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## COSMETIC CONSUMPTION TRENDS OF VIETNAMESE YOUNG PEOPLE – A CASE STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN HANOI

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### ABSTRACT

Our beauty demands are significantly increasing with the rapid development of the Global Economy. The use of cosmetic products has become prevalent among Vietnamese youth. In this article, the research team concentrates on collecting and analyzing data on cosmetics consumer trends of Vietnamese teenagers - research of high school and university students in Hanoi. The research yields some important results: Young people are becoming more interested in natural and time-saving trends toward beauty. The top concerns in using cosmetic products are skincare, haircare, and body odor. Make-up is also catching teenagers' attention, but the number of young people frequently doing makeup is inconsiderable, mainly due to the lack of knowledge, interest, and time for this field. In addition, the use of cosmetic products is mostly influenced by personal preferences, opinions of friends/relatives, and cultural tastes. The purchase of cosmetic products is driven by prices, brand names, and ingredients. Adolescents also tend to use some healthy products, such as cosmeceutical or vegan ones, to overcome the problems of unclear origins or irritating ingredients. Besides, high school and university students have low financial capacities; therefore, their money spent on cosmetic products is not too high, and the number of cosmetic products owned is not too many. Finally, the improvement of technology has led to two trends among teenagers: the convenience of cosmetic-related information searching and the widespread presence of shopping through e-commerce platforms.

### KEYWORDS

Trends, consumer trends, cosmetics, cosmetic products, Vietnamese teenagers, high school/university students, Hanoi.



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Compared to the global cosmetic market, the scale of Vietnam is relatively small but is also surging owing to the increasing market demand and consumer spending. The Vietnamese cosmetic market registers some trends as follows:

*The dominance of foreign brand names.* In a survey of skincare products, 56% of survey participants use Korean products, and 31% claim to own Japanese ones. Also, 90% of Vietnamese cosmetic enterprises are distribution agents of foreign cosmetic companies. (GMP, 2021)

*The changes in consumer behaviors and spending levels.* Euromonitor estimates that Vietnam's health and beauty retail market will reach about 14.42 billion USD, up 21% compared to 2021 (11.59 billion USD). Regarding the monthly spending on makeup products of female consumers in Vietnam, 20% of women spend from 300 to 500 thousand VND and 18% spend from 200 to 300 thousand VND on makeup. Similarly, the survey of monthly spending on skin care products recorded that 21% of respondents spend from 200 to 300 thousand VND and 17% spend from 300 to 400 thousand VND on skin care cosmetics. (GMP, 2021)

Research on consumer trends, in general, and cosmetics consumer trends among young people, in particular, has become necessary and applicable, especially for cosmetic enterprises and business markets. Identifying consumer behaviors is the initial step for business managers to build the development direction of products, according to the following criteria: meeting consumer needs, understanding customer sentiment, taking advantage of the products and surmounting worrisome problems.

## **2. COSMETICS OVERVIEW**

### **2.1. Definition**

The FDA defines a cosmetic as a product (excluding pure soap) intended to be applied to the human body for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering the appearance.

According to Circular 06/2011/TT-BYT (January 25, 2011) of the Ministry of Health regulating the Management of Cosmetics, a cosmetic product is a substance or preparation used to contact external parts of the human body (skin, hair, fingernails, toenails, lips and external genitalia) or teeth and oral mucosa, with the main purpose of cleaning, changing appearance, perfuming, or keeping the body in a good condition. (Ministry of Health, 2011)

### **2.2. Classification**

According to *Sujay Mistry (2022)*, the classification of cosmetic products depends on each criterion:

- *Classification according to their use:*

- + For skin: cream, powder, deodorants, perfumes, etc.
- + For nails: nail lacquers, manicure and pedicure preparations, etc.
- + For teeth and mouth: dental powders, lotions, mouth fresheners, etc.
- + For hair: shampoo, hair conditioner, hair sprays, hair preparations, etc.
- + For eyes: mascaras, eyeliners, contact lenses, etc.

