

# Factors Influencing Consumers' Purchase Intention of Cosmetic Products in Malaysia

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## Abstract

Cosmetic industry is one of the fast growing industry in the world. This beauty business is booming with more and more new cosmetic companies entering the market, resulted into a highly competitive environment. It is therefore essential for the cosmetic companies to continuously develop their business activities in order to remain and attract new customers. In order to do so, cosmetic companies need to understand and satisfy their customers by creating values and meet their demands. The purpose of this research is to investigate the influence of celebrity endorsement, product packaging, brand image, price fairness, and perceived quality on intention to purchase cosmetic products. Data collection was done in a survey among working adults who are working in private sectors within the northern region of Malaysia. The results found that celebrity endorsement and price fairness significantly influenced purchase intention of cosmetic products. The findings might benefit cosmetics firms and marketers to better understand important factors underlying cosmetics purchase intention among Malaysian consumers in order to better compete in the global as well as the local market.

## Keywords

Consumer, cosmetic, intention, purchase, working adults.

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## Introduction

Cosmetic is a multi-billion-dollars industry which includes a number of products ranging from cleanser, toners, serum, moisturizers to foundations, powders, lipsticks, eye liners, eye shadows, blushers and mascaras. The list keeps growing as newer and better products are increasingly available in the market. Furthermore, the cosmetic industry has expanded beyond a market solely for women, to include men and children.

According to the Businesswire.com (2015), the global cosmetic market amounted to USD 460 billion in 2014 and is estimated to grow and reach USD 675 billion by 2020 at a rate of 6.4%. Skin care has the highest market share while oral cosmetics are estimated to be the fastest growing market during the forecasted period. In 2014, the growth of Asia Pacific market alone formed a market share of 35% from the total cosmetic industry, followed by Western Europe and North America. The high market share of Asia Pacific region is attributed to the fact that customers are relatively beauty conscious. Moreover, with the expected growth rate being highest among all regions, Asia Pacific region continues to be an important focus among cosmetics providers.

In Malaysia, the beauty and health market is growing fast (Hassali, Al-Tamimi, Dawood, Verma, & Saleem, 2015). Consumer expenditure rate on cosmetics and toiletries has been increasing since the last few years by 40%, i.e. from MYR 1.4 billion in 1995 to MYR 1.9 billion in 2007, with a projection in sales volume to hit USD 1.1 billion by 2010. According to the Department of Statistics, Malaysia, the total spending in cosmetics and toiletries is about USD 407 million in 2013. Malaysian consumers tend to obtain beauty products from top name brands that are marketed especially those that enhance youthful appearance. Among the sale of cosmetics and toiletries, skincare products represented more than USD 229 million in 2013, followed by eye cosmetic colours of USD 20.6 million, powder make-up, lip make-up preparation, manicure and pedicure.

Due to huge market with fast expansion growth, studies on cosmetics purchasing behavior had gained interests among consumer researchers. Furthermore, the cosmetic industry has expanded beyond the women market and to include men and children, which is still under researched. Therefore, the objective of the study is to investigate factors which are related to consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products in Malaysia by examining the relationships between celebrity endorsement, product packaging, brand image, price fairness, perceived quality and intention to purchase cosmetic products among consumers irrespective of their gender.

## Literature Review

### *Purchase intention of cosmetic products*

The word "Cosmetics" is derived from the Greek word "Kosmetikos", which means "technique of dress and ornament", "skilled in ordering or arranging" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2016). According to U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA, 2016), the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act defines cosmetics by their intended use, as articles intended to be rubbed, poured, sprinkled, or sprayed on, introduced into, or

otherwise applied to the human body for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering the appearance. Among products which are included in this definition are skin moisturizers, perfumes, lipsticks, fingernail polishes, eye and facial makeup preparations, cleansing shampoos, permanent waves, hair colours, and deodorants, as well as any substance intended for use as a component of a cosmetic product. In other words, Mohamed Azmi Hassali (2015) defines cosmetics as any substance or preparation intended to be placed in contact with the external parts of the human body or with the teeth and the mucous membranes of the oral cavity with a view exclusively or mainly for cleaning them, perfuming them, or changing their appearance.

