

Demand for Feng Shui Stones in Vietnam: Cultural Belief and Consumer Behavior

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Abstract

This study investigates the demand for Feng Shui stones in Vietnam through the lens of cultural belief and consumer behavior, drawing on data from a survey of 149 respondents. Feng Shui, deeply embedded in Vietnamese cultural and spiritual life, influences a wide range of consumer decisions. The research examines how beliefs in energy balance, luck, and prosperity contribute to the popularity of Feng Shui stones, and identifies key demographic and psychographic factors driving their purchase. Results from the survey indicate that consumers are motivated not only by aesthetic and decorative appeal but also by spiritual significance and perceived metaphysical benefits. The study underscores the importance of cultural traditions in shaping contemporary consumer behavior and offers insights for businesses seeking to align products with culturally embedded values.

Keywords: *Demand, Feng Shui Stones, Vietnam, Cultural Belief, Consumer Behavior*

1. Introduction

Feng shui (phong thủy) is an ancient Chinese philosophical system aimed at harmonizing individuals with their surrounding environment, often through spatial arrangement and the flow of *qi* (energy) (Mak & Ng, 2005). While originating in China, feng shui has become an integral part of culture in Vietnam, deeply influencing many aspects of life from home design and business planning to maintaining personal and spiritual well-being (VnExpress, 2025; Vietcetera, 2023). It remains a living tradition that continues to shape both aesthetic preferences and emotional or spiritual choices in contemporary life.

One of the most tangible ways through which feng shui manifests in daily Vietnamese life is the use of spiritual stones, such as jade, quartz, and obsidian. In this research, the phrase “feng shui stones” is used in a broad sense, encompassing both raw or exhibited stones and those made into wearable forms such as bracelets or pendants—commonly referred to as feng shui jewelry. Although these have similar spiritual and metaphorical significance, jewelry's aesthetic and expressive value may indicate different consumption patterns. Underlying both raw and crafted forms, however, is a shared belief in the metaphysical properties of these stones: their ability to attract wealth, health, and emotional balance. For instance, jade has long been considered a symbol of wealth, luck, and peace (Hebes by Chloe, 2024), while quartz is often referred to as the “master healer” for its reputed ability to amplify energy, cleanse negative vibrations, and support spiritual practices (Crystal Vaults, 2024).

Several recent studies have started looking into how Vietnamese consumers' purchasing habits, particularly those of the younger age group, relate to their feng shui views. For example, research by Hoang Thanh Tung and Vu Nhat Quang (2024) demonstrated that “Quality of Happy Life” and “Social Recognition Value” have the strongest impact on the purchase intent of feng shui jewelry among Generation Z youths in Hanoi

City. Similarly, according to Nguyen Thi Van Anh and colleagues (2024), despite being a digitally native and rational generation, Gen Z still shows significant interest in feng shui jewelry as a form of both fashion and spiritual value, especially under the influence of social networks and media trends.

However, the majority of research to date has concentrated mainly on feng shui jewelry, with little attention paid to more general feng shui objects (feng shui stones), which play an important role in Vietnamese people's spiritual lives. Moreover, most of the data was collected from the urban Gen Z group, which does not fully reflect differences in age, geographic region, and level of belief in feng shui. Building upon these research gaps, this study aims to explore the demand for feng shui stones in Vietnam by examining various dimensions, including purchasing motivations, cultural beliefs, market trends, product preferences, and generational differences. Through a survey encompassing diverse age groups and regions, this research seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive insight into spiritual product consumption behavior in contemporary Vietnamese society.

To understand the nature of demand for feng shui stones, it is essential to first examine the general factors that shape consumer purchasing decisions. According to demand theory in microeconomics, a consumer's willingness to purchase a product is commonly influenced by factors such as price, income, personal preferences, the cost of related goods, and expectations about the future (Mankiw, 2020). In general, higher prices tend to decrease demand, while stronger preference or perceived value increases it.

Nevertheless, applying classical demand theory to spiritual products like feng shui stones poses certain limitations. These goods are not consumed solely for their functional or material value, but also for their symbolic, emotional, and belief-based significance, particularly among Vietnamese consumers, for whom feng shui is deeply intertwined with cultural identity, ancestral respect, and traditional spiritual practices. These localized practices mirror what broader consumer research has shown: As Belk (1988) argues, consumers often integrate symbolic items into their sense of self and identity. Similarly, Arnould and Thompson (2005) propose that cultural meaning, ritualistic behavior, and personal belief systems significantly influence consumption in ways not accounted for by standard economic models.

Hence, in addition to basic economic variables, this study adopts an expanded understanding of demand one that includes non-economic drivers such as spiritual belief, cultural symbolism, social influence, and aesthetic preference. These factors may play a more decisive role than price or income in the decision to purchase feng shui stones. To empirically explore how these diverse factors shape consumer behavior, the following chapter outlines the methodology employed to investigate these multifaceted influences, drawing on survey data collected from diverse consumer segments across Vietnam.

2. Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey method to explore the demand for Feng Shui stones in Vietnam and the cultural beliefs influencing consumer behavior. A structured questionnaire was designed to collect data from a sample of 149 respondents across different regions of Vietnam. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice and short-answer questions, divided into three main parts: (1) basic demographic information (age, gender, occupation, income, and region), (2) purchasing behavior (type of stones bought, frequency of purchase, reasons for buying, and purchase locations), and (3) personal beliefs and knowledge related to Feng Shui. Responses were collected manually and organized in spreadsheets. Data were analyzed using simple descriptive methods, including counting frequencies and calculating percentages, to identify patterns in consumer behavior and belief systems. No specialized statistical software was used in the analysis process.