- *Classification according to their functions:*

- + Curative and therapeutic: antiperspirants, hair preparations, etc.
- + Protective: sunscreens, etc.
- + Corrective: concealers, etc.
- + Decorative: lipsticks, eyelashes, eyeliners, etc.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

To study the *cosmetics consumer trends of Vietnamese teenagers - research of high school and university students in Hanoi*, the team exploits 2 research methods, including Desk Research (considering published documents through social media platforms) and Sociological Research (collecting answer sheets from targeted subjects). The data will then be aggregated and analyzed by Excel software.

Using the Desk Research method, the team reviewed some published articles and documents about cosmetic consumer trends as well as the characteristics of teenagers. Since then, a survey form was developed to conduct a sociological investigation of *cosmetics consumer trends among Vietnamese teenagers - research of high school and university students in Hanoi*.

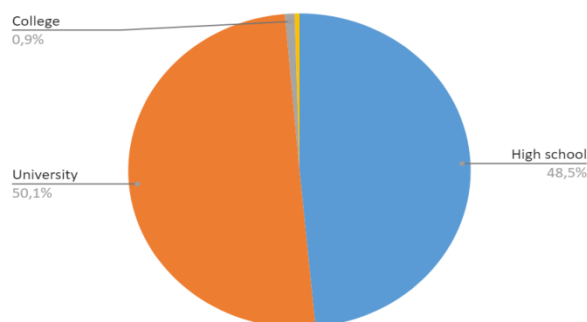
Data collection was carried out through 2 methods: The convenience Sampling method and the Snowball method - a sampling technique, in which existing subjects provide referrals to recruit samples required for a research study. The survey was built on Google Drive, and the survey link ([survey](#)) was sent to high school and university students in Hanoi through social media platforms such as Facebook, Zalo, Email, etc. The total number of answered survey questionnaires was 438. The survey data was then statistically synthesized using Excel software, from which to analyze and substantiate the research problem.

### **4. RESEARCH RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Characteristics of the survey participants**

Subjects participating in the survey include 438 high school and university students in Hanoi, of which 73% are female, 26% are male, and 1% do not want to report specifically. The educational level of the survey respondents is shown in *Figure 1*.

**Figure 1. The educational level of the survey respondents**



*Source: Survey results*

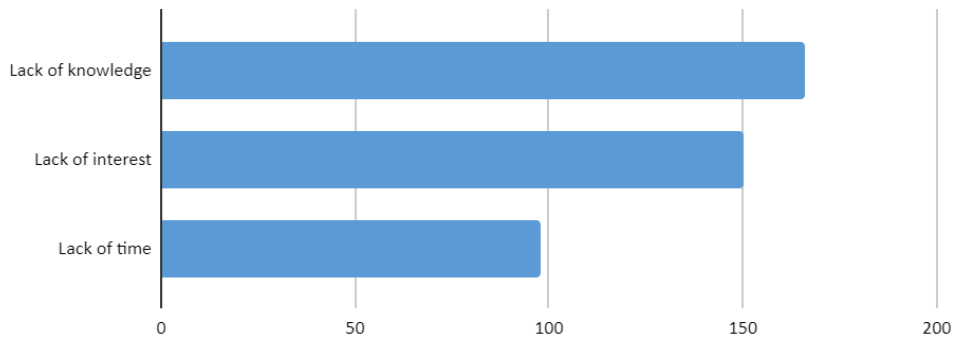
Figure 1 illustrated that research respondents mainly come from universities (50.1%) and high schools (48.5%). Other subjects come from colleges, have graduated from high school, or have worked (1.4%). Out of 438 students participating in the survey, about 58.2% are living in the urban area and the remaining 41.8% are from the suburban area.

#### **4.2. Cosmetics consumer trends of high school and university students**

The cosmetics consumer trends of high school and university students are reviewed and considered from different aspects.

The survey recorded that out of 438 respondents, the number of people who wear makeup irregularly accounts for 82% and only the remaining 18% wear makeup frequently. For those who do not often wear makeup, there are 3 most common reasons: lacking knowledge, interest, and time for makeup, as shown in *Figure 2*.

