also studied including attitudes and experience towards the crowdedness in supermarkets' premises in question n.9 (figure 4) and n.10 (figure 5). This was a graduation report for Bachelor's degree in Marketing, adopted from Library of University of Finance and Marketing in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam; the topic was about improving customers' satisfaction while experiencing shopping activities in supermarkets, there were 47% male and 53% female of a total amount of 300 respondents. The report was in Vietnamese language.

![Attitude towards crowdedness in supermarkets at rush hours](image)

**FIGURE 8 ATTITUDE TOWARDS CROWDEDNESS IN SUPERMARKET AT RUSH HOURS**

Source: Library of University of Finance and Marketing, HCMC. Tran, Final report 2010

Figure 7 was taken from results of question number 9 in the report of Tran, 2010. The majority of respondents which took 42% answered that they strongly do not like the crowd at rush hours but they still have to shop at this time of the day. Question number 10 in the same report was only for people who answered that they 'somewhat do not like the crowd' and 'strongly do not like the crowd', which is 'In your opinion, what are the reasons that caused crowdedness?'. This is a very
interesting multiple choice question; the results are shown in the following figure below.

FIGURE 9 REASONS FOR CROWDEDNESS IN SUPERMARKETS AT RUSH HOURS FROM VISITORS' POINT OF VIEW

(multiple answers: one respondents can choose more than one option, resulting in total percentage exceeding 100%)

Source: Library of University of Finance and Marketing, HCMC. Tran, Final report 2010

The percentage highlighted in red was certainly a good indicator and directly relevant information regarding product sampling. It is interesting to note that product sampling programs were actually one of the most assumed reasons for the supermarkets to get negatively crowded (expression was negative because this was 51.25% of 240 visitors who belong to the groups of people who strongly and somewhat do not like the crowd in supermarket at rush hours).

The role of evidence n.4 in thesis research

Evidence n.4 facilitates the making of question n.15 and question n.17 of thesis' quantitative research. The concern is focused on the activeness of shoppers towards taking product samples, in the interaction with crowded environment.
Evidence n.5

In June, 2013, the thesis author took several field trips to the most common supermarket locations in Ho Chi Minh city to observe the arrangements of Big C and Co.op Mart supermarkets in District 1 (Co.op Mart Cong Quynh: Manager Tran Thi Tuyet Hong), District 3 (Co.op Mart Nguyen Dinh Chieu: Manager Nguyen Thi Thu Thuy) and Phu Nhuan District (Big C Mien Dong: Manager Doan Hong Dung). The choice of the location to be visited was made according to the list of supermarkets featuring in the pilot product sampling program 'Month of new products' organized by Business Supports Association in April 2011 (Review Chapter 3.1 Similar project and case). The purpose of these field trips was to examine if space had an influence on the positive experience of visitors. The limitation of the field trips was that the author was not present when actual events took place. However, with the support from supermarkets' managers, the author was able to gather the information needed about the arrangement of the product sampling events mentioned above.

Findings

(1) The floor plans of the premises of all three supermarkets were not designed to allow space for specific exhibitions. Therefore, the shop managers had to rearrange shelves and counters and use the space of corridors and entrance halls.

(2) There were not enough parking spaces for visitors at both Co.op Mart premises. Besides, Co.op Mart Nguyen Dinh Chieu in District 3 actually had a problem with handling traffic in the parking lot. The Big C supermarket in the Phu Nhuan district observed no problem with parking.

(3) Complaints about pocket picking were increasing during the events.

The role of evidence n.5 in thesis research

Before the actual field trip to these locations, the author had an assumption that product sampling activities conducted on these premises might not go very smoothly because of the lack of space. On a daily basis, the supermarkets in populated areas like above mentioned districts are usually crowded even without any special event. This evidence helps to clarify this assumption and to get information about the
organization and the arrangement of these events. The evidence supports the making of question n.17 in this thesis’ quantitative data gathering through a form of online survey.

These findings also support and reflect the issue emphasized in figure 5 about supermarket visitors' negative experiences of crowdedness in supermarkets at rush hours.

**Famous failures of big names in the Vietnamese market**

According to an article about marketing research for NPD's failure by Vietnamese Business Supports Association news channel, the new product failure rate of Vietnamese manufacturers is about 80-90%, with 80% of the surveyed consumers complaining about the lack of innovative ideas. This is a shockingly high rate, which is considerably disappointing and discouraging. Nevertheless, the multinational enterprises operating in the Vietnamese market had a product failure rate of about 60%. (BSA News. 'Enormous investment, is success guaranteed?' July, 2011)

The case of Unilever with a tea product "Tra Cay Da" was a good example of how over-optimism towards a new product later pays the price. "Tra Cay Da" was promoting one of the most traditional, specific type of tea commercialized in a tea bag, the advertisement was very well-invested and well-directed, using a nostalgic and touching image of Vietnamese countryside. The product designers were quite sure that every Vietnamese person craved for this specific type of tea, and putting it in a teabag for more convenience would be a great success. But it clearly was not.

As for green tea, it is a non-verbal truth that consumers expect it to be in a green color package, and this type of tea was perceived to be served in a rather small pot, tea leaves are supposed to be put directly and scattered into the pot, the tea is consumed in a meditating atmosphere not on-the-go as the manufacturer tried to promote it. The sense of tradition in Asian countries and particularly in Vietnam is very strong. It can take away a fortune, but once understood correctly, it can also give a bigger fortune. (BSA News, 2011)

Another case is that of Laser Beer, trying to promote fresh bottled tap beer to take some of the market share of local street bars. The problem, once again, was to
assume that the consumers would like this idea a lot to have fresh tap beer in the bottle in their own home; while the truth was that fresh tap beer was enjoyed within a large group of men, outside, at a street vendor and clearly, it has to come directly out from the tap to be truly fresh. (BSA News, July 2011)

These cases of failure appear to be incredibly unbelievable for such large companies to make a simple mistake, as we only expected them to have wonderful competence and know-how. Commonly, there is nothing wrong with having a primary new idea about developing a new product, but it is essential to note that the expectation should not go over reality. That is exactly where product sampling and precisely, a Product Sampling Center as a tool for Marketing Research for NPD is needed.