Purchase intention is a decision plan to buy a particular product or brand created through a choice/decision process (American Marketing Association, 2016). Since it is very important for marketing professionals (the producers and the marketers) and the cosmetic industry manufacturers to understand and satisfy the needs and wants of their target consumers, it is therefore imperative to know the needs and wants of their targeted consumers by examining their purchase intention of cosmetic products.

### *Celebrity Endorsement*

Celebrity endorsement has been acknowledged as an important promotional tool by marketers. There are several ways in which celebrity endorsement can be materialised; providing testimonials on products, being the actor/actress in the advertisement, or even being a spokesperson for the companies (Schiffman, Kanuk, & Wisenblit, 2010). There has been an increasing trend among cosmetic marketers to promote their products using celebrity endorsement. For example, in Asian market, Malaysian top artist, Dato' Siti Nurhaliza has been an ambassador for *Maybelline* cosmetic products, Ziana Zain for *Nutrimetics*, and both Taiwanese actors, Godfrey Gao for *SK-II Men*, and Darren Wang for *P&G*. Celebrity endorsement is among important factors in creating brand identity and helps in evaluating a products perceived value as well as increasing the knowledge about the product (Younus, Rasheed, & Zia, 2015). It was found that celebrity endorsement significantly affects purchase intention of shampoos directly (Bhakar, Bhakar, & Dubey, 2015; Younus, Rasheed, & Zia, 2015). However, the celebrity who endorses the product and the cosmetic products that are being promoted should be relevant with sufficient reasonable logic in order for such endorsement to be effective in attracting more consumers (David & Benedikte, 2004). Thus, it is postulated that:

**H1:** Celebrity endorsement significantly influences consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products.

### *Product Packaging*

Packaging can be defined as the activities of designing and producing the container or wrapper for a product (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong, & Saunders, 2008). Product packaging has been integral in positioning and communicating brand among consumers. The design of product packaging is vital to convey image and quality of products as well as differentiating a brand from its counterparts (Dileep, 2006). Product packaging might also bridge consumers with product via brand personality (Schiffman, Kanuk, & Wisenblit, 2010). Consumers normally attach their feelings to the design and packaging of products (Fung, Chong, & Wang, 2004). Product packaging are among important factors in creating brand identity and helps in the evaluation of product's perceived value as well as increasing product knowledge (Bhakar, Bhakar, Dubey, 2015). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

**H2:** Product packaging significantly influences consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products.

### *Brand Image*

Brand image can be defined as perceptions that consumers associate with a particular brand (Keller, 1993). Brand image are among useful factors in consumer's evaluation before purchasing a product (Zeithaml, 1988). Brand image not only influences the way consumers view a product, but also lowering purchase risks (Loudon & Della Bitta, 1988). Eze, Tan, and Yeo (2012) found that brand image has a significant influence on intention to purchase cosmetic products among *Generation Y* female consumers. Thus, it is postulated that:

**H3:** Brand image significantly influences consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products.

### *Price Fairness*

Price fairness can be defined as "a consumer's assessment and associated emotions of whether the difference (or lack of difference) between a seller's price and the price of a comparative other party is reasonable, acceptable, or justifiable" (Xia, Monroe, & Cox, 2004, p. 3). It has also been found that price fairness contributes to the formation of price perception, which in turn affects behavioral intentions (Petrick, 2004a; 2004b). In a study done by Semuel & Chandra (2014), price fairness was believed to positively influence purchase intention of a cosmetic brand in Surabaya, Indonesia, Therefore, it is proposed that:

**H4:** Price fairness significantly influences consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products.

### *Perceived Quality*

Perceived quality can be defined as a consumer's evaluation of a brand's overall excellence based on intrinsic (performance and durability) and extrinsic cues (brand name) (Asshidin, Abidin, & Borhan, 2016) which provide values to consumers, a reason to buy and differentiate the brand from competing brands. Perceived quality of a product was found to have a significant positive influence on purchase intention (Saleem, Ibrahim, Yousuf, & Ahmed, 2015). Besides, Asshidin, Abidin, and Borhan (2016) also found that perceived quality significantly affects consumer's purchase intention towards American and local products in a positive direction. Based on the findings, the hypothesis would be:

**H5:** Perceived quality significantly influences consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products.

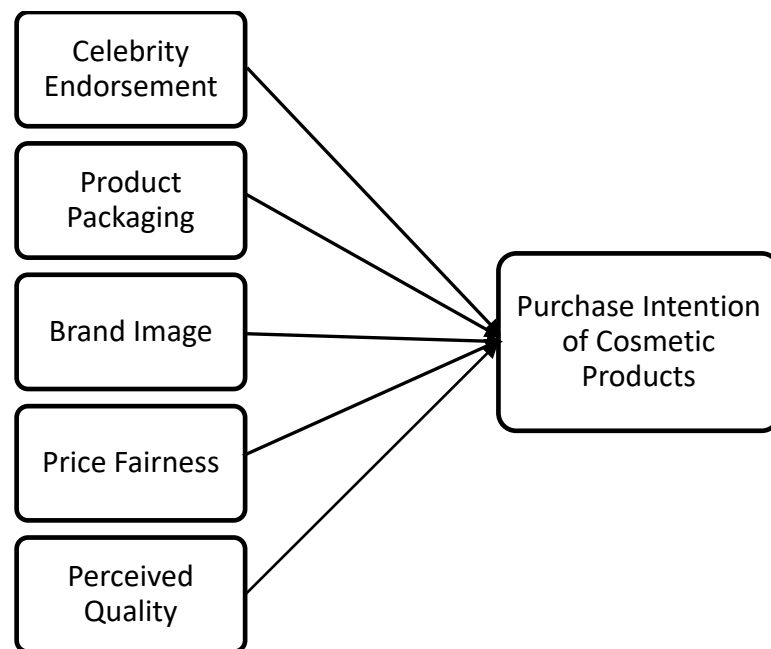


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

## **Methodology**

### *Population/Sample*

The population involved was working adults in private sector within the region of northern Malaysia. Convenient sampling was used whereby some 'quick' information was obtained to get a 'feel' for the phenomenon of interest, i.e. the extent of purchase intention of cosmetics products. Self-administered questionnaires were used in the survey. The minimum sample size chosen was 100. However, to ensure high usable rate, 150

questionnaires were distributed. Respondents chosen ranged from lower to middle, top and professional level of management and from various field of industry.

### *Measurements*

There are five independent variables; celebrity endorsement, product packaging, brand image, price fairness, and perceived quality and a dependent variable i.e. consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products which are involved in the study. Measurement scales for all variables except demographics were adapted from previous studies. Four items measuring celebrity endorsement were originated from the study of Bhakar, Bhakar, and Dubey (2015), three items measuring product packaging were originated from the study of Bhakar, Bhakar, and Dubey (2015), four items representing brand image were originated from the study of Eze, Tan, and Yeo (2012), four items representing price fairness were originated from the study of Samuel and Chandra (2014), three items measuring perceived quality were originated from the study of Asshidin et al. (2016) and three items representing intention to purchase were originated from the study of Eze, Tan, and Yeo (2012). All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1="Strongly Disagree" to 5="Strongly Agree"). Data was recorded and analysed using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 22. Respondents' demographic profiles were analysed by applying frequency analysis while mean and standard deviation for other variables were computed in a descriptive analysis. A reliability analysis was performed to ensure consistency reliability of the scales. A correlation analysis was run to investigate the relationship between variables. Finally, a multiple regression analysis was run to test the hypotheses by examining the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

### **Results**

Out of 150 questionnaires distributed, only 100 were returned with a response rate of 66.67%. The profile of the respondents is shown in Table 1. Female outnumbered male respondents by 32.00%. The majority of respondents was from 26 to 35 years old (48.00%), married (59.00%), graduated from university with undergraduate degree (49.00%), and having personal monthly income between RM 3,000.00 to RM 3,999.00 (27.00%).

Table 1. Demographic profiles of respondents

	Frequency	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	34	34
Female	66	66
<b>Age</b>		
18-25	8	8
26-35	48	48
36-50	37	37
Above 50	7	7
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	38	38
Married	59	59
Divorced / Widowed	3	3
<b>Highest Education</b>		
Secondary and below	8	8
Diploma or equivalent	23	23
University (Undergraduate degree)	49	49
University (Master)	12	12
Professional Qualification	8	8
<b>Personal Monthly Income</b>		
RM 1,000 to RM 1,999	5	5
RM 2,000 to RM 2,999	23	23
RM 3,000 to RM 3,999	27	27
RM 4,000 to RM 4,999	18	18
RM 5,000 to RM 5,999	12	12
RM 6,000 and above	15	15

Alpha coefficient for all variables were above 0.7 (see table 2), indicating acceptable and good internal consistency reliability for all variables (Sekaran, 2003).

