

Consumer Behavior Analysis of Reptile Bags for International Sales: An IPA and SOAR Study of the South Korean Market

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Abstract

For South Korean women buying objects from live animals can be considered as part of beliefs associated with positive energy such as health, courage, long life, fortune and pride, this belief is known as "pungsu-jiri-seol" or "geomancy". South Korean women also associate reptile skin bags with status, luxury and elegance. There are several factors that have an impact on consumer behavior, such as cultural factors where marketers must understand the role played by cultural elements, sub-cultures, and the social class of buyers. Social factors also have an influence, where consumer behavior is influenced by social aspects such as reference groups, family environment, and consumer social status and roles. Personal factors also have an impact, where the consumer's age and life cycle stage, occupation, as well as economic conditions, lifestyle, personality and self-concept influence consumer behavior. Finally, psychological factors also play a role, where motivation, perception, learning, and beliefs and attitudes influence consumer behavior. This research adopts a qualitative method with a case study approach. From the results of the analysis above, it can be concluded that Analysis of Consumer Behavior of Reptile Bags for International Sales Using the IPA and SOAR Method (Case Study on the Market in South Korea) as many as 88.33% looked at leather bags from trend and fashion attributes and 98.35% looked at leather bags from attributes motifs according to local culture.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, SOAR Analysis, IPA Analysis, Reptile Skin Bag

Introduction

The South Korean market represents a significant opportunity for luxury goods, particularly those crafted from reptile skin, such as crocodile and snake. These items are not only perceived as symbols of status, luxury, and elegance but are also deeply intertwined with cultural beliefs. Specifically, the South Korean belief system "pungsu-jiri-seol" or "geomancy," associates items made from live animals with positive energy, health, courage, long life, fortune, and pride. Therefore, for many South Korean women, purchasing reptile skin bags extends beyond mere consumption to embodying cultural and personal values.

Consumer behavior involves a dynamic interaction between influence, awareness, action, and the environment (Cha & Kwon, 2018). This interplay is influenced by various factors, including cultural, social, personal, and psychological elements. (Zakaria et al., 2018) emphasizes the importance of understanding these factors, highlighting the role of culture, sub-culture, and social class in shaping consumer behavior. Personal factors such as age, occupation, and economic conditions, along with psychological factors like motivation, perception, and beliefs, also play crucial roles in determining consumer behavior (Andrey Dulay et al., 2022). Luxury products, are non-essential but highly desired items associated with wealth and status (Ferreira et al., 2017). The demand for these products often increases disproportionately with income, indicating their role in enhancing self-esteem and status through their quality and craftsmanship (Mamat et al., 2016). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence

consumer behavior towards luxury reptile skin bags in South Korea is essential for marketers aiming to penetrate this market effectively (Wei & Wang, 2016).

Previous studies have explored various aspects of consumer behavior in different contexts. (Quynh et al., 2023) examined the impact of cultural values on green purchase intentions among South Korean consumers, revealing significant influences of collectivism and long-term orientation. (Wahyudin et al., 2021) investigated consumer behavior in online shopping, emphasizing the importance of transaction convenience. Focused on in-store consumer behavior, advocating for experimental research to understand consumer actions better. Despite these valuable insights, a gap remains in the literature regarding the specific behavior of South Korean consumers towards luxury reptile skin bags (Dzulhijatussarah & Defrizal, 2024).

This study aims to fill this gap by utilizing the Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) and SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) methodologies to analyze consumer behavior in this niche market (Habiburrahman et al., 2022). The IPA method, as described by (Choi, 2015), helps in assessing consumer satisfaction and expectations, while the SOAR approach focuses on strategic planning and stakeholder input. The objectives of this study are to analyze the consumer behavior of South Korean women towards luxury reptile skin bags using the IPA and SOAR methods, to identify the cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors influencing their purchasing decisions, to assess the level of satisfaction and expectations of South Korean consumers regarding luxury reptile skin bags, and to provide strategic recommendations for marketers targeting the South Korean luxury market.

By addressing these objectives, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the purchase of luxury reptile skin bags in South Korea, thereby offering valuable insights for marketers and contributing to the existing body of knowledge on consumer behavior in the luxury goods market.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this research is qualitative, aiming to produce descriptive data in the form of oral or written narratives, as well as observations of observable behavior from the individuals or subjects involved (Athwal et al., 2019). This approach involves various techniques such as observation, interviews, and document analysis. The focal point of this research is the "Consumer Behavior Analysis of Reptile Bags for International Sales: Case Study on the Market in South Korea." Qualitative research has several key characteristics: it takes place in a natural context to ensure that the realities are understood within their environment, the researcher and any assisting parties serve as primary instruments for data collection, and it uses methods such as observation, interviews, and document analysis with a focus on the process and results to obtain comprehensive data quality (Ibrahim et al., 2017). Observing the relationships between the parts being investigated during the process clarifies the findings.

