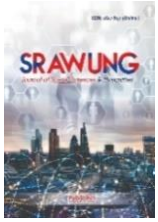

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Factors Influencing Coffee Consumption Decisions Among Young Adults in Phnom Penh

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ABSTRACT

Coffee is the most popular beverage in the world, and coffee culture in Cambodia is gaining popularity among young adults in Phnom Penh. Many drink coffee to reduce stress or refresh their minds, while others consume it to generate energy for their entire workday. This study investigates the factors influencing coffee consumption among young adults in the capital city of Cambodia. It aims to fill a gap in the existing knowledge, as research in this area has been limited. Additionally, the study seeks to create competitive advantages in the coffee beverage industry, particularly for small business enterprises. Quantitative methods were used to address a larger population and gather quantifiable data, producing more reliable results than qualitative methods. The findings showed that brand image, price, taste, and atmosphere influenced coffee buying intention. Among these, taste was the biggest factor. The intention to buy coffee then strongly influenced the actual purchase decision.

Keywords: *Atmosphere, Brand Image, Coffee Consumption, Price, Taste*

INTRODUCTION

Coffee is a beverage that has been known since the 17th century. Coffee, originally drank by the aristocracy, has evolved since the early twentieth century into one of the world's most popular beverages and is now part of our daily routine and lifestyle (Yeretzian, 2017). A 4.1% increase in non-traditional coffee consumption is projected for Asia, Africa, and Oceania. The increase in coffee consumption in these regions is a vital metric for the coffee industry, encompassing farmers, exporters, and retailers seeking to penetrate these burgeoning markets (Samoggia & Riedel, 2019). Furthermore, according to recent data, the Cambodian coffee market will reach US$5.10 million in 2024. Sales are expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.16% from 2024 to 2029, reaching a projected market volume of USD 7.55 million by 2029 (Statista, 2024).

According to the Khmer Times (Sok Sithika, 2022), the demand for coffee has steadily increased each year since coffee culture became more popular in Cambodia, particularly with international brands such as Starbucks, Gloria Jean's, and Eric Kayser, along with local favorites like Tube Coffee and Brown Coffee. Likewise, street coffee establishments are essential in fulfilling market demand, acting as alternatives to branded coffee shops by offering convenience, affordability, and a diverse range of coffee styles and flavors to accommodate various preferences (Chhuon Kongieng, 2024). The data revealed that there are more than 2,000 local and international coffee shops in the Kingdom, with 806 coffee shops in Phnom Penh as of December 1, 2024, reflecting an 8.04% rise from 2023. Among these sites, 749 coffee shops, including 92.93% of all coffee shops in Phnom Penh, are independently owned, while the other 57, accounting for 7.07%, belong to larger brands. The average age of coffee establishments in Phnom Penh is 2 years and 8 months (Malai Yatt, 2024). Coffee production in the Kingdom of Cambodia is relatively low, with less than 10,000 tons harvested annually, most of which consist of Robusta beans. Moreover, the potential area for coffee plantations is in northeastern Cambodia, particularly Mondolkiri and Ratanakiri, which are known for their unique taste and high quality due to the region's climate and soil (Mondulkiri Project, 2023; Sok Sithika, 2022; Tal Sokly & Serey Mardy, 2023). However, the supply for local market demands is insufficient due to high consumption, which leads the kingdom to import more coffee beans from its neighboring countries, including Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Singapore, and Italy (Cambodianess, 2019; OEC, 2022).

Consumer choices have an impact on a store's or company's survival. Therefore, to improve their business tactics, coffee suppliers must have a thorough awareness of the purchasing habits of their clients. Informed by these facts, the objective of this study is to investigate the factors influencing coffee consumption among young adults in Phnom Penh, along with examining the

impact of purchase intention on shaping coffee purchase decisions within this demographic.