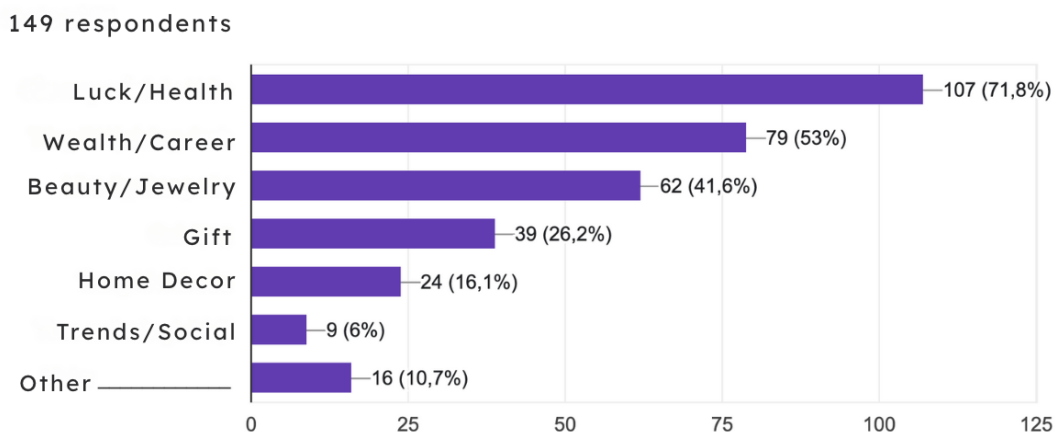
3. Results

3.1 Consumer Motivation

Consumer motivation is defined as the internal or external reasons that drive consumers to voluntarily engage in the purchase or use of a product or service (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, consumer behavior typically stems from fulfilling basic needs (such as food, clothing, and safety) to higher-order needs such as social belonging, self-expression, and self-actualization. In the context of consumption, this is often associated with “consuming to assert personal identity” (Belk, 1988). In Vietnam, the motivation to purchase Feng Shui stones reflects not only aesthetic preferences but also culturally embedded beliefs regarding fate, spiritual protection, and symbolic value. Rather than treating Feng Shui stones as mere ornaments, many Vietnamese consumers view them as tools for attracting luck, enhancing career prospects, or ensuring harmony in life. This pattern of behavior illustrates how consumption serves as a medium of spiritual and emotional expression, rooted in both ancestral traditions and evolving modern identities (VnExpress, 2023; ELLE Vietnam, 2021; Kinh tế & Đô thị, 2018).

Data from a recent survey of 149 Vietnamese respondents reinforces these cultural motivations. When asked about their primary reasons for purchasing Feng Shui stones, the majority cited spiritual goals such as attracting luck and promoting health (71.8%) and increasing wealth or career success (53%), followed by more instrumental reasons like aesthetics or gifting (41.6% and 26.2%, respectively) (see Figure 1). These results suggest that for most consumers, Feng Shui stones fulfill more than decorative functions. They serve as tangible extensions of personal hope, cultural belief, and psychological security. In a society where traditional beliefs still coexist with rapid modernization, these motivations highlight the dynamic interplay between cultural heritage and contemporary consumerism. Furthermore, such motivations align with the symbolic interactionist perspective, which emphasizes the meanings individuals attach to objects within their social and cultural contexts. Feng Shui stones become not just physical items but symbolic representations of aspirations, fears, and values passed down through generations. As Vietnam continues to experience economic growth and urban transformation, the enduring appeal of Feng Shui-related consumption reflects a form of cultural continuity, where modern consumers adapt traditional symbols to meet present-day emotional and existential needs.

Figure 1. Primary Motivations for Purchasing Feng Shui Stones



Source: Authors calculation from survey

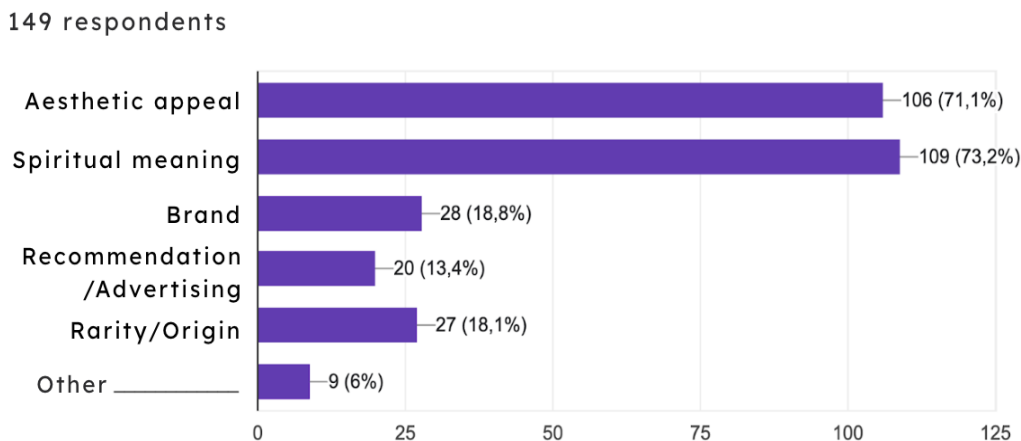
These motivations reveal that the consumption of Feng Shui stones in Vietnam is predominantly intrinsic and belief-driven, rather than purely rational or utilitarian. This aligns with Belk’s (1988) concept that individuals often consume goods not only for their functional utility but also to express values, aspirations, and personal narratives. In this context, Feng Shui stones function as symbolic goods, objects that embody personal and cultural meaning beyond their material form. Consumers do not merely purchase these stones

for decoration; they engage with them as conduits of spiritual energy, self-identity, and emotional reassurance.