This research is classified as a case study, involving an in-depth investigation of the context and interactions of a social entity, such as an individual, group, institution, or society, in its current state. Case studies offer comprehensive, in-depth, and intensive approaches, focusing on detailed analysis of contemporary problems or phenomena (Mahadi & Husin, 2021). This allows for a thorough examination of the social unit being studied. In this research, the entity under study is the consumer behavior of South Korean women towards luxury reptile skin bags.

The primary data in this research are directly obtained by the researchers from the original sources. This includes data collected from reptile skin bag consumers who have purchased products at Nebybags. The data were gathered through interviews with

consumers to gain firsthand insights into their behavior and perceptions. The data collection techniques used in this research include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation involves using the senses to directly record consumer perceptions of reptile skin bags in South Korea, capturing the natural behavior and interactions of consumers with the product. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with reptile skin bag consumers and exporters, using an interview guide to ensure relevant and complete data were obtained. The informants included Serly Park, a regular customer since 2010 and owner of a Korean bag shop in Indonesia; Kanglin Soo, a regular customer since 2020; Mr. King, a regular customer since 2020; Nam Hee So, a regular customer since 2019; and Abdullah, a regular customer from 2017 to 2023. Documentation involves collecting data from various documents such as notes, transcripts, books, articles, reports, and other forms of written materials that provide secondary data relevant to the research.

The data analysis process follows the qualitative data analysis approach by (Babchuk, 2019) encompassing three main stages. The first stage, data reduction, involves summarizing, selecting core information, and identifying important patterns within the data. The researchers focus on analyzing consumer behavior concerning international sales of reptile skin bags in the South Korean market, based on observations and interviews. The second stage, data presentation, organizes and presents the data in patterns or relationships that are easier to understand, helping to depict consumer behavior regarding the international sales of reptile bags in the South Korean market. The final stage involves drawing conclusions and verification, evaluating and ensuring the analysis results align with the research problem. This stage is crucial for confirming the validity and reliability of the findings. By employing these methods, this research aims to provide a detailed and comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior towards luxury reptile skin bags in South Korea, thereby contributing valuable insights for marketers and enhancing the existing body of knowledge on consumer behavior in the luxury goods market.

Results and Discussion

Result

Consumer Needs

For consumers in South Korea, reptile skin bags are becoming a trend that is quite popular among middle and upper class consumers. They consider reptile skin bags a symbol of status and elegance. Consumers in South Korea tend to look for reptile skin bags that are high quality and have unique designs. They also prioritize sustainability and ethical factors in the production of reptile skin bags. So, producers who use environmentally friendly production methods and maintain animal welfare will get more attention from consumers. Apart from that, consumers in South Korea are also happy with reptile skin bags that have a local touch or elements of Korean culture. This provides added value and uniqueness to the product. So, to be successful in the South Korean market, reptile skin bag manufacturers need to pay attention to quality, unique designs, sustainability, and local cultural elements.

This can be seen from the following interview quote with Serly Park

The quality of materials and construction is a major consideration for consumers. They want to be confident that the bag they purchase is made from high-quality materials and well-assembled to ensure durability. "Apart from that, many consumers also pay attention to details such as zippers, buttons or additional accents that can add aesthetic value to the bag." Another thing that can be seen from the interview with Mrs. King "Yes, there is a current trend in reptile bag design. Currently, the design trend for

reptile bags tends to be more minimalist and clean. Simple designs with a focus on distinctive reptile skin motifs and textures have become popular among consumers. Bags in neutral colors such as black, brown or beige dominate the market because they are easy to match with various outfits and styles." Kanglin Soo also expressed the same thing. "Of course, when choosing a reptile bag, consumers consider several crucial aspects. First is the quality and appearance of the material. They look for bags with reptile skin that look authentic and of high quality, giving a luxurious and exclusive impression. Additionally, size and functionality are also important considerations. Consumers want to be confident that the bag is the right size for their needs, whether it is for everyday use or a special occasion. The functionality of the bag, such as additional internal pockets or accessories, is also a consideration to ensure their items can be well organized in the bag. Overall, these aspects are key for consumers to choose a reptile bag that suits their lifestyle and desires."

Consumer Perception

Consumers in South Korea generally have a positive perception of reptile skin bags. They see it as a symbol of luxury, elegance and high social status. Reptile skin bags are considered an exclusive and prestigious product. However, there are also some consumers who have negative perceptions regarding the use of reptile skin in fashion products. They are concerned about animal welfare and the negative impact on the environment. These consumers are more likely to choose bag options made from synthetic materials or other natural materials.