To address this study, the researcher designed questionnaires based on previous findings, using the digital platform Google Forms as the primary method to collect data from this specific demographic. Therefore, the study aims to bridge the existing knowledge gap, given the limited research in this area. Additionally, the paper seeks to create competitive advantages in the coffee beverage industry, particularly for small business enterprises.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous scholars in Asia have examined coffee consumption. Among these scholars, Samoggia and Riedel (2018) identified and categorized the motives, preferences, and attributes associated with coffee consumption and purchasing behavior. Additionally, a study in Indonesia identified the parameters affecting consumer consumption intensity and its effects on modern coffee (Affandi et al., 2022). However, research on the determinants of coffee consumption choices among young adults in Phnom Penh has not yet been conducted. Although Phou et al. (2024) examined the factors affecting consumers' purchase intentions and decisions in Phnom Penh, their study focused on bubble tea. Consequently, this study in Cambodia's capital investigates several theories related to key factors influencing young adults' coffee consumption, formulating five hypotheses: brand image, price, taste, atmosphere, and purchase intention.

The Impact of Brand Image on Purchase Intention

A brand is characterized as a label, term, sign, design, or any combination thereof that differentiates a company’s products and services from those of its rivals, as indicated by Liang et al (2024). According to Malda Putri & Rahyuda, (2021) findings, purchase intention has a significant and positive effect on brand image. The research indicated that an elevated brand image correlates with an increased purchase intention. Favorable brand perception enhances the probability that consumers will purchase products from reputable brands, as it mitigates their perceived risks (Ali Bulle, 2020). Therefore, the author proposed the following hypothesis:

H_1: Brand image has a positive relationship with purchase intention.

The Impact of Price on Purchase Intention

Price can be defined as the monetary amount that a customer is required to pay to acquire a good or service. Benhardy et al (2020) describe price as the total sum of money necessary to purchase a good or service. Price significantly influences market share competitiveness, as consumers may choose to buy from competitors after evaluating similar products. Ayub & Kusumadewi (2021)

concur that enhanced purchase intentions correlate with better price perceptions. Pricing is a critical element of the marketing mix that requires meticulous attention. Therefore, the author proposed the following hypothesis:

H_2: Price has a positive relationship with purchase intention.

The Impact of Taste on Purchase Intention

Taste is one of the five traditional senses and a form of direct chemoreception, specifically referred to as gustation. It pertains to the ability to perceive flavors in food and beverages. The tongue and the nose serve as distinct sensory organs responsible for these perceptions, closely interconnecting the senses of taste and smell (Cole et al., 2016). Consumers more readily embrace sensory descriptors like flavor and aroma than technical ones, according to Li et al (2019) as they enhance taste perception, elevate preference, and potentially influence purchase intention. Ulfi Aurelia et al (2023) proposed that data on the product's visual appeal, the pleasure from its aroma, the enjoyment of its consumption, and the ideal temperature for consumption can evaluate the taste factor. Drawing from the current literature, the author can formulate the following hypothesis:

H_3: Taste has a positive relationship with purchase intention.

The Impact of The Atmosphere on Purchase Intention

Decoration, display, layout, lighting, scent, and cleanliness collectively shape the store's atmosphere, serving as stimuli that positively affect consumer decision-making. Customers' purchase intentions are influenced by their inclination to remain in the store, their likelihood of making repeat purchases, and their willingness to recommend the store to others (Hussain & Ali, 2015). Based on the above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_4: Atmosphere has a positive relationship with purchase intention.

The Impact of Purchase Intention on Purchase Decision

Intention serves as an indicator of the degree to which individuals desire to engage in specific behaviors and the extent of effort they exert to execute such behaviors (Phou et al., 2024). Although consumer purchase intention can directly affect purchase decisions, it is essential to acknowledge that factors such as taste, price, brand image, and atmosphere also significantly influence this process (Wang et al., 2023). Based on the above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_5: Purchase intention has a significant impact on purchase decision.