Furthermore, when respondents were asked about key factors influencing their purchasing decisions, the top two answers were “spiritual meaning” (73.2%) and “aesthetic appeal” (71.1%), far ahead of considerations such as brand reputation or advertising. This suggests that the decision-making process surrounding Feng Shui stones is guided more by personal belief systems and aesthetic sensibility than by external marketing cues. Only a small percentage of respondents identified brand (18.1%) or advertising (14.1%) as important influences, indicating low brand loyalty and a limited role for traditional commercial persuasion in this product category (see Figure 2).

This pattern reinforces the idea that Feng Shui stone consumption in Vietnam is a highly subjective and culturally mediated activity. Purchasing decisions are shaped by internalized values, inherited traditions, and personal symbolism, rather than by standardized notions of product performance or rational cost-benefit analysis. Such behavior is consistent with experiential and symbolic consumption theories, which emphasize the emotional, cultural, and identity-based dimensions of consumer behavior (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Additionally, the prominence of “aesthetic appeal” as a close second to spiritual meaning reflects the dual role these items play in modern Vietnamese households: as objects of spiritual function and as lifestyle decor. This convergence of belief and style illustrates how traditional practices are being reinterpreted in a contemporary consumer culture, where spiritual objects must also align with personal taste and interior design trends. In this way, Feng Shui stones exemplify how belief-driven consumption adapts and evolves, retaining its core meanings while also integrating new aesthetic and lifestyle considerations.

Figure 2. Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions



Source: Authors calculation from survey

These findings suggest that consumer motivation in Vietnam is driven by a complex interplay of cultural heritage, personal beliefs, and emotional assurance. These elements are not abstract values, manifest in everyday acts of consumption. For example, consumers often select stones based on their destiny element or birth year compatibility according to the Five Elements, or consult feng shui experts before buying a piece for their home or office. Additionally, feng shui stone consumption is often embedded in personalized rituals: carrying a citrine stone in a wallet to attract wealth, gifting rose quartz for emotional healing, or placing amethyst by the bedside for peaceful sleep. The act of purchasing thus becomes a form of spiritual investment, a way of aligning oneself with protective energies or manifesting specific life outcomes. Rather than treating these stones as fixed religious tools, many Vietnamese consumers engage with them as flexible spiritual technologies, adaptable to modern lifestyles and individual goals. This supports the notion that

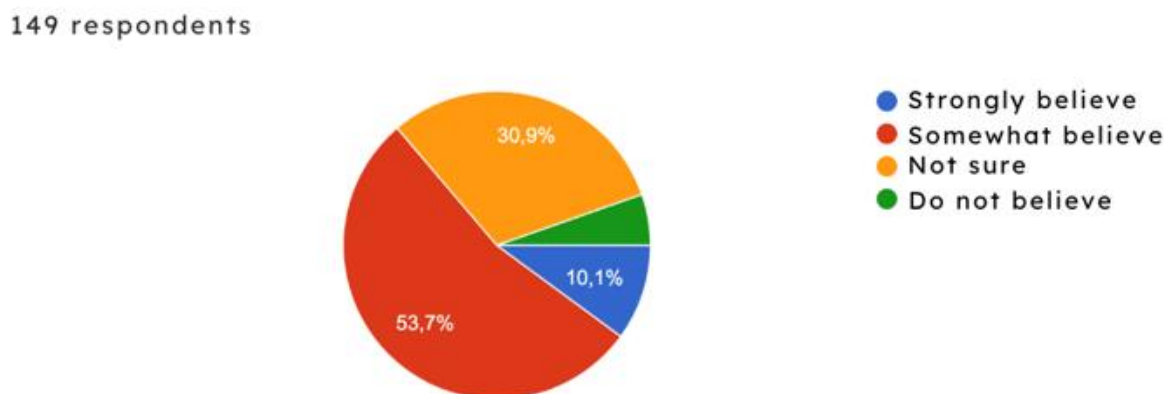
consumption in this domain is not only about possessing objects but about buying into a symbolic worldview, where consumer choices reflect deeper hopes, values, and strategies for navigating uncertainty (McCracken, 1988; Miller, 2010).

3.2 Cultural Belief Influence

Cultural beliefs profoundly shape consumer behavior, particularly in contexts where symbolism and tradition hold substantial sway. According to cultural consumption theory, consumers are not merely rational agents maximizing utility but also cultural beings who engage with goods as carriers of meaning, identity, and ritual (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). In societies where ancestral customs and spiritual cosmologies remain central to daily life, consumption often serves as a means to participate in collective myths, reaffirm social belonging, and navigate existential uncertainty (Geertz, 1973). This dynamic is especially evident in Vietnam, where belief systems shaped by Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and indigenous animism continue to influence daily behaviors and consumption patterns (Vuong et al., 2018). In this cultural context, feng shui stones are more than ornamental items; they act as culturally embedded symbols believed to mediate individuals' relationships with fate, health, and spiritual harmony. Indeed, the decision to purchase these stones often reflects inherited beliefs transmitted through family and community networks, rather than mere personal preference (Kendall, Vu & Nguyen, 2010).

Survey data from 149 Vietnamese respondents underscores this deep cultural entrenchment. When asked whether they believed feng shui stones could influence their lives, such as health, luck, or career, a significant majority (63.8%) answered affirmatively, including 10.1% who “strongly believe” and 53.7% who “somewhat believe.” Interestingly, 30.9% expressed uncertainty, while only 5.3% rejected the belief entirely (see Figure 3). These figures suggest that for many, belief in feng shui is not absolute but operates as a cultural undercurrent something people might not fully endorse yet still participate in, shaped by inherited values rather than critical certainty. To further explore the sources of this belief, respondents were asked to identify influencing factors behind their interest in and purchase of Feng Shui stones. As shown in Figure 4, the most frequently cited influence was personal knowledge about Feng Shui (51%), followed by religious or spiritual beliefs (43.6%) and social media exposure (31.5%). Advice from friends or relatives (28.9%) and family tradition (19.5%) were reported less frequently, suggesting that while inherited cultural values continue to shape some consumer decisions, they are no longer the primary force.