*The role of case collection in thesis research*

These case studies give valuable information, which indicates the importance of marketing research for a new product entrance. Specifically, the informative facts from these cases contribute to the making of interview questions for qualitative data gathering from the point of view of the business representatives.

To sum it all up, having all of these additional data, facts and summary is an advantage for the throughout creation of methodology. Nonetheless, possessing the right and adequate profound materials will help the researches stay closely on track and tackle the most relevant issues. These sets of information are very supportive and directly served the formation of the online questionnaire and company interviews which we will soon discuss about in the following chapter.

4 Methodology

The goal of this thesis is to find out if the idea of the Product Sampling Center model, as an optimized marketing research tool, is practical and well-received in the two main cities in Vietnam. The following research methods are applied to engage both Vietnamese consumers and manufacturers operating in Vietnam's market.
4.1 Research methods

The thesis applies both quantitative research and qualitative research methods, as mentioned in the chapter's opening. We certainly aim to achieve the most accurate, unbiased and multi-dimensional result that includes viewpoints of both consumers and manufacturers for the same topic. Therefore, the combination of these two methods assures that our primary goal is met in the end of the research. The research forms were made using Google Drive, the data was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 19.0.1 software.

Quantitative research method

The qualitative Research method was executed using an online form of questionnaire to reveal the habit of purchasing, using and testing new products of Vietnamese consumers. The questionnaire form was created to target consumers who currently reside in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi; the two most populated and developed cities in Vietnam.

Qualitative research method

In addition to the quantitative research questionnaire, an online form to interview some representatives of Vietnamese manufacture companies was also made. The companies' representatives were asked about their companies' marketing research activity, as well as their opinion towards the idea of the Product Sampling Center model.

Research Scope

The research scope of this research defines what research areas are covered. As the idea of the Product Sampling Center model is considered new and rather unknown at the moment, the research areas were limited to tackle the most relevant issues concerning the practicality of the model in real life. For the moment, only residents in the two main cities of Vietnam (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) were surveyed. However, the questionnaire form was published online so there was no geographic
restriction. Nevertheless, by following the research scope, the inputs which were of people who did not reside in the above mentioned cities were considered invalid and left out of the data collection summary and analysis.

4.2 The description of the process

At the early stage of generating questions for both quantitative and qualitative researches, ideas were recorded in the form of scripted notes. There were no restriction in idea generation or arranged order of questions at this stage, therefore, the goal was to collect as many assumptions as possible.

The next step was to create the first questionnaire form for the quantitative research by going through a selective process of keeping the most relevant assumptions and eliminating the least appropriate issues from the questionnaire form. This questionnaire was only a foundation for the final one since it had to go through a survey piloting process which was later on discussed in the section "Report on pilot survey and amendment to the previous version". For the qualitative research, since the complexity of the interview questionnaire was low, the questions were not critically considered, there was no significant rearrangement, and the changes were very small afterwards and more likely for the purpose of making the questions more understandable.

The survey questionnaire for the quantitative research was then tested out, this process was explained in details in the latter part of the methodology chapter. After the piloting process, the questionnaire form was considerably changed, more logics were added and language correction was made.

4.3 Survey questionnaire and interview questions

This chapter will present the details of the research questionnaire and interview questions, together with the explanation providing logics of why certain questions were made and for what purposes they served.
Survey questionnaire

The survey consists of eighteen (18) questions, in the form of online questionnaire using Google Docs for survey design, divided by the use of some logics to target respondents more effectively. Some of the questions, as mentioned in chapter/section 3.2 of this thesis are benchmarked from previous research conducted by FTA Research & Consultant company in 2009 to find out if there actually is a considerably change after a few years. The survey is designed to save the respondents' time by skipping irrelevant questions according to their inputs. The logics are illustrated in the figure 3 below.

Section 1: The first five general compulsory questions are the same for every respondent. These questions ask for the most basic information to form simple but useful demographic profiles from the respondents such as age range, gender, place of residence, family size, and employment status. The last question about employment status sets the criteria to separate the whole number of respondents
into two groups: (1a) People who provide primary income to their household and (2a) people who do not.

Section 2: Basically, people who belong to the group (1a) as mentioned above got one more optional question about their approximate amount of income which is in three different ranges, together with the another five compulsory questions. These five questions in this section are slightly similar to the five questions that people in the second group (2a) have to answer in term of idea but the language is altered to it is more suitable to the context and the situation of the surveyed objects. So, in short the first group of respondents receives 6 questions and the second group of respondents receives 5 questions regarding their purchasing habits and preferences. The last question in this section once again divides respondents into two groups: (1b) People who use samples and trials a lot or to some extent; (2b) people who do not use samples and trials at all

Section 3: People who belong to group (2b) are directed straight to only one more open question about the reason(s) why they reject testing out samples and using trials of new products with some hints; while people who belong to group (1b) need to answer five more questions about their habits regarding testing of new products including what categories of products, how often etc. In addition to the five questions in section 3, respondents in group (1b) also got the only one question that people in group (2b) were asked. It is because even people who have answered that they do use samples would have experience of rejecting trying some specific products for some reasons.

Appendix 1 shows a detailed content of the questionnaire form.

This research method was used to reach a large group of consumers at a time by using surveying approach through a questionnaire form to collect many variables that will be summarized to numeric data and analyzed accordingly. This group of people was randomly surveyed and they represent all of the people who share the same geographic and cultural background. Each question directed to an assumption that needed to be clarified through given options that respondents were required to
choose from. The numeric data in percentage and sometimes in counting units reflects the common grounds that most people share.