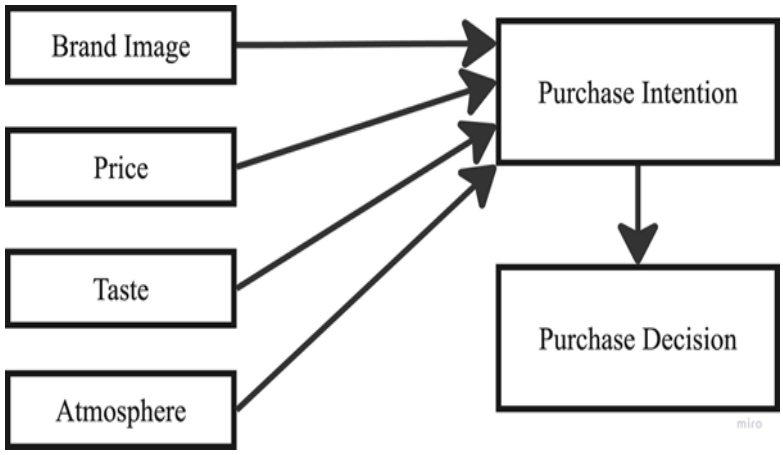

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
Source: Processed Data by Researcher

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aims to establish the relationship between brand image, price, taste, and atmosphere on consumer purchase intention using a quantitative approach and explanatory research purposes. A research questionnaire was used to collect information from respondents about their knowledge, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. The target population consisted of young adult customers, specifically coffee lovers, residing in the capital city of Cambodia. Google Forms was used for questionnaire preparation and social networking groups were used for data collection. The researcher and his three best friends visited coffee shops in Phnom Penh to ask patrons to answer questions.

The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale and demographic data. The Item-Objective Congruence Index (IOC) was used to assess content validity at the item development level. Cronbach's alpha (Taber, 2018) was used to assess reliability. R Studio (v2024.09.1+394) was used for data analysis, while Excel version 16.91 facilitated data cleaning and conversion. SPSS (v20.0) was used for regression and correlation analyses. Participants were asked to spend approximately 5 minutes on a survey consisting of 6 sections. Participation was voluntary, and the answers were used only for scientific purposes. The data was processed anonymously, with names and emails not collected.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Result

Respondents received the survey on November 25, 2024, at 4:20 PM, and it closed on December 6, 2024, at 9:30 AM. A total of 19 questionnaires were conducted in Phnom Penh, with 113 respondents randomly selected. Among those, one individual chose not to participate in the survey; therefore, the total number of respondents was 112. The results indicated that there were more women than men in the sample; 53.6 percent were female, while 42.9 percent were male. Most of the group, around 74.1 percent, was young adults between 18 and 24 years old. The rest were a bit older, with 17.9 percent in the 25-30 age range, 5.4 percent between 31-35, and just 2.7 percent aged 36 and above. In terms of occupation, the vast majority, 77.7 percent, were students. The remaining participants worked in private companies (9.8 percent), the government/public sector (8 percent), or were self-employed (4.5 percent). Incomes varied, but the biggest group, 62.5 percent, earned between $100 and $250 per month. Around 15.2 percent made $551 or more, 13.4 percent earned $251-350, and 8.9 percent were in the $351-450 range. Drinking habits were also diverse, with nearly 40 percent of the people drinking daily, 18.8 percent drinking weekly, 20.5 percent only occasionally, 12.5 percent rarely drinking, and 8.9 percent never drinking at all. Table 1 below shows the details about it.