Figure 3. Belief in Feng Shui Stones' Influence on Life



Source: Authors calculation from survey

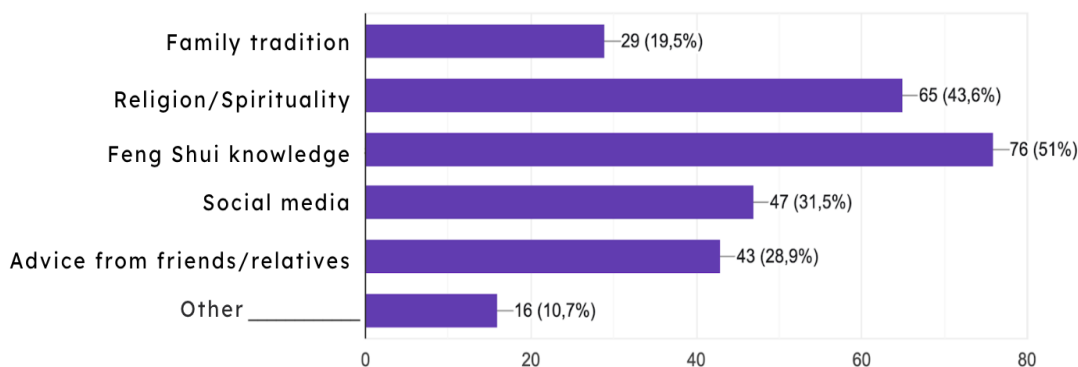
These results point to a significant transformation in how belief systems around Feng Shui are formed and maintained. Rather than relying solely on intergenerational transmission, many consumers appear to be engaging in an active, self-directed construction of belief, drawing from multiple sources such as online

content, spiritual exploration, and personal reflection. This supports the view that in modern Vietnam, spiritual consumption is becoming increasingly individualized, shaped by hybrid influences that blend tradition with digital culture and contemporary identity-seeking.

The rise of social media as a notable source (31.5%) also underscores the role of digital platforms in reshaping traditional belief practices. Online influencers, lifestyle blogs, and spiritual content creators can now disseminate Feng Shui knowledge to large audiences, often repackaging it in ways that resonate with urban, tech-savvy consumers. This reflects a broader cultural shift in which authority over spiritual and symbolic knowledge is no longer confined to elders, religious figures, or family lineage but is diffused across a decentralized and digital information landscape.

Moreover, the high percentage of respondents citing “knowledge about Feng Shui” as their main influence (51%) suggests a trend toward conscious engagement. Rather than passively inheriting rituals, individuals are seeking to understand and personalize the meanings of the objects they consume. In this context, Feng Shui stones function as *fluid cultural symbols*, items that can be interpreted, recontextualized, and adapted to fit the consumer’s current emotional needs, lifestyle preferences, or sense of existential orientation. This phenomenon aligns with contemporary theories of reflexive modernity (Giddens, 1991), which argue that in late-modern societies, individuals are increasingly tasked with constructing their own belief systems and life narratives amid a plurality of cultural options. As Vietnam continues to modernize and globalize, the role of Feng Shui stones illustrates how traditional symbols can persist not through rigid continuity, but through flexible reinterpretation. They become meaningful not simply because they were handed down, but because they are actively chosen, curated, and integrated into one's personal worldview.

Figure 4. Factors Influencing Belief in Feng Shui Stones



Source: Authors calculation from survey

Overall, the survey data illustrates that belief in Feng Shui stones in contemporary Vietnam is no longer transmitted solely through hereditary or traditional means. Instead, it is being restructured through a variety of modern channels, ranging from the reception of popularized Feng Shui knowledge and the growth of personal spiritual exploration to the widespread influence of social media and digital culture. This diverse mix of influences has given rise to a *flexible belief system*, one in which consumers are not passive recipients of tradition but active participants in meaning-making. Rather than adhering to rigid, inherited dogma, individuals selectively adopt, reinterpret, and personalize cultural symbols like Feng Shui stones to align with their own emotional, spiritual, and aesthetic needs. In this context, belief is not absolute or institutionalized but situational, adaptive, and self-curated. Feng Shui stones become multifunctional symbols, serving simultaneously as spiritual tools, decorative objects, psychological anchors, and expressions of cultural continuity.

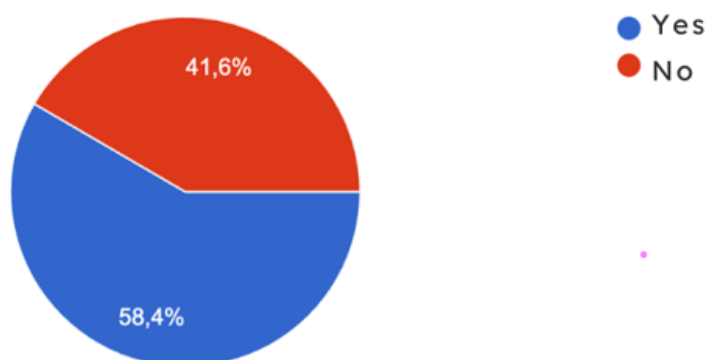
In a society marked by rapid modernization, economic flux, and shifting social norms, this form of consumption provides a mechanism for managing uncertainty and anxiety. Purchasing and using Feng Shui stones becomes a way for individuals to *reassert control*, find inner reassurance, and maintain a sense of connection to cultural heritage without the obligation to fully subscribe to or reproduce its traditional frameworks. This reflects a broader post-traditional landscape in which modern Vietnamese consumers negotiate identity, belief, and belonging not through inherited scripts alone, but through conscious, personalized acts of symbolic engagement.