**Figure 2. Reasons for not wearing makeup frequently**

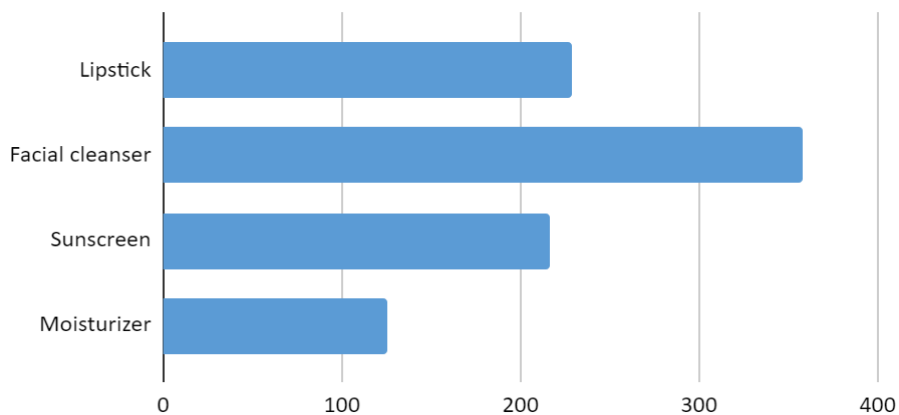


Source: Survey results

The most common reason is due to the lack of knowledge, with 166 responses (46.2%), followed by the lack of interest with 150 responses (41.8%), and the lack of time with 98 responses (27.3%). In addition, the survey also noted some other reasons, including being discouraged by family/school, feeling unnecessary to wear makeup because they are men themselves, or just doing makeup on special occasions.

The research indicates the most needed cosmetic products, as shown in *Figure 3*. Accordingly, facial cleanser is the most essential one with 358 responses (81.7%), followed by lipstick with 229 responses (52.3%), sunscreen with 217 responses (49.5%), and moisturizer with 126 responses (28.8%). Besides, the survey also registered some other favorite products such as makeup remover, acne serum, etc.

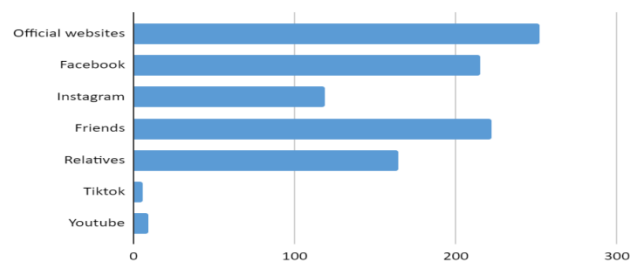
**Figure 3. The most essential cosmetic products**



Source: Survey results

With regards to cosmetic information resources for young people, some of the most common ones are official websites from brands, Facebook, friends, relatives, etc, as indicated in *Figure 4*.

**Figure 4. The most common cosmetic information resources**

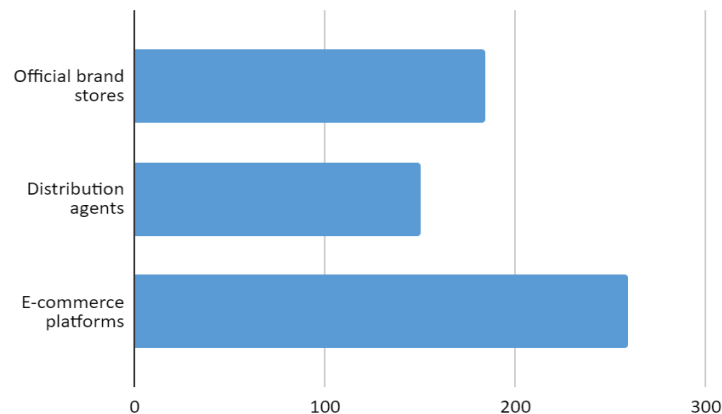


Source: Survey results

As demonstrated by the graph, official websites are the most trusted resources with 252 responses, followed by information from friends (222 responses), Facebook (215 responses), relatives (164 responses), and Instagram (119 responses). There are some other notable resources such as Youtube (9 responses) and Tiktok (6 responses). As can be interpreted, the most effective ways to convey information to consumers are through social networking platforms and word-of-mouth channels, namely friends or relatives.

The most common shopping places for cosmetic products selected by survey respondents are reflected in *Figure 5*.