The questions were generated based on the foundation and findings presented in the chapter of literature review. The literature reviews led to some assumptions that needed further clarifications. It was a result from combining given theoretical resources and the author's own critical thinking and reflection.

**Report on pilot survey and amendment to the previous version**

The pilot survey for the online questionnaire targeting Vietnamese consumers was presented to the total number of ten people, in which eight respondents were contacted in-person, and the survey was conducted following the ask-and-tell method. The surveyor read questions and respondents answered those questions one-by-one. For each question, the respondents were asked how understandable each question was and if the respondent has another way of putting the question so that it would make more sense to them. This piloting action assured that the respondents in actual research would understand the questions clearly, so that they are not confused and gives false answers. The validity of the research hence will be increased. It was also important to choose a rather extrovert type of respondents to do this pilot survey for the best results.

One other benefit of piloting the survey questionnaire before finalizing was that: the respondents were involved in sharing their own ideas and being able to suggest alternatives for the questionnaire form. In the end, the form was much more developed and questions were more relevant and clear.

**Interview questions**

The interview questionnaire was composed in order to find out how the Vietnamese manufacturers perceive the Product Sampling Center, as a new model, which helps them with conducting more reliable and effective marketing research, in term of time, costs and effort for their new products. The interview is in the form of an online questionnaire with 6 questions in total. There is also an online presentation
about the concept of the Product Sampling Center in Power Point format attached in the interview description for reference. This attachment assists respondents in getting to know the presented concept better so that they can give more accurate and relevant answer to the interview questions. Target companies are SMEs based in the two major cities: Ho Chi Minh city and Hanoi.

The description and explanation below will provide an idea about the reason why these questions are made and also what kind of expectation the author has from making each question.

Question number 1 and 2 were for identifying from which companies the respondents were and what their position were in that specific company

Question number 3: How marketing research is conducted in your company

This question is designed to find out how marketing research is conducted in the respondents’ companies. It is a multiple choice question with four available options to choose from. The first option is for companies which conduct in-house marketing research, the second option is for companies which outsource their marketing research to a marketing research company, the third option is for companies which have not yet done any official marketing research activities and the last option is for companies having no plan for such activities.

This question is important and it helped shape the big picture of how marketing researches are carried out. The result is expected to show which approach is preferred and whether outsourcing would take a considerable percentage.

Question number 4: What are the difficulties that your company faces in conducting marketing research?

This open question asks respondents about the difficulties their companies are facing up with while practicing marketing research for the new product development with some hints about budgeting, the nature of the products, other influences from inside or outside environments that affected the effectiveness in conducting such activities. This question is rather sensitive and it could generate answers that are confidential;
respondents are encouraged to give even general answers if they find it uncomfortable to discuss in details.

However, this question is the most important one because it helps us to understand their difficulties so that we will know if there is capacity for the Product Sampling Center to fit in and help them solving the problems they are having.

Question number 5: Reaction towards a given statement

This question was designed to clarify an assumption that the author had had about the way most Vietnamese companies conduct their marketing research and how effective the approach has been in their opinion. It was an assumption because the author’s knowledge of how these marketing activities were practically applied through personal observation was not strong enough to be a concrete theory to rely on. The statement is divided into two smaller phrases which are related to each other: the first phrase asks the company’s representative to reflect their experience and know-how from their familiarity in doing marketing research in Vietnam. The given first phrase assumes that ‘most Vietnamese companies nowadays conduct door-to-door marketing researches for the new product development’. The second phrase contains a statement that is ‘this approach is not very effective because consumers might be put in passive role when contacted in inappropriate time and so the results are not very reliable’. The two phrases together shape the statement and the respondents are asked to choose between three options which are: ‘yes, I totally agree’, ‘no, I totally disagree’ and ‘other opinion’ which gives respondents an opportunity to express their own opinion(s). That means, respondents who would choose the absolute agreement are supposed to agree to both phrases, respectively, respondents who would choose the absolute disagreement are supposed to disagree to both phrases. Respondents who choose ‘other opinion’ are supposed to disagree to either phrase and there is space for inputting own thoughts about the issue.

Question numbered 6: How beneficial do you think The Sampling Center will be to your business?

This question directly asks respondent to input their own thoughts and therefore, value the concept of the Product Sampling Center. The respondents are supposed to
evaluate the advantages and how these advantages benefit and solve the problems that the particular company has.

After all these forms were generated and made available online, the surveying and interview time was scheduled and then actual researches took place. The data was collected shortly and stored to be analyzed. The analysis of collected data was presented in the next chapter of the thesis.

5 Discussion

This chapter provides a complete analysis of the data which was collected by using quantitative and qualitative research methods discussed in the previous chapter. The thesis discussion not only analyzes the collected sets of data, but also expresses the author's reflection on the results of the research in connection with the previous assumptions and literature reviews. In addition, the limitations of the research were also discussed in order to provide the readers a more accurate and correct view of the thesis. Most importantly, this chapter will directly reply to the research question which was to prove that this idea of the Product Sampling Center was well-received by Vietnamese consumers and manufacturers. Hence, suggestions for further researches related to the topic of the thesis will also be made.

5.1 Analysis of research

This research study proved that there were some common tendencies and behaviors between Vietnamese consumers and those from other developed countries. Despite cultural differences, there were some similarities in the behaviors of the consumers from both cultural backgrounds. It means that, the new consumer behavior studies are proven to be practical as consumers are grouped by what they value rather than a collection of consumers' demographic data.

Online Survey Research result

The quantitative research questionnaire was open online for 48 hours, receiving 183 responses in total. The geographic scope of this particular research was limited to only two main cities. There were six out of 183 responses showing that the place of
residence of these respondents were neither Hanoi nor Ho Chi Minh city, therefore were considered invalid and eliminated from the data analyzing process. In the end, there were 177 responses included in the data analysis. The results were summarized using the IBM SPSS Statistics 19.0.1 software.