3.3 Market Trends

Market trends refer to the prevailing patterns in consumer behavior, including adoption rates, preferred channels, pricing expectations, and demographic shifts. According to Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory (2003), the spread of new cultural goods is shaped not only by intrinsic value but also by perceived credibility, accessibility, and alignment with social norms. In contexts where consumption is symbolically laden, as with feng shui stones, market patterns can reveal underlying societal dynamics and generational transitions. In Vietnam, while feng shui retains deep cultural resonance, the market for feng shui stones remains a niche segment within the broader gemstone and jewelry sector. The Vietnam jewelry market generated approximately US \$1.08 billion in revenue in 2024 and is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of nearly 4.6% through 2032 (Statista, 2025; IMARC Group, 2025). This market growth reflects increasing urbanization, rising incomes, and growing interest in symbolic or heirloom products factors that create favorable conditions for the feng shui segment to expand. Among 149 respondents, 58.4% reported having purchased or used feng shui stones, whereas 41.6% had not, suggesting a market that has moved beyond the early adoption phase but still holds room for broader expansion (see Figure 5). This aligns with trends observed in symbolic consumption markets, where belief-based products often depend on trust, social reinforcement, and generational interest (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

Figure 5. Previous Purchase of Feng Shui Stones

149 respondents



Source: Authors calculation from survey

When examining distribution channels, respondents displayed an almost equal preference between specialty Feng Shui stores (43.6%) and online platforms (40.9%), with notable portions also citing personal recommendations (28.2%) and trade expos or fairs (22.1%) (see Figure 6). This diversified channel usage suggests the emergence of a hybrid market structure that blends traditional, trust-based modes of exchange with the convenience and reach of digital commerce. The prominence of both in-person and online purchasing pathways reflects a transitional phase in consumer behavior where spiritual consumption is no

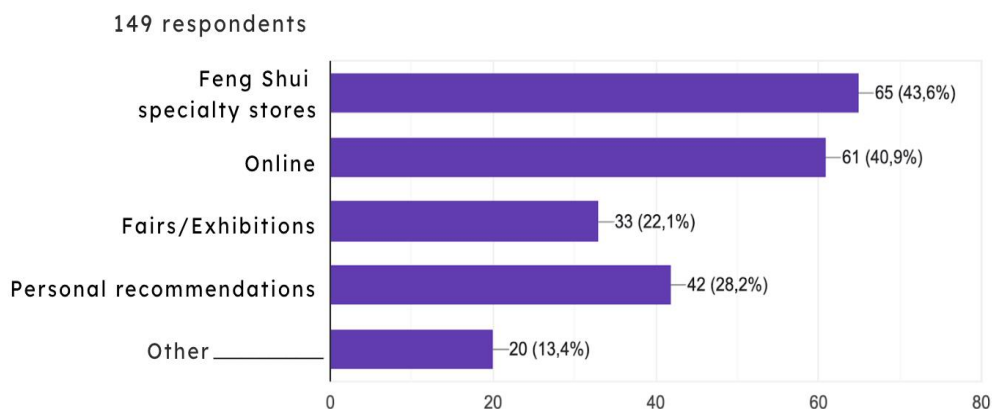
longer confined to physical interaction with a practitioner or store but is increasingly influenced by the accessibility of digital platforms.

The growing role of e-commerce in the purchase of belief-based goods like Feng Shui stones marks a significant shift in how symbolic and emotionally charged items are acquired. What was once a highly personalized, face-to-face transaction rooted in trust and local knowledge can now occur through a smartphone app or social media marketplace. This digitization of belief-related consumption points to changing consumer expectations where convenience, variety, and peer reviews are beginning to complement (and sometimes substitute for) traditional factors like word-of-mouth and in-store expertise.

However, the continued relevance of specialty stores and personal recommendations suggests that trust and authenticity remain critical in this market. Many consumers may still seek expert guidance, physical interaction with the product, or ritual context before making a purchase, particularly for items believed to affect one's fortune, health, or spiritual balance. The coexistence of digital and traditional channels therefore indicates not a replacement, but a layering of old and new consumption logics, where ritual significance and digital efficiency are reconciled in a single decision-making process.

This hybridization also reflects broader trends in contemporary consumer culture, particularly in societies undergoing rapid modernization like Vietnam. As belief-based consumption becomes more individualized and fragmented, distribution channels must adapt to offer both symbolic credibility and logistical ease. The evolving pathways through which Feng Shui stones are bought and sold demonstrate how even the most tradition-bound products are being reshaped by technological and market forces without necessarily losing their cultural or spiritual resonance.

Figure 6. Preferred Purchase Channels for Feng Shui Stones



Source: Authors calculation from survey

Price sensitivity is another important factor. The majority of respondents expressed willingness to spend between 200,000 and 500,000 VND (46.3%), while fewer were willing to go beyond 1,000,000 VND (12.8%). This price range suggests that feng shui stones are generally positioned as mid-tier spiritual-lifestyle products, straddling the line between accessibility and symbolic luxury. However, when asked about the credibility of feng shui products on the market, only 3.4% of respondents rated them as “very reliable,” while 35.6% considered them “fairly reliable.” In contrast, 52.3% said they were “uncertain,” and 8.7% found them “not reliable.” This credibility gap may be a limiting factor in broader market growth, as consumers remain skeptical about authenticity and effectiveness, especially in a context where spiritual goods risk being commodified and losing perceived genuineness. Similar concerns have been documented in other contexts where spiritual or cultural goods are treated as “credence products,” whose value depends heavily on trust, tradition, and perceived authenticity (Rokpelnis et al., 2018).