**Figure 5. The most common shopping places for cosmetic products**

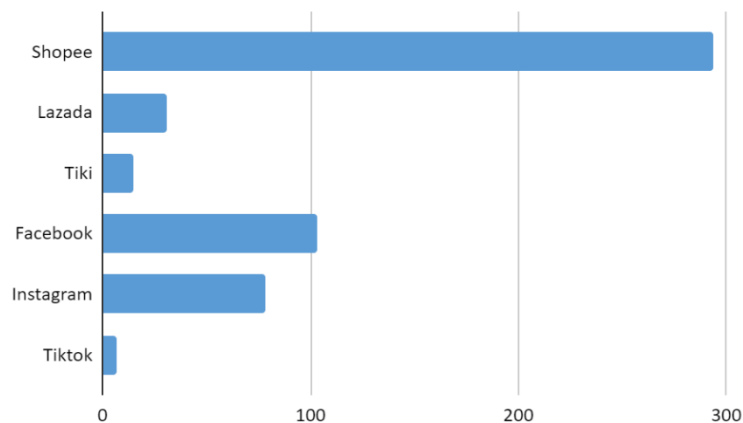


*Source: Survey results*

As reported by the above figure, shopping through e-commerce platforms, also known as online shopping, dominate the most with 259 responses (58.4%), followed by the official brand stores with 184 responses (41.8%) and distribution agents with 150 responses (34%).

It can be seen that the rapid development of technology has led to the convenience of online shopping for cosmetics. In fact, with 438 survey participants, 72.5% shop through e-commerce platforms, particularly Shopee (294 responses), Facebook (103 responses), and Instagram (78 responses). Moreover, research respondents also shop on Lazada, Tiki, Tiktok, with fewer responses: 31, 15, and 7 respectively (9.7%, 4.7%, and 2.1%), shown in *Figure 6*.

**Figure 6. The most favorite e-commerce platforms**

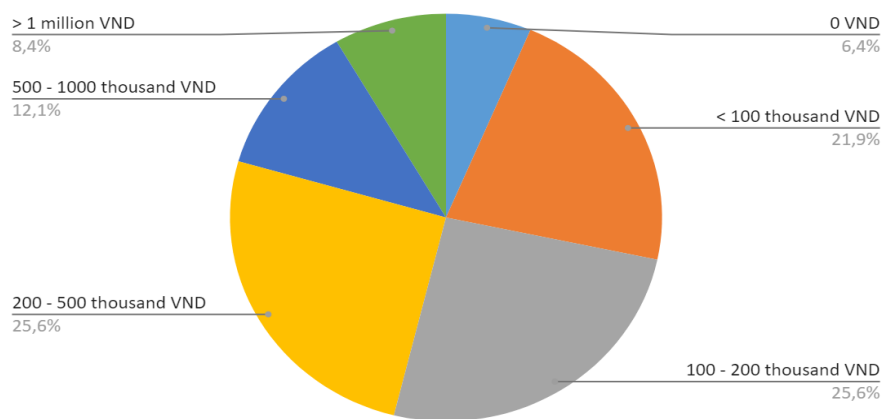


*Source: Survey results*

KOLs/Beauty Bloggers are becoming trendy career paths for young people who have passion and knowledge about the beauty industry. KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders), also known as "influencers", are individuals or organizations with expertise and authority in their field. Beauty Bloggers are the ones who share tips and beauty trends through social media such as Facebook, Youtube, Personal Blogs, etc. The team also studied the tendency to seek opinions/purchasing links from KOLs/Beauty Bloggers of 438 participants. The result illustrates that 64.4% (282 votes) seek opinions/purchasing links from famous KOLs/Beauty Bloggers, and the remaining 35.6% (156 votes) do not care about the opinion of KOLs/Beauty Bloggers, attributed to the fact that these subjects are not interested in the cosmetic industry.

When it comes to high school and university students, financial issues become even more important because most of them do not have high incomes or still rely on their parents for daily expenses. The survey was conducted to study the amount of monthly money spent on cosmetic products, as shown in *Figure 7*.