Basic demography of respondents

Age in a demographic profile

The majority of the respondents fell into the age group between 18 and 25 years of age (84.18%). Among the rest of the respondents, four were under 18 years (2.26%), ten from 26 to 35 years old (5.65%), eight from 36 to 55 years old (4.52%), and six people were older than 55 years (3.39%). Most respondents were born between the years 1988 and 1995. The major group mentioned above is considered a sub-group of the Generation Y according to the literature review section. Despite the imbalanced percentages of the age groups, the result is still considered highly relevant since this age group falls into the target customer group of the Sampling Center model.

Gender in demographic profile

The 177 respondents included 99 females (55.93%) and 78 males (44.07%). The demographic data collection of gender in this research is crucial and used in many other following cross-tabulation data analyses that are related to customer behavior in order to indicate the influence of gender on some decision making situations. The numbers of the males and females taking part in this research were quite equal with no significant difference between the two genders.

Place of residence in a demographic profile

There were 61 respondents from Hanoi (34.46%), the capital city and the rest 116 respondents (65.54%) were from Ho Chi Minh city, the most industrial and developing city in South Vietnam. The idea of this research question was to seek an equal number of responses from both cities. However, due to the nature of an online survey which was passed on from people to people without any geographic filter, it was rather hard to control a balanced intake of the two criteria. Nevertheless, it did
not cause significant unreliability to the whole research result because each criterion will be measured separately in combination with other criteria from other questions in the cross-tabulation analysis.

*Family size in a demographic profile*

The purpose of this question was to find out if family size can influence purchasing behavior when this result is later combined with other criteria in a cross-tabulation. The majority of the respondents had from 2 to 4 members in their family (72.88%), while 39 people had more than 4 members in their family (22.03%) and nine answered that they live alone (5.08%)

*Employment status in a demographic profile*

This question works as a criterion for sorting out people who were employed and provided primary income for their household and who were not. This is the last question of the basic demographic research part of the survey. The respondents who answered "yes" were given a set of questions and the rest of them who answered "no" were given a different set. Of all the 177 respondents, only 21 were employed (11.68%) with 156 of them unemployed (88.32%). This is a logical result because the majority of the respondents shown in the demographic profile by age were young people from 18 to 25 years of age. This group consists of people who are still in high school and college, living with and financially supported by their parents.

![Figure 11](image)

**Figure 11** The difference in consumer behavior in taking sample between employed and unemployed people
As shown by the figure above, the difference in choosing whether or not take product samples between employed and unemployed people is very small. The difference in number is only 2.84% which means that the employment status may not affect the decision of taking samples. However, the percentage is lower on the unemployed side, which was opposite to the author's assumption at the start. The assumption was that the unemployed people would tend to seek and take more samples to reduce their daily spending. Therefore, the result was certainly a good clarification to give better understanding of how consumers react in reality. Based on this result, we can be rather confident about consumers being very positive to the idea of testing new products.

This result tells us that there is a considerable number of unemployed people who are not loyal to a home brand reflecting on their trust in the national quality certificate. Generally speaking, this question reveals how consumers value their home brands. The unemployed people still chose purchasing the product under this certificate because of the acceptable price and quality. It also means that this group of people might not be totally satisfied with the quality but thought that it could be the best option they could get at a price they can afford. In addition, we can see that unemployed consumers' satisfaction is still greatly influence by value, since the percentages shown in the figure for this group are all higher than the other e.g. in
neutral option: "price and quality is acceptable", a somewhat negative option: "I don't trust but still purchase because of affordable price" and strongly negative option: "I strongly distrust the certificate". Figure B shows the more value-weighing opinion of this group when asked to compare the purchasing choice between domestic and foreign manufacturers.

Figure 13 shows the largest percentage falls into the option "buying from both domestic and foreign manufacturers but prefer foreign manufacturers". The result confirmed the author's assumption, e.g. those who were financially dependent prefer foreign products. According to Nielsen's Vietnam Pocket Reference Book (2013), the common reasons for Vietnamese consumers to choose foreign products over domestic ones are based on their greater quality and diversity in functions, designs and colors. This result supports the analysis of figure A about unemployed respondents' value perception towards domestic products.

On the other hand, the percentage of employed consumers who totally support domestic products in Figure A under national quality certificate is noticeably higher.
On a general level, this result shows us the big picture of how financially independent people and financially dependent people react towards price and quality. Hence further and specific researches should be conducted only on this matter for a deeper understanding of consumer behaviors in a more narrow scope, and why there are such differences in choice between employed and unemployed people. The numerical difference and imbalance between these two group was also one of the limitations of the research, e.g. only 21 of the 177 respondents represent employed people. This matter will be discussed more closely later on (see thesis Limitation).

The demographic data of this research show that this group of unemployed people fell between people aged 18 to 25 so they belong to generation Y, while employed people belong to the early generation Y and mostly to generation X. Also, in the following figure C presented below, we can clearly see that the group of employed people or broadly speaking generation X were the decision-makers with more frequent purchases totaling over 1 billion Vietnam Dong (EUR 35.05; USD 47.35, Bloomberg, July 6, 2013 at 7:17:00 p.m.). Driven by price and were family raisers, the employed group in our research were the ones who were buying for their households and the unemployed were the ones who were more involved in evaluating the quality through using the products.

**FIGURE 14 PURCHASING FREQUENCY OF SHOPPING FOR MORE THAN 1 MILLION VND BY EMPLOYED CONSUMERS**
The same question in figure C was also put to the group of people who were financially dependent. The result supports the earlier analysis, showing that the majority of unemployed people chose "once in a few months", resulting in the different percentage of 71.8% (112 out of 156 unemployed respondents).