This is illustrated by several sources' answers in interview excerpts, such as according to Nam Hee So, "In South Korea, reptile skin bags are considered a symbol of luxury, elegance and high social status, especially when I got them at classy exhibitions. "Many consumers appreciate the aesthetic value and material quality of reptile skin bags, so they tend to choose them as an exclusive and prestigious fashion accessory." Then according to Kanglin Soo in his interview "Even though many consumers in South Korea have a positive view of reptile skin bags, some also have concerns regarding animal welfare and the negative impact on the environment associated with the use of reptile skin. Consumers who care about these issues are more likely to choose bag options made from synthetic materials or other natural materials as a more environmentally friendly alternative.", while according to Serly Park "Consumers' views in South Korea towards reptile skin bags are very diverse. There are groups of consumers who admire the beauty and status value of reptile skin bags, while others prefer to avoid the use of reptile skin for ethical and environmental reasons. "This difference in views shows the complexity of consumer preferences in choosing fashion products, especially when they involve social and environmental issues."

Consumer Characteristics

Consumers in South Korea have a high preference for high-quality fashion products. They tend to prioritize elegant and modern designs. They really care about the latest fashion and trends. They always follow fashion developments and want to appear up-to-date. Therefore, they tend to look for reptile skin bags that are trendy and suit their lifestyle. When it comes to reptile skin bags, consumers in South Korea generally look for good quality and durability. They also value the originality and genuineness of the product, so a genuine, high-quality reptile skin bag will be their choice. They want to ensure that the reptile skin bag they buy is truly genuine and of high quality. They will look for trusted brands and products that have a certificate of authenticity. Apart from that, consumers in South Korea also tend to pay attention to brands. Famous

brands or brands with a good reputation are often their choice when buying reptile skin bags.

This is illustrated in the following excerpt from interviews with several sources: according to Abdullah, "Consumers in South Korea appreciate the quality and durability of reptile skin bags. They look for products that are of good quality and durable, so high quality reptile skin bags will be their main choice, besides that they also really care about the latest fashion and trends. Their interest in fashion shows that they tend to look for reptile skin bags that are trendy and suit their lifestyle. Bags with the latest and stylish designs will be more attractive to them." According to Kanglin Soo, "The combination of preferences for high quality, product authenticity, and well-known or trusted brands reflects that consumers in South Korea are smart consumers and are careful in choosing reptile skin bags. They are looking for products that meet high quality standards and suit their fashionable lifestyle." According to Nam Hee So, "Product authenticity is an important factor for consumers in South Korea when purchasing reptile skin bags. They want to be sure that the bag they buy is truly original and not a replica. Therefore, trusted brands and products with certificates of authenticity tend to be their top choices."

Expected product

Consumers in South Korea are increasingly aware of the importance of sustainability. Therefore, reptile skin bags made using environmentally friendly materials and responsible production processes will get more attention from them. Consumers in South Korea tend to look for reptile skin bags with unique designs that are different from others. They want to have a bag that can be their personal style statement. For example, bags with unconventional shapes or with interesting accents. Consumers in South Korea also appreciate bags that have various functions. Bags that can be used in a variety of situations, such as bags that can be converted into shoulder bags or bags with adjustable straps, will be of great interest to them. Consumers there may be interested in reptile skin bags that incorporate elements of local culture, such as traditional motifs or accents inspired by local arts and crafts.

This is illustrated in the following interview excerpts with several sources: according to Nam Hee So, "Consumers in South Korea are increasingly aware of the importance of sustainability. Therefore, they tend to prefer reptile skin bags that are made using environmentally friendly materials and responsible production processes. Proof of service that can be provided by reptile skin bag manufacturers is by providing information regarding the raw materials used and environmentally friendly production practices. Attention to sustainability, unique design and diverse functions are important considerations for consumers in South Korea when choosing a reptile skin bag. Manufacturers can provide proof of service by providing information about environmentally friendly raw materials, offering a variety of bag designs that reflect personal style statements, and providing bags with flexible features according to consumer needs." According to Serly Park, "Unique and different designs are a major concern for consumers in South Korea. They look for reptile skin bags with designs that reflect their personal style statement. While manufacturers can offer a variety of design options, such as unconventional shapes or interesting accents, to meet these consumer preferences, diverse functionality is also an important consideration for consumers in South Korea. They wanted a reptile skin bag that could be used in a variety of situations, for example a bag that could be converted into a shoulder bag or a bag with an adjustable strap. Manufacturers can offer bags with flexible features to meet the needs of consumers who prioritize functionality." According to Kanglin Soo, "Consumers in South Korea have an appreciation for local cultural elements. Reptile skin bags that incorporate traditional motifs or accents inspired by local arts and crafts will get more

attention from them. Proof of service that can be provided by manufacturers is by presenting bag designs that display unique local culture. In addition, combining local cultural elements in the design of reptile skin bags can also attract the attention of consumers in South Korea. Manufacturers can feature traditional motifs or accents inspired by local arts and crafts in their bags to create added value and appeal to consumers who value unique culture and traditions.

Conclusion

From the results of the analysis above, it can be concluded that Analysis of Consumer Behavior of Reptile Bags for International Sales Using the IPA and SOAR Method (Case Study on the Market in South Korea) as many as 88.33% looked at leather bags from trend and fashion attributes and 98.35% looked at leather bags from attributes motifs according to local culture.

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