Generational shifts also appear to play a role. When asked whether today's youth still care about feng shui, 59.1% said they do care, while 24.8% reported "slightly interested," and only 5.4% said they don't care at all. Interestingly, 10.7% stated that they are "very interested" in feng shui. Although not overwhelming, these figures suggest that younger consumers are not rejecting feng shui entirely. Rather, they may be reframing it within contemporary narratives of lifestyle and self-care, less about fate and more about energy, balance, or aesthetic well-being.

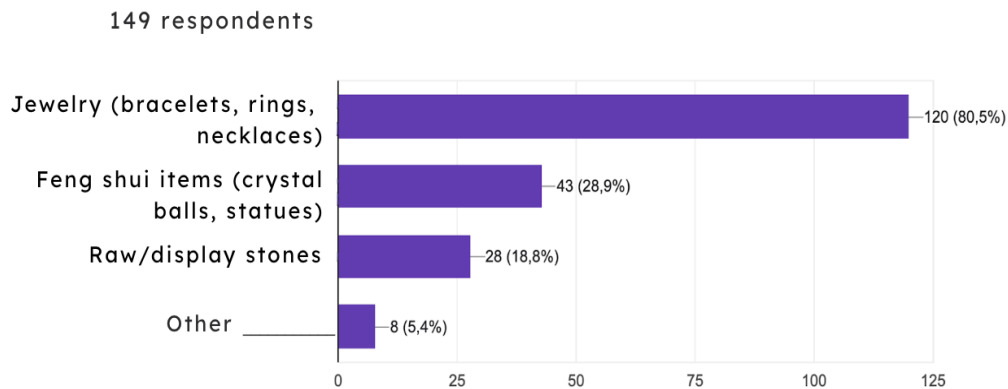
In short, the Vietnamese feng shui stone market is best characterized as symbolically vibrant yet commercially cautious. While distribution channels are diversifying and interest among younger generations remains present, if nuanced, the market continues to grapple with credibility concerns. These dynamics suggest that successful brands must navigate a delicate balance between cultural tradition and contemporary trust-building measures, such as third-party certification, transparent sourcing, and lifestyle-oriented storytelling.

3.4 Product Preferences

Product preferences in the feng shui stone market are not merely matters of aesthetic taste but serve as mediums through which individuals express identity, intention, and cultural alignment (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; McCracken, 1988). According to Belk (1988), consumption allows individuals to construct and project aspects of the extended self, using objects to articulate spiritual, social, or stylistic meanings. In the context of feng shui, this symbolic function is particularly salient: consumers select products not just for their beauty or material value, but because they resonate with personal beliefs, aspirations, and rituals of meaning.

Recent market patterns in Vietnam reflect this dynamic blend of spirituality and style. According to a 2023 study on Generation Z's purchasing behavior in Hanoi, over 80% of respondents expressed a strong preference for feng shui jewelry, particularly bracelets and pendants, as the most desirable product form (Hoàng & Quang, 2023). This trend is further corroborated by data from our own survey: among 149 respondents, jewelry-based products such as bracelets, rings, and necklaces were overwhelmingly preferred, with 80.5% selecting them as their top choice (*see Figure 7*). This strong preference suggests a shift toward wearable spirituality, where individuals seek items that are simultaneously symbolic and seamlessly integrated into everyday fashion. Rather than relying on fixed displays or traditional rituals, many Vietnamese consumers now prefer feng shui jewelry that blends aesthetic elegance with spiritual significance, allowing for a portable, unobtrusive form of spiritual practice embedded in daily life (VietnamNet, 2024). Other forms, such as decorative statues or crystal balls (28.9%) and raw stones for display (18.8%), received considerably less attention. This disparity may reflect spatial constraints in urban living and a generational shift toward mobility, minimalism, and symbolic efficiency (Miller, 2010; McCracken, 1988). In increasingly compact homes and fast-paced lifestyles, jewelry offers a form of symbolic condensation: a small, portable object that encapsulates spiritual meanings such as protection or prosperity without taking up space or appearing overtly ritualistic.

Figure 7. Preferred Feng Shui Product Types



Source: Authors calculation from survey

Beyond product forms, material preference among Feng Shui stone consumers reveals important layers of symbolic intention, generational preference, and market accessibility. When asked about their preferred types of stones, quartz emerged as the most favored material, chosen by 56.4% of respondents, followed by jade (23.5%) and other types such as agate, amber (11.4%), or miscellaneous stones (28.9%) (see Figure 8). The prominence of quartz suggests that its appeal lies not only in affordability and availability but also in its symbolic versatility, commonly associated with clarity, emotional balance, and energy purification (Nghiem-Phu, 2022). This makes it a highly adaptable spiritual tool that can be reinterpreted to suit a wide range of consumer needs and belief systems.