The next analysis is about consumer behavior in making a choice of a replacement for broken electronic devices (see figure D)

![Figure 15: Consumer Behavior in Making a Choice of a Replacement for Broken Electronic Devices](image)

The general pie chart shown above represents the responses of both employed and unemployed people since the individual results did not vary greatly (between 3 - 4% difference). The figure tells us that people most likely tend to try to fix slightly broken devices. Therefore, we can assume that the market for this kind of products is rather slow-paced since consumers' tendency to purchase new products in replacement for old and broken ones was low. Electronic devices were given in a specific question in this research because companies which provide products in this category were some of the target businesses for the Sampling Center model. The result, despite the resistance in purchasing new products for a replacement, shows us an opportunity to target this large group as a potential group of consumers to be attracted to the Sampling Center. These people either resisted making new purchases not knowing if there existed better electronics with affordable prices, or that they did not have a
chance to test out a potential replacement even if it could be more expensive, but the quality is worth paying for.

Question 12A (for people who are employed) and question 11B (people who are unemployed) changed the research criterion. It merged the two previous groups together, and classified them into two new groups of people who took samples of new products and people who never did product sampling. There were 122 respondents in the group of people who took samples in their daily life, and the remaining 55 people are among the ones who rejected taking samples. The figure below shows us in which city the resistance to taking product samples was stronger.

![Figure 16: Place of residence of people who rejected taking samples](image)

In general, figure 16 also suggests where we would want to introduce the Sampling Center first. Ho Chi Minh city seems to be slightly more receptive to the model. However, further research on how residents in each city perceive the Sampling Center model should be conducted for a deeper analysis on the managerial and operational level.

After question 12A and question 11B, we have a new two groups of people who takes samples and who do not. Figure F shows the activeness in taking samples of people in the two biggest cities in Vietnam. This result also supports the analysis of
the previous outcome: people in Ho Chi Minh city (HCMC) were very active in taking product samples (69.67%). By age, a majority of people aged between 18 to 25 years old took product samples actively (86.07%).

Among 122 respondents who actively took samples, 75.41% of them were positive when asked if they were interested in the idea of visiting a Product Sampling Center.

A cross-tabulation result involving gender and interest in the Product Sampling Center (table 2) shows that female respondents were the ones who took samples more actively (2 thirds of total number of people who took samples), and they were also 2 thirds of the total number of people who were interested in the Product Sampling Center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Interest in the idea of a Sampling Center</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2 CROSS-TAB: INTEREST IN THE IDEA OF SAMPLING CENTER BY GENDER

FIGURE 17 PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF PEOPLE WHO ACTIVELY TOOK SAMPLES
This result confirms the author’s assumption that female consumers tend to be more interested in testing and trying new products than men. In this case, the tendency of being interested in sampling new products of female consumers follow the theory provided in the literature review of consumer behavior by gender (see Consumer Behavior chapter). This group of consumers by gender is also the target group of the Product Sampling Center. The result shown above is very supportive to the affirmation of the choice of a target group by gender.

Furthermore, the following set of tables and analyses below will validate some assumed influential factors that affect the decision to visit the Product Sampling Center. There were six factors given to be rated from strong agreement as "very important", neutral as "this factor may influence my decision" and strong disagreement as "totally not important". The six factors were: "Companion", "Availability of discounts and freebies", "Parking lot availability", "Crowdedness and Complexity of Settings", "Service manner" and "Distance from home". Some of the factors were based on the findings of negative reactions towards product promotion programs in supermarkets found in the previous pre-research by the author (see Evidence n.5 in "Facts and Statistics that utilize quantitative research" in Chapter 3.2).

The cross-tabulation summaries below show us the interrelations between the two variables of how respondents placed the importance of each factor and their gender. We can clearly see that female respondents are more aware of these factors in their choices leading to another affirmation that female consumers have their influence in making the decision whether to visit a place or not, depending on how they personally perceive the image of that particular place based on the importance of each given factor.

Table 3 illustrates the importance of the companion that the respondents want to have in order to make a decision to visit the Product Sampling Center. In total, 33.61% of the 122 respondents regarded "Companion" as a very important factor that influence their decision, while 50.82% said that this factor may influence their
decision and the rest 15.57% gave the answer that this factor is not important and influential to their decision making at all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Gender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Very important</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41 (33.61%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - It may influence my decision</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>62 (50.82%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Totally not important</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19 (15.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>122 (100.00%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3 CROSS-TAB: INFLUENCE 1: I NEED COMPANION IN ORDER TO VISIT A SAMPLING CENTER

A majority of the respondents gave an impression that having friends and relatives as companions is rather essential to visiting a public place. The data we have now could be a supportive premise to the strategic planning for marketing purposes of this specific model of a Product sampling Center; there remains the question of how to encourage people to come in groups, what sort of activities there could be to stimulate the need of a companion and how to attract women to visit the place.

The second factor indicates the importance of extra benefits that potential visitors think that they could materialistically gain after visiting the Product Sampling Center. The extra benefits were presented in the form of freebies, coupons and discounts. This factor appears to be very influential to the visitors' decision, since 40.98% of respondents said that it was very important and another 51.64% of them stated that extra benefits might make it easier for them to make a decision. Table 4 includes the answers in details showing the interrelation between the respondents' choice and their gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Gender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Very important</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50 (40.98%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - It may influence my decision</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>63 (51.64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Totally not important</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9 (7.38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>122 (100.00%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4 CROSS-TAB: INFLUENCE 2: THERE IS EXTRA BENEFITS AVAILABLE AT THE PRODUCT SAMPLING CENTER
Similarly to influence 1, this factor is also a set of valuable data that helps us to understand what consumers want in addition to getting what they need, because only focusing on satisfying the needs is insufficient. We need to find out the drives, and add more values to the service by finding out these influences. There is evidence of the availability of extras: gifts, coupons, discounts being one of the principal elements that affect the satisfaction of potential visitors, and female visitors in particular.