**Figure 7. Monthly money spent on cosmetic products**

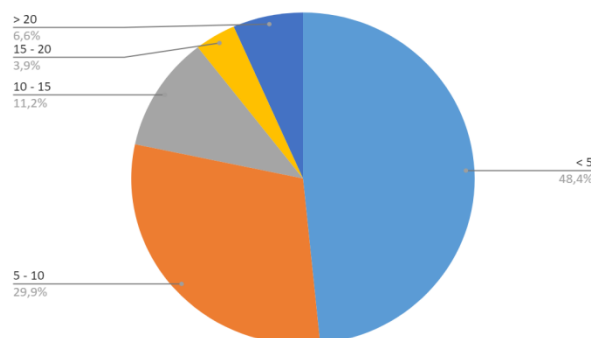


*Source: Survey results*

Figure 7 demonstrates that the majority of survey respondents spend about 100 - 500 thousand VND on monthly cosmetic purchases. In addition, 21.9% spend less than 100 thousand VND, 12.1% spent between 500 and 1000 thousand VND and only 8.4% spend more than 1 million VND on monthly cosmetic purchases. The remaining 6.4% do not save money to buy cosmetics.

Financial capabilities are also reflected by the number of cosmetic goods belonging to adolescents. As can be seen, the number of products they have is relatively small: nearly 50% of the respondents own less than 5 products, and nearly 30% own 5-10 products. In addition, regarding a larger number of cosmetic products, there are also fewer owners: 11.2% (49 people) own 10-15 products, 3.9% (17 people) own 15-20 products and 6.6% (29 people) own more than 20 products. (*Figure 8*)

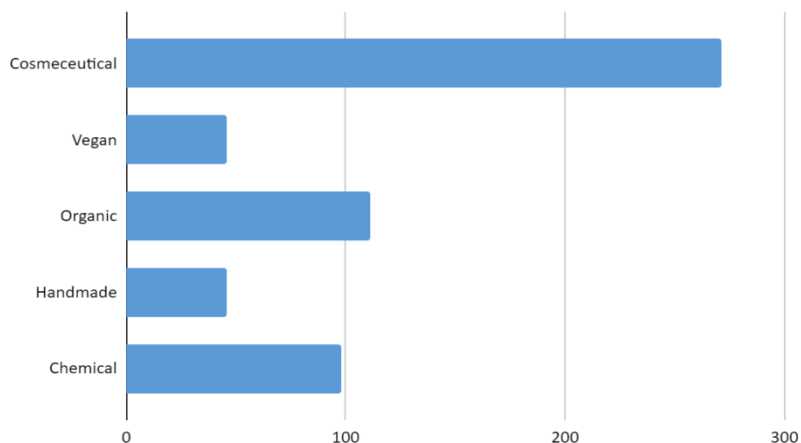
**Figure 8. The number of cosmetic products owned by young people**



Source: Survey results

The research also recorded some information about preferential types of cosmetic products and the most reputable countries for manufacturing cosmetics, as shown in *Figures 9 and 10*.

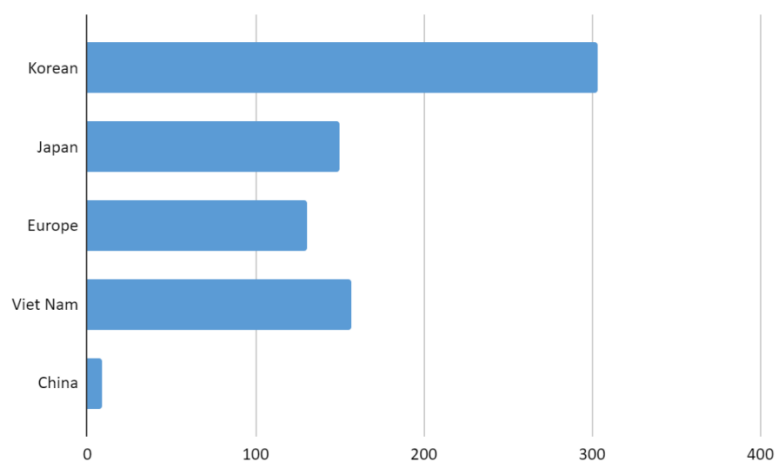
**Figure 9. Preferential types of cosmetic products**



Source: Survey results

Figure 9 shows the preferred type of cosmetics according to 438 survey respondents. As can be registered, 271 people (61.9%) noted that they choose to use cosmeceutical products, followed by 111 people (25.3%) showing a preference for organic products and 98 people (22.4%) giving priority to chemical ones. Vegan and handmade products all take the attention of only 46 subjects (10.5%).