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

	Number of Items	Item(s) dropped	Cronbach Alpha
Celebrity Endorsement	4	-	0.92
Product Packaging	3	-	0.87
Brand Image	4	-	0.83
Price Fairness	4	-	0.77
Perceived Quality	2	1	0.78
Purchase Intention	3	-	0.93

In table 3, the highest mean score was perceived quality while the lowest mean was celebrity endorsement. Skewness and kurtosis for all variables were in the range between

-1.00 and + 1.50, indicating an acceptable normal distribution of data (George & Mallery, 2003).

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Celebrity Endorsement	2.49	0.94	0.17	-0.38
Product Packaging	2.78	0.92	0.12	-0.71
Brand Image	3.60	0.80	-0.43	-0.15
Price Fairness	3.38	0.77	0.36	-0.64
Perceived Quality	4.00	0.75	-0.76	1.47
Purchase Intention	3.86	0.87	0.35	-1.00

Table 4 shows inter-correlations between variables. There is a significant positive correlation ( $r=0.21$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention and also between product packaging and purchase intention ( $r=0.23$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This indicates that as celebrity endorsement and product packaging increase, purchase intention tends to increase as well (George & Mallery, 2003). As the value for both significant positive correlations are closer to 0, it can be said that there is a weak tendency for purchase intention to increase. Adversely, price fairness has a significant negative correlation with purchase intention ( $r=-0.20$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) indicating that as price fairness increases, there is a weak tendency for purchase intention to decrease.

Table 4. Inter-correlations of variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Celebrity Endorsement	-					
2. Product Packaging	0.46**	-				
3. Brand Image	0.11	0.52**	-			
4. Price Fairness	0.27**	-0.03	-0.19*	-		
5. Perceived Quality	0.01	0.27**	0.44**	-0.06	-	
6. Purchase Intention	0.21*	0.23*	0.09	-0.20*	-0.00	-

\*  $p<0.05$ , \*\*  $p<0.01$  (1-tailed)

The multiple regression analysis was carried out to test the hypotheses. In table 5,  $R^2$  value was 0.13, indicating that 13.00% variation in the purchase intention of cosmetic products was explained by celebrity endorsement and price fairness, and the model is significant ( $F=2.83$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Durbin-Watson test was within 1.5 to 2.5 range, indicating that there is no auto-correlation error and thus, no overlapping statements among items in the independent variables.

Table 5. The results of multiple regression analysis of the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable.

	<b>Std. Beta</b>
Celebrity Endorsement	0.22*
Product Packaging	0.16
Brand Image	-0.05
Price Fairness	-0.27**
Perceived Quality	-0.04
Purchase Intention	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.13
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.09
F value	2.83*
Durbin-Watson	1.95

\*p<0.10, \*\* p<0.05

(Dependent variable: Purchase Intention of Cosmetic Products)

The graph is normally distributed and linearity can be concluded from residual plots between the independent variables and the dependent variable (see Appendix 2 and 3). Looking at the scatterplot in Appendix 4, it was assumed that the severe problem of heterocedasticity did not arise.

Tolerance values for all predictors were more than 0.10 while VIF values for all predictors were less than 10 (see table 6), indicating no multi-collinearity error. Therefore the model is fit.

Table 6. Collinearity statistics for the relationship between variables

	<b>Tolerance</b>	<b>VIF</b>
Celebrity Endorsement	0.69	1.45
Product Packaging	0.56	1.80
Brand Image	0.61	1.65
Price Fairness	0.87	1.15
Perceived Quality	0.80	1.26

Based on the results of multiple regression analysis, it can be concluded that celebrity endorsement has a significant positive influence on purchase intention of cosmetic products ( $\beta=0.22$ ,  $p<0.10$ ). Thus, H1 is supported. Product packaging and brand image did not impose any significant impact on purchase intention of cosmetic products. Therefore, H2 and H3 are not supported. Price fairness has a significant negative influence ( $\beta=-0.27$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) on purchase intention of cosmetic products. Hence, H4 is

supported. Perceived quality did not show any significant influence on purchase intention of cosmetic products and therefore, H5 is not supported.