The third influence shown in Table 5 is the importance of a parking lot to the decision of visitors. The author’s assumption when making this influence one of the options to be asked and answered by respondents was based on the population growth in the two distinct cities. Surprisingly, the result, did not show this factor was as influential as it was supposed to be at the beginning of the research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2. Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - Very important</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27 (22.13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - It may influence my decision</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44 (36.07%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Totally not important</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>51 (41.80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>122 (100.00%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 5 CROSS-TAB: INFLUENCE 3: PARKING LOT**

Nevertheless, the planning of proper parking lots still needs to be considered part of the supporting services in order to increase consumers’ positive experiences, and not to rely much on the public parking lots which are still available at the moment.

The next factor to be analyzed is the crowdedness and complexity of the arrangement of the Product Sampling Center. This influence as an option to survey was commenced on account of the above mentioned reason, that the two target cities are overpopulated. In addition to that, negative shopping experiences in previous researches presented in the earlier chapters also confirm that crowdedness has greatly influenced the satisfaction of Vietnamese consumers with public displays.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Very important</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>52 (42.64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - It may influence my decision</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>49 (40.16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Totally not important</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21 (17.21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>122 (100.00%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 6 CROSS-TAB: INFLUENCE 4: THE PLACE IS NOT TOO CROWDED AND COMPLICATED

More than two fifths of the respondents thought that the negative crowdedness and also the complexity of settings greatly influences their decision of visiting such a place. The other two fifths thought that this factor somewhat influences their decision. Therefore, it is remarkable that the simplicity in providing functional services together with the ability to ease tension created by a very big group of people in a public place need to be tackled carefully in order to help this model sustaining and getting recognition from the public.

Another notable factor that we will discuss here is the influence manner and professionalism in providing services. The number of people who rated this factor as very important was 71.31%, whereas another 26.23% chose the option that this factor might influence their decision. Only three out of 122 people stated that this factor was totally unimportant to their decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Very important</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>87 (71.31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - It may influence my decision</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32 (26.23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Totally not important</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 (2.46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>122 (100.00%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 7 CROSS-TAB: INFLUENCE 5: PROFESSIONAL AND POLITE SERVICE PROVIDERS

Preeminently, manners in Asian countries and particularly in Vietnam are very important, especially in the service sector. This result once again affirms the importance of this factor specifically to the model of a Product Sampling Center.
Besides other factors, human resource management is very critical and should not be taken lightly because it will be beneficial to sustaining the image of the whole model in the long run.

The last factor is the importance of the distance between the Product Sampling Center and respondents' homes. This factor is rather hard to practice in reality based on the fact that the cities' infrastructure was already established. However, the result would show us how influential this factor could be according to the respondents' answers. The proportion of those who stated that this factor is crucially important to somewhat important was 88.52% of the total number of respondents who actively took samples in the two biggest cities in Vietnam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Gender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Very important</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>47 (38.52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - It may influence my decision</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>61 (50.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Totally not important</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14 (11.48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>73</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
<td><strong>122 (100.00%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 8 CROSS-TAB: INFLUENCE 6: DISTANCE BETWEEN MY RESIDENCE AND THE PRODUCT SAMPLING CENTER**

Nonetheless, it is still necessary to survey the influence of this factor and the result shown that the distance between consumers' homes and the Product Sampling Center is a rather important element. Even so, it would be then a question to find out which neighborhoods in a particular city have the maximum capacity of potential consumers and then make further demographic researches as well as specific researches in order to find the best location to attract the greatest number of visitors.

Last but not least, the final question was given to both groups of people who claim that they actively take samples as well as people who said that they never took samples. The respondents were asked to give some of the reasons why they would reject testing samples by inputting their own words. Table 9 shows the five most common reasons why product samples were rejected:
The five most common reasons, together with other reasons are imperative to improving the nature of the product samples themselves as how they would be presented in the Product Sampling Center. By making the product samples friendlier to consumers, we can increase the chances of the products being tested and improved by a greater number of consumers. In the end, it will be beneficial to both manufacturers and consumers to have improved products that fully satisfy their needs.

**Online Interview Research result**

Another essential part of the whole study is the qualitative part. The analysis of each question is provided in ascendant order starting from question number 3. Questions number 1 and 2 were only used to identify the companies and the position of or in which department the companies' representatives were from.
Question 3 How is marketing research conducted in your company?

How marketing research is conducted in your company?

- 50% We do in-house marketing research
- 38% We co-operate with marketing research companies
- 13% We have not done official marketing research

FIGURE 18 HOW MARKETING RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED IN A COMPANY

The percentages resulting from the interviews show that half the total number of companies conduct marketing researches by themselves while 37% of the rest cooperate with marketing research companies. Only one company (Malayan Breweries Ltd.) chose the option that they have not yet done official marketing research. This can imply that they have conducted some sort of unofficial research or have made plans to do the researches in the future. There were four optional answers to this question. The last one which no company chose: 'the company never does marketing research', and it was for the company who does not wish to execute this approach for the time being.
Question n.4: Interviews with companies' representatives

What are the difficulties in conducting marketing research that your company has to face or has overcome? The table below shows the narrated summary of the answers of the representatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company name</th>
<th>Expression of response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Binh Tan Consumers Good</td>
<td>Expressing a low level of interest in practicing marketing research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DASO Corp. Ltd.</td>
<td>Neutral but showing uncertainty about the idea of carry on marketing researches for new products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malayan Brewery Ltd.</td>
<td>Negative, suggesting different approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Duc Anh Inox Ltd.</td>
<td>Showing uncertainty about company’s competitiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tam Chau Ltd.</td>
<td>Showing a level of practicality in marketing research but also some dissatisfaction about the outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Tiep Lock Co. Ltd.</td>
<td>Showing complete confidence in the operation of own showroom system as a marketing channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quynh Anh JSC</td>
<td>Showing a level of practicality in marketing research but also uncertainty about the outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nissin Foods Vietnam Co.</td>
<td>Showing a level of uncertainty, recognition of difficulty because of the nature of the product.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 10 SUMMARY OF COMPANIES' RESPONSES ABOUT DIFFICULTY IN CONDUCTION OF MARKETING RESEARCH

A detailed summary of the responses

1. The nature of our product is challenging to be tested, the researches that the company had done were unofficial and the scope was not wide enough. There are still difficulties in getting to know what styles, colors and designs consumers prefer.