**Figure 10. Reputable countries for manufacturing cosmetics**

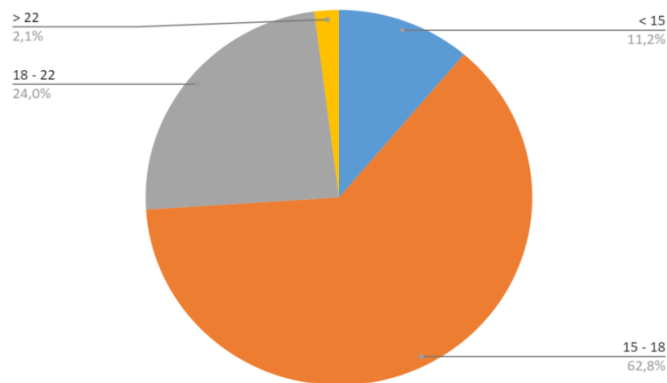


Source: Survey results

As can be indicated in Figure 10, Korea is the first ranked country with 303 participants (69.2%) using its cosmetics, followed by Vietnam and Japan with 157 and 150 participants (35.8% and 34.2%) choosing their products. Europe and China are also included in this list with 131 and 9 responses, respectively. Thus, it can be seen that Korean cosmetics are quite prevailing among Vietnamese youth.

The age at which people first access cosmetics is also an intriguing aspect of research. Figure 11 below depicts that the most common age of people first using cosmetics is 15-18 (62.8%).

**Figure 11. The age at which people first access cosmetics**

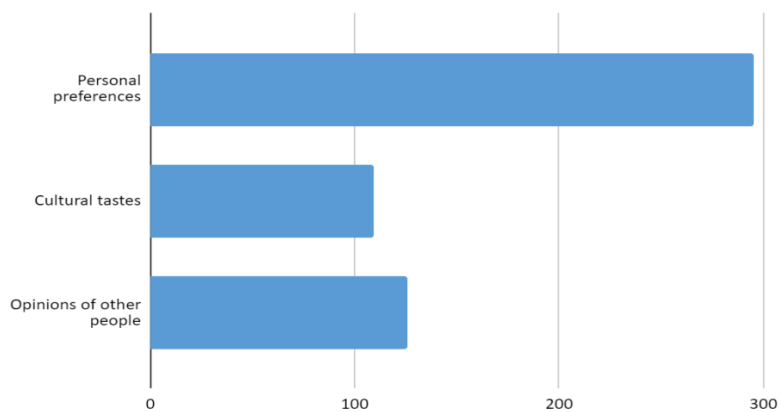


Source: Survey results

The age of 18-22 is ranked in second place with 24% of people starting to access cosmetic products. Furthermore, there is a small number of people who have early access to cosmetics (<15 years old), accounting for 11.2% and very few people first use cosmetics after the age of 22 (2.1%).

Studying the determining factors of cosmetics use and purchase is becoming a necessity for cosmetic entrepreneurship. The survey reported 3 factors having the most influence on the cosmetic use of teenagers, namely personal preferences, opinions of other people, and cultural tastes (Figure 12). Along with that, the 3 main factors affecting high school and university students' decision to buy cosmetic goods are prices, brand names, and ingredients (Figure 13).

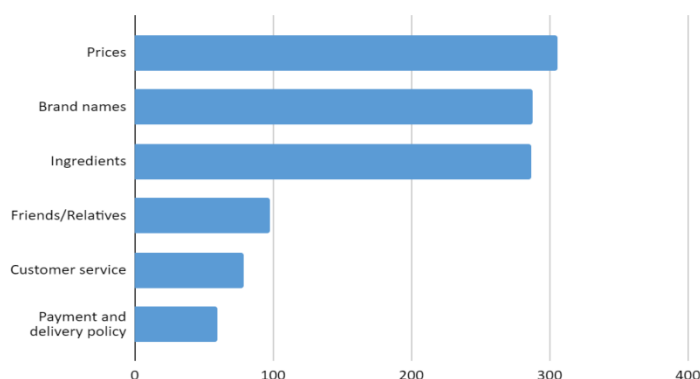
**Figure 12. Determining factors of cosmetics use**