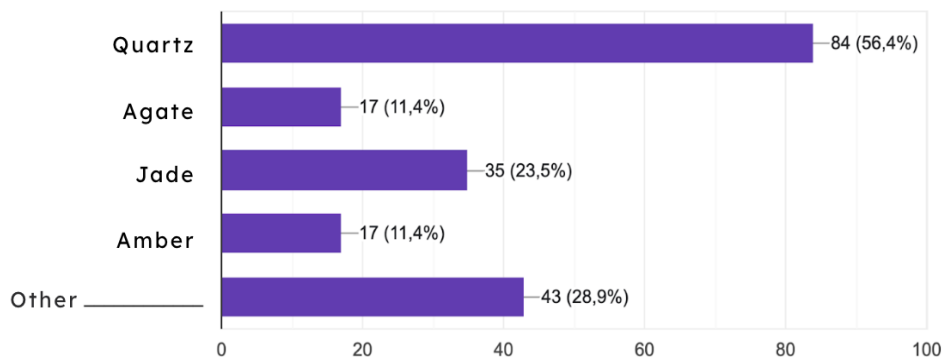
In contrast, jade long revered in East Asian cultures as a symbol of virtue, nobility, and prosperity (Rawson, 2002) has seen a relative decline in popularity. While jade maintains strong cultural and historical significance, its higher cost and fixed traditional meanings may make it less appealing to younger or more spiritually eclectic consumers. This shift suggests that younger generations may prefer materials that allow for personalization rather than those associated with rigid or inherited symbolism. As spiritual practices become more individualized and consumer-driven, materials like quartz offer consumers the freedom to construct personal narratives and emotional connections without being bound by longstanding ritual connotations.

This trend also highlights the democratization of spiritual consumption, in which access to meaningful objects is no longer limited by cost or traditional gatekeeping. The affordability of quartz makes it widely accessible across income groups, allowing more individuals to engage with Feng Shui practices without the burden of exclusivity. In this way, material choice becomes both a reflection of symbolic preference and an indicator of broader shifts in spiritual consumption—from formal, tradition-bound engagement to flexible, emotionally resonant interaction.

Moreover, the rising interest in "miscellaneous stones" points to a growing openness among consumers to experiment with lesser-known or unconventional materials. This may reflect a movement toward spiritual pluralism, where personal intuition, aesthetics, and online trends increasingly shape what is deemed spiritually meaningful. The diverse preferences for stone types suggest that the market for Feng Shui stones is no longer monolithic but multifaceted, catering to a wide range of beliefs, values, and identities.

Figure 8. Preferred Feng Shui Stone Materials

149 respondents



Source: Authors calculation from survey

This preference structure reinforces the role of symbolic utility in the product choice process. Rather than selecting stones based solely on tradition or appearance, many consumers align material with purpose, choosing stones perceived to offer the metaphysical properties they seek. For instance, individuals pursuing love or emotional healing may gravitate toward rose quartz, while those focused on financial stability may opt for citrine or jade. As Carrette and King (2005) note, contemporary spiritual consumption is less about institutionalized belief and more about individualized bricolage, where meaning is assembled from personal experience, market cues, and cultural fragments.

Additionally, material choice is often shaped by gendered and generational aesthetics. While older consumers may value the authenticity or heritage of jade, younger generations often prefer quartz-based jewelry for its modern look, affordability, and compatibility with fashion trends (Miller, 2010). This aligns with broader anthropological observations that material culture adapts to lifestyle rhythms, where symbolic goods are increasingly chosen not only for what they mean but also for how they move, fit, and feel within daily routines (Woodward, 2007). Product preferences in Vietnam's feng shui stone market are shaped by a combination of spiritual symbolism, lifestyle compatibility, and generational reinterpretation. The dominance of jewelry and quartz materials reflects a shift toward personalization, mobility, and symbolic minimalism, trends that both respond to and reinforce modern consumption patterns. As the market continues to evolve, producers and retailers may benefit from aligning product design not only with traditional values but also with contemporary modes of self-expression and embodied spirituality.

4. Discussion

4.1 Cultural beliefs continue to play a major role in shaping consumer decisions.

The survey results show that cultural beliefs continue to play a central role in shaping the choice and use of Feng Shui stone products in Vietnam. While the *form* of consumption is evolving from static display items placed in homes or workplaces to wearable Feng Shui jewelry used in daily life, the *function* remains largely consistent: to attract peace, luck, health, or prosperity. This continuity of symbolic purpose, despite changes in usage and form, reflects Belk's (1988) assertion that consumer behavior is a powerful medium through which individuals extend and express their self-identity using symbolic material possessions.

Importantly, the increasing trend toward personalized and wearable formats such as bracelets, pendants, and rings signal a shift in how spiritual values are integrated into daily life. Rather than being confined to ritualistic or spatial contexts, Feng Shui stones are now woven into consumers' everyday routines, merging spirituality with lifestyle. This convergence of the sacred and the personal highlights the adaptive resilience of traditional belief systems in a modern consumer society. Consumers are not abandoning cultural or

spiritual frameworks; instead, they are reconfiguring them in ways that align with contemporary aesthetics, convenience, and individual expression.

The continued presence of religious and spiritual elements in shopping behavior suggests that Feng Shui stones are not merely fashion accessories or wellness products. Rather, they occupy a unique position at the intersection of traditional culture and modern personalization. This dual identity allows them to satisfy both the cultural need for symbolic meaning and the modern consumer's desire for customization and individuality. The popularity of such items among a broad demographic is evident in the fact that 58.4% of survey participants reported having used Feng Shui stones, indicating that these products have moved beyond a niche or trend-based appeal. They have transitioned from early adopters to mainstream acceptance, becoming embedded in the broader cultural and consumer landscape of Vietnam.

This expansion reflects not only increased market demand but also the capacity of spiritual commodities to adapt and remain relevant in changing social conditions. As consumers seek ways to cope with uncertainty, express personal beliefs, and maintain cultural connections, Feng Shui stones offer a versatile platform for symbolic engagement. Their widespread use illustrates how deeply cultural beliefs can remain embedded in consumption practices, even as those practices undergo transformation. In this way, the Feng Shui stone market in Vietnam serves as a microcosm of how tradition and modernity co-exist, not in opposition, but in a dynamic and evolving relationship.