## Discussions

The expansion of cosmetic industry in which to include men and children has triggered the need to investigate factors which are related to consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products in Malaysia. In this study, the relationships between celebrity endorsement, product packaging, brand image, price fairness, perceived quality and intention to purchase cosmetic products among consumers are examined among working adults in private sector within the region of northern Malaysia.

From the findings, H1 is supported due to the significant positive influence of celebrity endorsement on purchase intention of cosmetic products. The study is generally aligned with previous studies (Bhakar et al., 2015; Younus et al., 2015) with the exception of the current findings are more towards general cosmetic products rather than just focusing on a single cosmetic products such as shampoo in the study of Bhakar et al. (2015). It also differs by respondents who participated the study whereby the current study focused on working adult in private sectors whereas Younos et al. (2015) focused on self-earning people in which their priority in spending and purchasing cosmetics might not be the same. Respondents might feel as if they are having the same character like the celebrity and emulate the celebrity style by purchasing and using the cosmetics promoted by a particular celebrity. The feelings would also provide social approval and good impression from others.

H2 is not supported as product packaging did not impose any significant impact on purchase intention of cosmetic products. Nice design and impressive packaging are usually offered at higher price and this might deter consumers' intention to purchase those cosmetic products. Thus, product packaging did not seem to have any impact on consumers' feelings which contradicted Fung et al. (2004) and did not seem to be an important factor in the evaluation of cosmetic products as stipulated earlier by Bhakar et al. (2015).

The findings also indicated that brand image did not impose any significant impact on purchase intention of cosmetic products which led into the rejection of H3. It was believed that the well-known brand cosmetics were usually more expensive and that might hinder consumers from purchasing them. Purchasing well-known brand did not seem to make consumers feel more rewarded. The findings did not agree with the earlier study of Zeithaml (1988) since brand image was found not to be a useful factor in consumer's evaluation before purchasing a product. Besides, brand image also was not perceived to lower purchase risks as asserted earlier by Loudon and Della Bitta (1988) and contradicted findings of Eze et al. (2012) as it did not influence intention to purchase cosmetic products among consumers.

On the other hand, H4 is supported since price fairness did impose significant influence on intention to purchase cosmetic products in a negative direction. The findings has supported the earlier study of Petrick (2004a) and Petrick (2004b) since price fairness was deemed important in forming price perception which subsequently influences behavioural intentions. However, the findings had contradicted the earlier study by Samuel and Chandra (2014) whereby price fairness was believed to influence purchase intention of a cosmetic brand in a positive direction. When price increases, the purchase intention will decrease and vice-versa. Higher price will deter consumers from purchasing more cosmetic products and this has suggested a sort of price-sensitive consumer market in Malaysia irrespective of cosmetic types and brands.

Perceived quality did not seem to impose any significant influence on intention to purchase cosmetic products and thereby, H5 was rejected. The findings had contradicted both studies by Saleem et al. (2015) and Asshidin et al. (2016) when expensive cosmetics were not perceived as having higher quality compared to those which are less expensive even if samples were provided before future purchasing events.

## **Implications**

The research provides critical information regarding the current market situation and purchase intention trends among consumers within the cosmetics market in Malaysia. The findings would benefit cosmetic industry players in Malaysia; manufacturers, marketers, investors, and retailers. The cosmetics firms might focus more on promotion factor by employing celebrity endorsement for their products in order to trigger higher sales volume. The price of cosmetic products should also be formulated accordingly and with full cautious as cosmetic consumers in Malaysia are price-sensitive and willing to forego their intention to purchase cosmetic products even among the well-known brands.

The findings might also be a reference for those who might consider to invest in the cosmetic industry in Malaysia by understanding local cosmetics current trends in order to design a proper marketing mix that suit Malaysian market. Besides, the findings also provide some insights to marketers in order for them to design different approaches which are consistent with the current cosmetics market trends by specifically delve into the needs and wants of Malaysian consumers.