Source: Survey results



**Figure 13. Determining factors of cosmetics purchase**

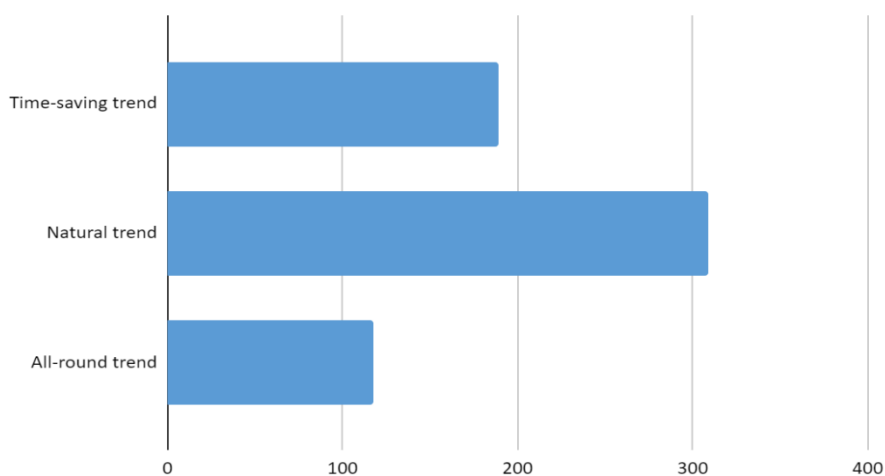


*Source: Survey results*

Cosmetics-making classes are growing in demand, though not popular among teenagers. The team found that only 24 people (5.5%) of the respondents attend cosmetic-making classes. The remaining (94.5%) are not interested in these courses.

Beauty trends among the youth also become diverse. The survey noted that there are 3 main trends targeted by high school and university students. Accordingly, the natural beauty trend accounts for the most consideration with 309 responses (70.5%), followed by the time-saving beauty trend (43.2%) and the all-around beauty trend (26.9%). (Figure 14)

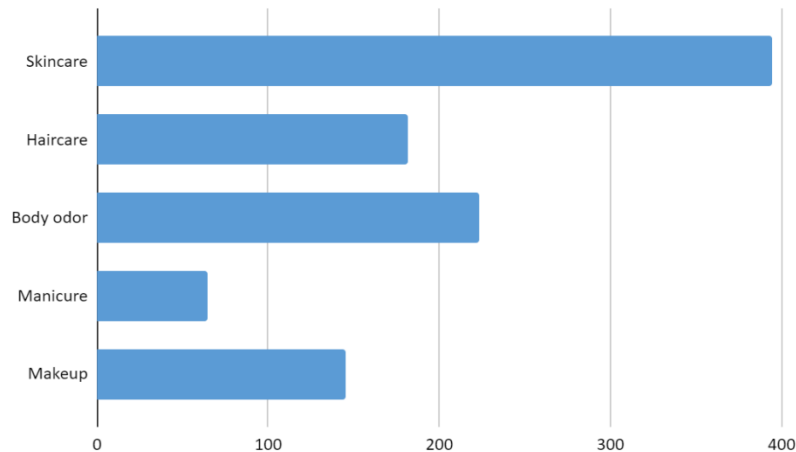
**Figure 14. Common beauty trends among teenagers**



*Source: Survey results*

Concerning the use of cosmetic goods, there are some typical aspects that young people are turning to. The survey regarded skincare as the feature receiving the most attention with 394 responses (90% of the respondents), as shown in Figure 15.

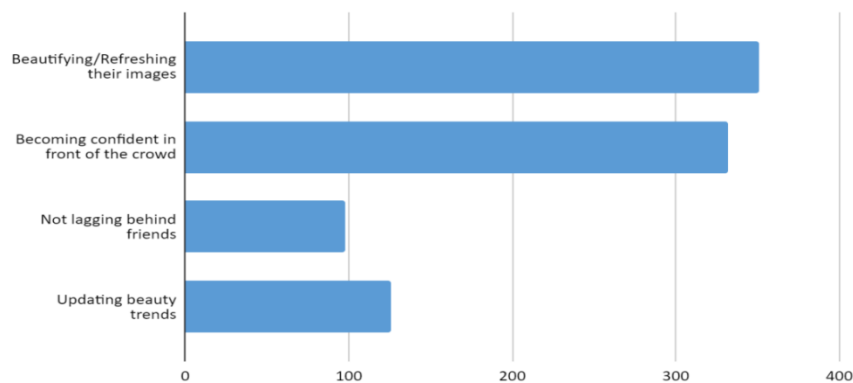
**Figure 15. The most interesting aspect of using cosmetics**



*Source: Survey results*

Figure 16 delineates the advantages of using cosmetic products, assessed by 438 survey participants.

