

Asian beauty market projected to be worth US\$170b by 2019

Halal products seen gaining traction while consumers in general are getting more brand promiscuous

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BY 2019, the Asian beauty and personal care market will be worth US\$170 billion – over a third of the global market. And it's thanks to the rapidly expanding middle class with access to disposable income that have bolstered sales of cosmetics, anti-ageing creams, and skin whitening and hair care products.

This was highlighted on Thursday at a roundtable session, "Know your consumer: The changing face of Asian beauty", presented by the Institute on Asian Consumer Insight (ACI).

It was phase two of ACI's roundtable sessions for its 2016 Asia Business Series, which explores how Asian consumers might behave, think, and live over the next 5-20 years.

ACI research & development director Gemma Calvert opened the event with a keynote address that was followed by a discussion and debate session with four other panellist speakers. She also moderated the session.

Prof Calvert noted that new markets for halal products are gaining significant traction. "There are 927 million Muslims in the Asia-Pacific, representing 62 per cent of the overall



Prof Calvert (third from left) and her fellow panellists. From left: Koji Kobayashi, global SK-II consumer and market knowledge leader, Procter & Gamble; Elison Lim, Nanyang Business School assistant professor and ACI fellow; Ms Fall; and Georgia Lee, founder of TLC Lifestyle Practice & DrGL

population of Muslims worldwide and they are going to be expanding by 2019. (There is an) estimated US\$73 billion just from the Muslim population alone, which is vast."

Beauty treatments based on traditional Chinese medicine or holistic remedies such as Ayurveda in India are also gaining traction.

On another note, the panel identified that one of the challenges that big cosmetic companies would face is that consumers are becoming more promiscuous with their brand choices.

ACI fellow and founder Nicole Fall said: "Consumers are not looking for brands in the same way that they

were. They're actually just looking for a solution. So, if it (any product) delivers the solution, if that face mask that costs S\$2, and it's from My Beauty Diary from Taiwan, does the trick, then they're going with that."

Across Asia, marked cross-cultural differences in the way beauty is conceived is also becoming very evident – with one in five South Korean woman having undergone some form of plastic surgery to conform to an idealised conception of beauty, while women in Thailand aspire to a more holistic interpretation in which inner beauty carries as much weight as one's external appearance.

Asia is also becoming one of the

fastest growing markets for men's grooming products with over US\$2 billion being spent on male skin care.

The Pacific's obsession with beauty it seems, is deep-rooted, fast expanding and represents a huge opportunity for both global and local brands that can anticipate the insatiable demand for new and better beauty products.

This second roundtable session is a prelude to the bigger 2016 ACI Asia Business Summit to be held in October. The entire series is organised in collaboration with *The Business Times*. More information can be found at www.asia-business-summit.com.