Table 1. Demographics of Respondents

Items	Category (N=112)	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	60	53.6
	Male	48	42.9
Age	18 - 24	83	74.1
	25 - 30	20	17.9
	31- 35	6	5.4
	36 and above	3	2.7
Occupation	Government/Public Sector	9	8.0
	Private Company	11	9.8
	Self-employed/Owners	5	4.5
	Student	87	77.7
Income	100 - 250 USD	70	62.5
	251 - 350 USD	15	13.4
	351 - 450 USD	10	8.9
	551 and above	17	15.2

Drinking Frequency	Daily	44	39.3
	Never	10	8.9
	Occasionally	23	20.5
	Rarely	14	12.5
	Weekly	21	18.8
Total		**112**	**100.0**

Source: Processed Data by Researcher

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha is regarded as an indicator of scale reliability, reflecting correlation efficiency within a range of 0 to 1. An alpha value below 0.6 is deemed unacceptable, while a value above 0.6 indicates an acceptable result (Taber, 2018). This study conducted the reliability test twice. First, the researcher performed a pilot study by administering 19 questionnaires to 20 respondents located in Phnom Penh. The pilot study yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.72, indicating a satisfactory level of internal consistency reliability. In comparison, with 112 respondents, the reliability increased to 0.73, demonstrating that the items were suitable for data analysis. Table 2 provides the information.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

Reliability Test	N of Respondents	Value	Internal Consistency
Pilot Cronbach's Alpha	20	0.72	Acceptable
Cronbach's Alpha	112	0.73	Acceptable

Note: $\alpha > 0.5$ as poor, $\alpha > 0.6$ as questionable, $\alpha > 0.7$ as acceptable, $\alpha > 0.8$ as good, $\alpha > 0.9$ as excellent

Source: Processed Data by Researcher

Analysis of the Level of Agreement

The data analysis revealed the respondents' behavior regarding factors affecting coffee consumption among young adults in Phnom Penh, along with their purchasing decisions. The table included the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation values, followed by an analysis of the level of agreement. The average responses from participants for each factor reflected the degree of those factors. The results indicated that brand image was not a significant factor, as respondents expressed a neutral level of agreement (mean = 3.29). However, price was an important consideration, with respondents agreeing that it influenced their purchasing decisions (mean = 3.48). Taste emerged as the most crucial factor, with respondents strongly agreeing that it drove their purchase intention and decision (mean = 3.73). Additionally, the atmosphere of the coffee shop was

also an important factor, with respondents agreeing that it played a significant role in their coffee consumption (mean = 3.70). Finally, respondents agreed that both purchase intention and purchase decision were important factors, suggesting that a combination of these variables influenced young adults' overall coffee consumption behavior (See Table 3 details).

Table 3. Analysis of the Level of Agreement

Variable	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. D	Agreement Level
Brand Image	1	5	3.29	.770	Neutral
Price	2	5	3.48	.787	Agree
Taste	1	5	3.73	.661	Agree
Atmosphere	1	5	3.70	.636	Agree
Purchase Intention	2	5	3.70	.575	Agree
Purchase Decision	1	5	3.58	.801	Agree

Note: 1.00-1.79 (strongly disagree), 1.80-2.59 (disagree), 2.60-3.39 (neutral), 3.40-4.19 (agree), and 4.20-5.00 (strongly agree)

Source: Processed Data by Researcher

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was used to determine how well two or more variables correlated. Janse et al (2021)reported that correlation values ranged from -1 to +1. When the readings approached +1, it indicated higher positive relationships. This demonstrated that as one variable grew, so did the other. Conversely, when the number approached -1, it signified that an increase in one variable resulted in a decrease in the other, thereby indicating a negative correlation between the variables. Based on the analyzed data, table 4 displays the relationships between brand image, price, taste, atmosphere, purchase intention, and purchase decision in coffee consumption among young adults in Phnom Penh. The results showed that brand image had a moderate positive link with purchase intention ($r = 0.307$, $p < 0.01$), meaning that a better brand image increased the intention to buy coffee. However, its connection with the purchase decision was weaker and not significant ($r = 0.147$), showing that the brand image did not strongly affect the actual decision to buy. Price also had a weak positive link with purchase intention ($r = 0.284$, $p < 0.01$) and purchase decision ($r = 0.085$, not significant), suggesting that price influenced the intention but was less important in the final decision. The