2. The range of products is wide so budgeting for each and every product category is a problem. The distribution channels are mainly convenient stores and small markets so it is hard to reach consumers of higher social classes.

3. Since we offer alcoholic products there are difficulties with testing products and taking consumers’ preferences towards a product according to the law. Completely different approaches should be practiced.
4. Our company often took the more passive role because we produce goods that facilitate the process of making food. It takes more time and effort to demonstrate to a group of people, and the size of people that we could reach is rather small in comparison to the manufacturers of food products.

5. We usually carried out home testing, which was very limited and unofficial. We also attended fairs and tested our products there but we had to invest a considerable amount of money, and the results were not very satisfactory.

6. We rely on our reputation, strong showroom and distribution channel so we do not need a sampling center. We believe that the quality of our existing products will be an advantage to introducing our new products.

7. We usually chose to display and test our new products at fairs and exhibitions. However, the time was limited so we did not get enough data for more reliable researches. We have experienced a lack of storing space and bad storing conditions so the quality of our products suffered.

8. We offer instant food so it is hard to test new products flexibly. Therefore, our options to conduct product testing are also limited in size and time. We could only schedule some small demonstrations in supermarkets and department stores, and the outcomes were only enough to make small changes not powerful enough to further develop our product.
Question 5 Reactions towards a given statement

The given statement in this question is "Common surveying activity in Vietnam nowadays is making door-to-door contacts with consumers at their residences or at public places, giving samples and collecting feedback. I think this approach is not very effective and reliable because consumers are in a passive and somewhat unwilling state to try out products". This statement is broken down to two parts, the first half expresses the author’s / interviewer’s assumption about the common marketing approach that most Vietnamese companies are practicing. The second half tackles the interviewees' opinions about the effectiveness of this approach.

The analysis of the responses to this question shows a high percentage of total agreement. Companies that expressed a total agreement with this statement are Binh Tan Consumers Good Manufacturer, Malayan Brewery Ltd., Viet Duc Anh Inox Ltd., Tam Chau Ltd., Quynh Anh JSC and Nissin Food Vietnam Co. while Viet Tiep Lock Co. showed their total disagreement with the given statement. DASO Corp. Ltd., however, responded neutrally by choosing neither total agreement nor total disagreement but the option to input their own opinion. Their response in their own words expressed their agreement with the first half of the statement which confirms the assumption followed by a degree of uncertainty towards the second half of the
statement. They shared that the practice of door-to-door marketing research for new products depends very much on the quality of the marketing research company so it was not easy to conclude an absolute statement about the effectiveness and reliability of this practice. Despite the minority of this opinion, it is actually a valuable insight that should be taken into consideration in order to provide a non-biased conclusion.

**Question 6 How beneficial do you think The Sampling Center will be to your business?**

Out of eight responses, there were six positive opinions, one neutral and one opinion stating that this model of Sampling Center was not applicable due to the nature of the products that the company produces. This company specializes in manufacturing locks and safes.

At the end of this section, the data was already summarized. A more thorough analysis that will compile every item of the existing evidence such as the relevant literature reviews, facts and statistics related to the topic and will result in a concrete conclusion and an answer the research question asked earlier.

**5.2 The limitations of the researches**

Before discussing our final result, it is necessary to consider the existing limitations of the researches. The two researches played a very important role in collecting data that were genuinely crucial to the thesis study. However, some circumstances had occurred during the researches that were either unexpected or hard to be prevented.

The first limitation was that the number of respondents in the two cities was not equal. This limitation was very hard to anticipate and fix in a way that we could control the equality and balance between the numbers of respondents in each city. The aim was to get as many people to fill in the online questionnaire as possible. This resulted in a greater number of respondents from Ho Chi Minh city than Hanoi which slightly influences the reliability of this research.
The second limitation was that the numbers of male and female respondents became unequal when the criterion was narrowed down to people who actively take product samples. There was a criterion to regroup people and form new groups that contained people with a more similar background. At the beginning, the balance between the two genders was kept. However, there was a greater number of female than male respondents after this criterion was applied. This limitation broke the necessary balance although it was not a very influential limitation to make the results invalid but it slightly reduced the reliability of the results in the end.

The third limitation was that the age groups are not equal to each other. There was a majority of people aged 18 - 25 years because of the fact that this group of people were more used to the practice of technology and found it convenient and comfortable to complete the survey virtually.

The fourth limitation was that the industries in which the companies were operating were expected to be varied. There were only food processing companies, and companies which focused on producing consumer goods. Out of 80 interview invitations, only 8 companies took part in the interview so in the end, we could just use all of the answers that we could get. The result would be more reliable if we could interview some companies which produce electronic consumer goods or other high tech products.

5.3 Reflection on the result

Although there were certain limitations in the research results somewhat affecting the reliability of the final outcome, the result still shows very promising and reliable aspects that will be beneficial to the readers who would like to follow up this idea for a more thorough research in order to study the Product Sampling Center model's potential in terms of operational planning and profitability. The research outcome was supportive to the thesis' theoretical basis, showing us that there exists a need or a possibility for such a model to be successful. The question is now about what to do and how to do it. This thesis well-answered the research question showing that the model of a Product Sampling Center was potential since it had been received very
positively. Most people, as well as many companies' representatives showed that they were engaged with the idea of such a model.