**Figure 16. Benefits of using cosmetic products**

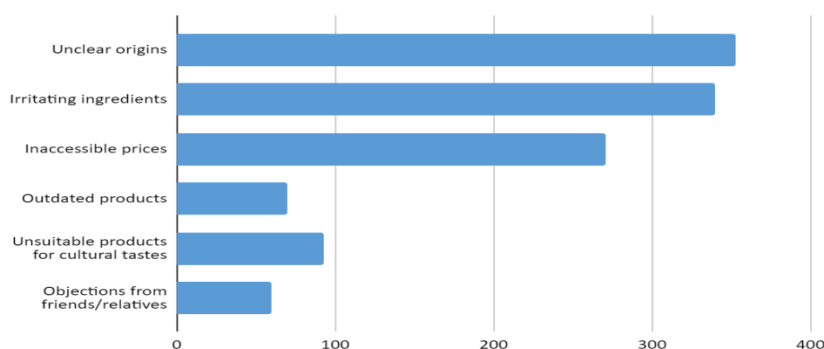


*Source: Survey results*

The results indicate that 351 people (80.1%) said they use cosmetics to beautify/refresh their image, and 332 people (75.8%) use cosmetics to become more confident in front of a crowd. In addition, two benefits of getting fewer replies include updating the beauty trends and not lagging behind friends, accounting for 28.8% and 22.4% respectively.

The use of cosmetic goods also poses a threat to its consumers. In this research, 438 participants rated some issues that high school and university students feel most concerned about when using cosmetic products (Figure 17).

**Figure 17. The most concerning problems in using cosmetic products**



*Source: Survey results*

The biggest problem is attributed to the unclear origins and the irritating ingredients of products, accounting for 80.6% and 77.6% (353 and 340 responses respectively). Ranked in second place, price is reportedly inaccessible, converting to 61.9% (271 responses) of all registered obstacles. Some other issues are also listed, namely outdated products, unsuitable products for cultural tastes, or objections from friends/relatives, correspondingly 70, 93, and 60 responses (16%, 21.2%, and 13.7%).

## 5. Discussion

From the survey results and collected information about cosmetics consumer trends of teenagers, it can be seen that:

*Some trends registered from the research corroborate with other published conclusions, including:*

- Facial cleanser and lipstick are the two most popular products among high school and university students.
- The most popular sources of cosmetic information are the company's official websites and Facebook. The most popular cosmetics shopping places are the official brand stores and e-commerce platforms.
- Young people tend to prioritize safe products such as cosmeceutical and vegan ones.
- Korean products attract the most attention and have the most impact on Vietnamese teenagers, followed by other imported brands from Europe and Japan.
- Young people tend to have early access to cosmetics, mainly from the age of 15-18.
- Consumers are very concerned about the personalization of products as well as their cultural tastes.
- When consumers intend to buy cosmetics, they are influenced by 3 main factors: prices, brand names, and ingredients. The average monthly expenditure spent on cosmetics is around 100 - 500 thousand VND.
- In using cosmetic products, adolescents are keen on not only skincare but also hair care and body odor.
- People fascinated with using cosmetic products incline to seek opinions/purchasing links from KOLs/Beauty Bloggers, who have expertise and knowledge in the field of beauty.

*Some trends registered from the research contradict other published conclusions, including:*

- The number of young people regularly doing makeup is insufficient compared to that of teenagers doing makeup infrequently.
- The survey shows that male teenagers are not interested in beauty products. Being a boy is even one of the reasons for them to avoid using cosmetics.
- Handmade products are not prevalent among adolescents. There are also not many people participating in cosmetics-making classes.
- Although the imported cosmetic market is growing among young Vietnamese, Vietnamese cosmetic products are also attracting the attention of many high school and university students.

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