taste was a key factor, with a strong positive link to purchase intention ($r = 0.376$, $p < 0.01$) and a moderate link to purchase decision ($r = 0.337$, $p < 0.01$), making it an important driver of both the desire and the decision to buy. The atmosphere of coffee shops also played a major role, with a significant positive link to both purchase intention ($r = 0.356$, $p < 0.01$) and purchase decision ($r = 0.475$, $p < 0.01$). Finally, purchase intention had a strong positive link with purchase decision ($r = 0.464$, $p < 0.01$), showing that it acted as a bridge between other factors, like taste and atmosphere, and the actual decision to buy. Therefore, the results showed that taste and atmosphere were the most important factors in influencing coffee consumption, while brand image and price were less influential and mainly affected purchase intention.

Table 4. Pearson's Correlation between Variables

Variable	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Brand Image	1					
Price	.095	1				
Taste	.017	.196*	1			
Atmosphere	.217*	.221*	.355**	1		
Purchase Intention	.307**	.284**	.376**	.356**	1	
Purchase Decision	.147	.085	.337**	.475**	.464**	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Processed Data by Researcher

Regression Analysis

Because the research model involved more than one independent variable, regression analysis was used to investigate the relationship between the variables, as explained by Gogtay et al. (2017). The regression analysis was conducted in two steps to examine the relationships between variables. In the first step, the analysis focused on the impact of brand image, price, taste, and atmosphere on purchase intention. The results showed that all four variables had positive effects on purchase intention. Taste had the strongest influence ($\beta = 0.280$, $p = 0.002$), followed by brand image ($\beta = 0.250$, $p = 0.004$) and price ($\beta = 0.169$, $p = 0.048$). Atmosphere had a positive but weaker and less significant effect ($\beta = 0.165$, $p = 0.071$). Based on these, it was suggested that taste was the most important factor driving purchase intention, while atmosphere had a smaller role (Table 5).

Table 5. Regression Results on Coffee Consumption Decision

Coefficients[a]					
Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.193	.384		3.106	.002
Brand Image	.187	.063	.250	2.986	.004
Price	.123	.062	.169	1.996	.048
Taste	.244	.077	.280	3.178	.002
Atmosphere	.149	.082	.165	1.822	.071
a. Dependent Variable: DV (Purchase Intention)					

Note: Significant Level at $p<0.001$, $p<0.05$; $p>0.10$ not significant

Source: Processed Data by Researcher

In the second step, the analysis examined the relationship between purchase intention and purchase decision. The results indicated that purchase intention significantly influenced purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.464$, $p < 0.001$). This demonstrated that purchase intention played a key role as a mediator, connecting factors like taste, brand image, price, and atmosphere to the final decision to buy coffee. Based on the above, the regression analysis confirmed that taste was the strongest predictor of purchase intention, while purchase intention itself was a critical factor influencing the actual decision to buy. Other factors like brand image, price, and atmosphere contributed indirectly by shaping the intention to purchase (Table 6 provides the information).

Table 6. Regression Results on Coffee Consumption Decision

Coefficients[a]					
Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.189	.440		2.699	.008
Purchase Intention	.647	.118	.464	5.496	.000
a. Dependent Variable: DV (Purchase Decision)					

Source: Processed Data by Researcher

Hypothesis Testing

The table below summarizes the results of all hypotheses testing since the first and second regression analyses.

Table 7. Result of Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Sig.	Result
H_1: Brand image has a positive relationship with purchase intention.	.004	Supported
H_2: Price has a positive relationship with purchase intention.	.048	Supported
H_3: Taste has a positive relationship with purchase intention.	.002	Supported
H_4: Atmosphere has a positive relationship with purchase intention.	.071	Supported
H_5: Purchase intention has a significant impact on purchase decision.	.000	Supported

Source: Processed Data by Researcher

Research Discussion

The purpose of this study is to understand the factors influencing coffee consumption among young adults in the capital city of Cambodia, as the coffee culture in Phnom Penh has gained popularity. Based on the survey results, among the factors considered, brand image, price, taste, and atmosphere significantly influence consumers' decisions to drink coffee beverages. Informed by other researchers' theories, this research developed five hypotheses supported by the following evidence:

Hypothesis 1: Because brand image has a positive relationship with purchase intention, indicating $\beta = 0.250$, $p = 0.004$. This demonstrated that a stronger brand reputation increased the intention to purchase coffee. Indeed, this study produced the same outcome as the analysis conducted by Phou et al. (2024)

in their research of bubble tea beverages in Phnom Penh, which was also in line with Ali Bulle (2020).