6 Conclusion and Recommendation

The acknowledgement of possible approaches which make business more effective is one of the keys to success. In the end, we can see that the knowledge of the proposed model is not only beneficial to Vietnamese companies but also to other business environments if there are proofs of similarities between them. Other international firms interested in this particular market can also get a closer look in the consumer behaviors towards new products if they want to enter the Vietnamese market and also utilize this model for their own marketing research purposes. The Product Sampling Center may not be a constrained cutting-edge evolutionary optimization. However, from the results, the model's practicality has now been validated to be placed in a higher position among other potentially useful marketing research tools for the manufacturing business in Vietnam.

The research results are complementary to the thesis' literature reviews. In other words, we now interpret the books through realistic and proven evidences, and therefore, the purpose of conducting researches was fulfilled.

This thesis as a research report would be a useful material for marketing research topics targeting the Vietnamese market, or a foundation for more concrete and established business plan of this model considering profitability and functionality.
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Appendix

Appendix 1: Survey form

Section 1: General questions

Question 1: Please disclose your age
- Under 18 years old
- From 18 - 25 years old
- From 26 - 35 years old
- From 36 - 55 years old
- Above 55 years old

Question 2: Please disclose your gender
- Male
- Female

Question 3: What is your city of residence? Please type your answer in the text box

Question 4: What is the size of your family?
Note: Definition of ‘family’ in this research are people living in the same household and connecting to each other financially.
- 1, I live alone
- 2 to 4 people
- more than 5 people

Question 5: Are you providing primary income to your family?
- Yes
- No

Question 6a: Please approximate your month income.
Note: This question is optional. However, your answer will be extra-helpful to the research.
- Under 2 million VND/month
- From 2 to 8 million VND/month
- Over 8 million VND/month

Question 7a: Which of the followings are the purchases that you usually make?
You can choose more than one options
- Consumers Products
- Personal Care Products
- Food products
- Special nutrition food and medicine
- Hi-Technology Devices
- Computer software and applications

Question 8a: How often do you purchase with shopping bill of more than 1 billion VND?
- Very often (every day to 2 - 5 times/week)
- Often (once a week to few times in a month)
- Seldom (Once in a few months)
- Never

Question 9a: How’s your shopping habit for home appliances and high-tech electronics?
- I try to get broken products fixed
- I buy new products when the old ones are broken
- I update and buy new products when there are new models in the market even my models still work fine
- I do not buy such products

Question 10a: What kind of manufacturers do you usually purchase from?
- National-domestic manufacturers
- Foreign manufacturers
- Both but I prefer domestic manufacturer
- Both but I prefer foreign manufacturer
- I purchase from both and equally
- I do not care about product's origin
Question 11a: How is your reaction towards the products that is certified as "Vietnamese high-quality product"?
- I totally support and buy these products
- I buy some of the products because the price and quality is acceptable
- I do not really trust the certified products, but still buy them because they are cheap
- I totally do not trust these products.

Question 12a: Do you use samples?
- Yes
- No

Question 6b: Which of the followings are the purchases that you usually make?
You can choose more than one options
- Consumers Products
- Personal Care Products
- Food products
- Special nutrition food and medicine
- Hi-Technology Devices
- Computer software and applications

Question 7b: How often do you purchase with shopping bill of more than 1 billion VND?
- Very often (every day to 2 - 5 times/week)
- Often (once a week to few times in a month)
- Seldom (Once in a few months)
- Never

Question 8b: How’s your shopping habit for home appliances and high-tech electronics?
- I try to get broken products fixed
- I buy new products when the old ones are broken
- I update and buy new products when there are new models in the market even my
models still work fine
- I do not buy such products

Question 9b: What kind of manufacturers do you usually purchase from?
- National-domestic manufacturers
- Foreign manufacturers
- Both but I prefer domestic manufacturer
- Both but I prefer foreign manufacturer
- I purchase from both and equally
- I do not care about product’s origin

Question 10b: How is your reaction towards the products that is certified as "Vietnamese high-quality product"?
- I totally support and buy these products
- I buy some of the products because the price and quality is acceptable
- I do not really trust the certified products, but still buy them because they are cheap
- I totally do not trust these products.

Question 11b: Do you use samples?
- Yes
- No

Question 13: Which of the followings are your interest products to take trials and samples of new products from?
You can choose more than one options
- Consumers Products
- Personal Care Products
- Food products
- Special nutrition food and medicine
- Hi-Technology Devices
- Computer software and applications
Question 14: How often do you use trials and samples of new products?
- Very often (every day to 2 - 5 times/week)
- Often (Once per week to few times per month)
- Seldom (once in a few months)
- Never

Question 15: How active are you in taking samples of product and trials?
You can choose more than one option
- I actively take samples in supermarkets and shopping malls.
- I actively participate in fairs and product introduction shows but not necessary try them out.
- I take samples when marketers bring the samples to my door.

Question 16: If there is a sampling centre that allows you to come and try out new products of your interest, will you come to try new products and give your opinion so that manufacturers can develop and improve their products?
- Yes
- No

Question 17: Please rate the factors that affect your decision of visiting a Product Sampling Center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>It may influence my decision</th>
<th>Totally not important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have to have friends or relative with me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coupons, discounts, gifts etc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking lot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is not too crowded and confusing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and polite manner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance from where I live to the Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 18: Please tell us the reasons that influence your rejection towards receiving sample or trials of new products?
(note: hints: Chemicals, health concern, unknown brands, not environmental friendly, company violated laws)

Appendix 2: Abbreviations and Terms Explanation

NPD = New Product Development

PSC = Product Sampling Center

SME = Small and Medium Enterprise

TVC = Television Commercial

'Vietnamese high-quality goods' label = it is a label named 'Hang Viet Nam Chat Luong Cao' in Vietnamese language, usually noted with abbreviation 'HVNCLC'. This label is a certificate for qualified products which passed the standards of Vietnam's Good of High Quality Association, a government-run authority.