In short, the study is also useful in providing reliable information on factors affecting purchase intention among cosmetics consumers in Malaysia whereby cosmetics firms and marketers could have better understanding on the influencing factors which will help them to compete better in Malaysian marketplace.

## Limitations and Future Research

The study has several limitations. First, the questionnaires were collected and answered by working adults in private sector within the region of northern Malaysia. The purchase intention of other consumers from the other states in Malaysia remained unknown and might be investigated in the future as the influencing factors might be varied in other locations. Second, the adoption of convenience sampling technique may limit the representativeness of the intended population. Consequently, the respondents may not be representative and the study may not be generalisable. Future studies might employ probability sampling technique to evaluate the consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products. Future studies should also consider other variables which are not covered in the current research in order to better explain the intention to purchase cosmetic products among consumers.

## Conclusion

The fast growing of cosmetic market has turned the industry into one of the most lucrative industry in the world which attracted new cosmetic companies to enter the market. In order for cosmetic companies to remain in such a high competitive environment globally, it is therefore essential for them to continuously develop their business activities so that customers can be retained. Therefore, it is very important for the cosmetic companies to study and understand factors that are related to cosmetics consumers' purchase intention. By investigating the influence of celebrity endorsement, product packaging, brand image, price fairness, and perceived quality on intention to purchase cosmetic products, it is hoped that this study would contribute some insights for researchers, cosmetics firms, and marketers in relation to the consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products in Malaysia.

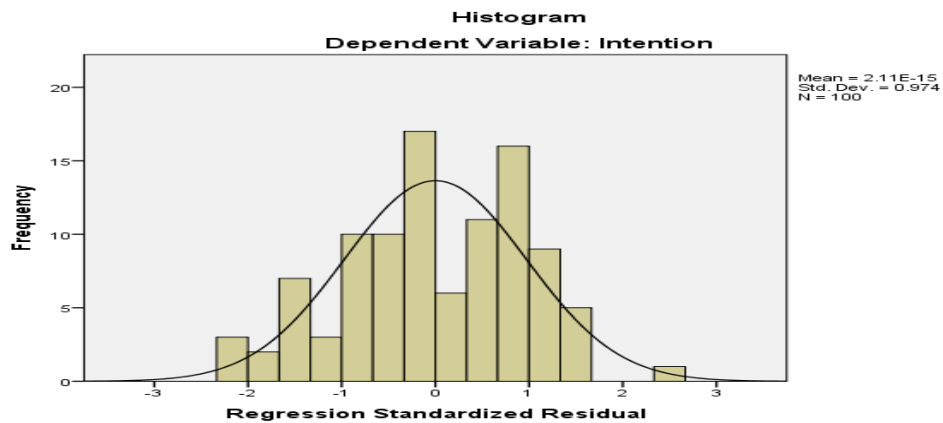
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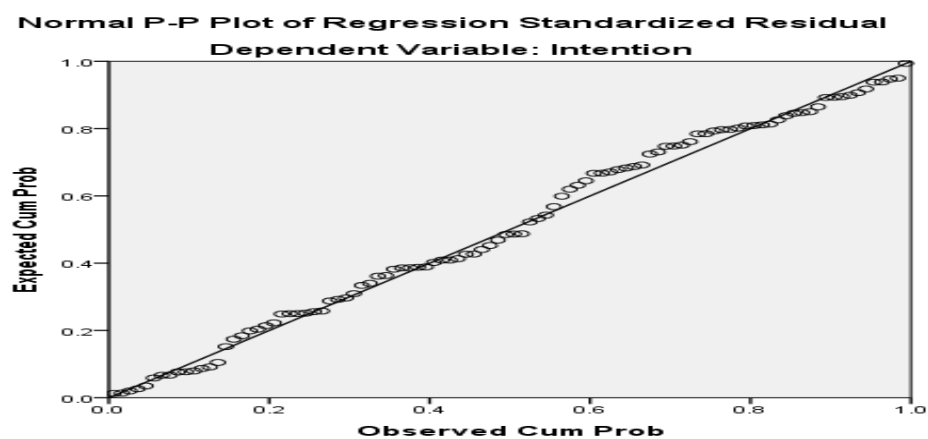
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## Appendix 2. Histogram



## Appendix 3. Normal P-Plot Diagram



## Appendix 4. Scatterplot Diagram