Hypothesis 2: Price has a positive relationship with purchase intention, which is supported by $\beta = 0.169$, $p = 0.048$. This result indicated that a reasonable price encourages young adults in Phnom Penh to consider buying coffee from a particular shop. This result was also consistent with previous studies on the effect of price perception, product knowledge, company image, and perceived value on purchase intention, with the same significant value $p = 0.048$ (Ayub & Kusumadewi, 2021).

Hypothesis 3: The results strongly support that taste has a positive relationship with purchase intention ($\beta = 0.280$, $p = 0.002$), indicating that excellent taste is an important driver affecting the decision to buy coffee. Interestingly, this finding aligns with the study on the effect of coffee sensory tasting information and taste sensitivity on consumer preferences (Li et al., 2019; Ulfi Aurelia et al., 2023).

Hypothesis 4: The atmosphere positively influences purchase intention was partially supported ($\beta = 0.165$, $p = 0.071$). This indicated a positive relationship, but it was not as strong as other factors like taste and brand image. One reason for this weaker significance could be the diverse range of coffee shop environments in Phnom Penh, where establishments vary widely in design, ambiance, and cleanliness, from high-end locations with modern aesthetics to smaller, more casual setups. This variation may have led to mixed responses from participants based on their personal preferences and experiences. Moreover, the relatively young age group of respondents, many of whom are students with limited budgets, might prioritize factors such as taste and price over the atmosphere. These findings suggest that while the atmosphere does play a role in shaping purchase intention, it may not be as universally impactful as other factors within the context of Phnom Penh's coffee culture. The result of this hypothesis test is consistent with the findings of the study on the effect of store atmosphere by Hussain & Ali (2015).

Hypothesis 5: The results confirmed purchase intention has a significant impact on purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.464$, $p = 0.000$). This result is strongly supported, as intention serves as a plan and mediates the effects of brand image, price, taste, and atmosphere in making an actual purchase of coffee. This outcome is supported by the study by Phou et al. (2024), which found that when consumers have an intention, they are more likely to buy particular products based on those factors.

The findings showed that brand image, price, taste, and atmosphere influenced coffee buying intention. Among these, taste was the biggest factor. The intention to buy coffee then strongly influenced the actual purchase decision, also supported by other scholars.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to identify the factors influencing coffee consumption among young adults in Phnom Penh and how their intentions shape this demographic, ultimately leading to actual purchase decisions. Coffee culture has become trendy in Cambodia due to high consumption, but the northeastern provinces of Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri have been unable to meet local demand, necessitating outsourcing from neighboring countries. This study is significant because there has been no existing research investigating the factors impacting coffee consumption among young Cambodians in Phnom Penh. The study employed purchase intention and purchase decision theories to understand customer behaviors, experiences, and perceptions regarding influencing factors. The results revealed that brand image and taste received strong support, while price and atmosphere were partially supported. Purchase intention serves as the key player driving consumers to make actual purchase decisions.

The implications of this study include promoting Cambodian entrepreneurs by creating a favorable environment for coffee bean cultivation and generating jobs for local residents. The study can help shop owners create competitive advantages in the coffee beverage industry by prioritizing the quality of coffee beans and maintaining reasonable prices. However, the study has limitations due to time constraints and the small sample size of 112 participants in Phnom Penh city. Future research should aim to increase the sample size and explore trends in coffee culture in other cities, such as Siem Reap, Preah Sihanouk, and Battambang, which attract significant foreign tourism.

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