4.2 The Role of Media and Commercialization

The rise of online distribution channels, social media marketing campaigns, and the growing presence of Feng Shui stones in lifestyle and wellness events have significantly restructured how these products are consumed in Vietnam. No longer confined to temples, spiritual shops, or ceremonial contexts, Feng Shui stones are now widely accessible on digital platforms such as Shopee, TikTok, and Instagram pages specializing in "healing energy" or metaphysical self-care. This expanded presence reflects the increasing commodification and mediatization of spiritual goods, where belief-laden products are rebranded for contemporary consumption and marketed alongside lifestyle items such as yoga accessories, essential oils, and minimalist jewelry.

This shift has made Feng Shui stones more approachable, especially to younger consumers who may not have been raised in strictly religious households but are nevertheless drawn to ideas of energy healing, balance, and emotional wellness. As a result, many now engage with these stones not primarily through a religious or traditional lens, but as part of broader trends in wellness culture, spiritual fashion, and mindful living. Feng Shui stones, in this context, are positioned less as ritual objects and more as versatile tools for self-care, identity formation, and aesthetic alignment with global "new age" movements.

However, this commercialization process is not without its tensions. As Feng Shui stones move from sacred spaces into algorithm-driven marketplaces, concerns about the "dilution" of cultural values have emerged. Some critics argue that mass marketing risks stripping these items of their symbolic depth and spiritual integrity, reducing them to superficial commodities divorced from their original cultural context. Additionally, the explosion of sellers across informal platforms and the lack of standardized quality control have created ambiguity around product authenticity and efficacy. This has contributed to a growing trust gap between consumers and vendors, particularly in a market where symbolic value and perceived energy are as important as material quality.

This tension illustrates a broader paradox in the globalization of spiritual consumption: while digitization democratizes access and fosters new forms of engagement, it also challenges traditional authority structures and raises questions about legitimacy, cultural continuity, and commodified belief. In Vietnam, where Feng Shui remains deeply intertwined with heritage and personal fate, the movement of these objects into highly commercialized and stylized digital spaces presents both an opportunity for cultural adaptation and a risk of cultural erosion. The evolving consumption of Feng Shui stones reflects a negotiation between tradition and

modernity, belief and branding, authenticity and accessibility. As spiritual products continue to intersect with digital lifestyles, the meanings they carry and the ways they are valued will likely continue to shift, shaped by both market dynamics and individual reinterpretation.

4.3 Consumer Trust and Authenticity Concerns

One significant issue that emerged from the survey is the lack of consumer confidence in the reliability and authenticity of Feng Shui stone products currently available on the market. Only a small percentage of respondents reported a high level of trust in the products they purchased, while more than half indicated uncertainty about their authenticity or quality. This widespread ambivalence raises important concerns about provenance, legitimacy, and symbolic credibility in a product category that fundamentally depends on trust, belief, and perceived spiritual efficacy.

In a market where the symbolic value of a product often outweighs its material cost, this trust gap represents a critical challenge. From a business perspective, it poses a major barrier to sustainable market expansion. Consumers are more likely to hesitate or disengage from repeat purchases if they cannot verify the authenticity of what they are buying, especially when the item carries spiritual or metaphysical significance. Inconsistent sourcing practices, lack of product certification, and the proliferation of low-cost imitations on digital marketplaces further erode buyer confidence. For sellers, this environment creates a pressure to not only market the aesthetic or symbolic appeal of the product but also to demonstrate its credibility and ethical origins.

From a cultural perspective, this dilemma reflects a deeper tension: when iconic or sacred objects become widely commodified, how can they retain their original meanings? As Feng Shui stones shift from traditional spiritual tools to mass-consumed lifestyle products, their sacredness risks being diluted by the demands of commercial scalability and consumer convenience. This raises a critical question: can spiritually symbolic goods be integrated into modern markets without losing their cultural and metaphysical depth?

To address both the trust gap and the cultural integrity of these products, several strategies may be worth exploring. First, independent quality testing and certification such as gemological assessments or transparency about sourcing could help establish product legitimacy and reassure consumers of authenticity. Second, traceability systems, similar to those used in the ethical fashion or food industries, could allow consumers to track the origins and treatment of their stones, fostering a stronger connection and sense of trust. Third, culturally grounded brand storytelling can play a vital role in re-establishing symbolic depth. Brands that communicate the historical significance, spiritual value, and ethical journey of their products are more likely to resonate with belief-driven consumers seeking more than just a decorative object. Navigating the fine line between commercial success and cultural preservation requires a business model that does not treat belief as a trend to be exploited, but as a dimension to be respected and thoughtfully integrated. Doing so may not only close the trust gap but also reinforce the enduring relevance of Feng Shui stones in both spiritual and consumer contexts.

4.4 Generational Shift

Both the qualitative and quantitative findings suggest that younger generations, particularly millennials and Gen Z are not rejecting Feng Shui, but rather redefining its meanings and practices to align with contemporary lifestyles. Instead of engaging in formal rituals or adhering to rigid belief systems, many young consumers are approaching Feng Shui through a more personal, symbolic, and emotionally resonant lens. For them, a rose quartz bracelet may represent self-love and positive energy, while a jade pendant may serve as a wearable reminder of emotional balance or inner peace. These forms of engagement signal a softening and personalization of belief, where the object's spiritual essence is maintained, but the way it is interpreted and practiced becomes more flexible, aestheticized, and integrated into daily life.

The concept of “secularized Feng Shui” is useful in describing this cultural shift. While the products continue to carry spiritual symbolism, they are increasingly detached from their traditional religious or cosmological frameworks and recontextualized within urban, secular, and consumer-oriented settings. This transformation reflects not a loss of meaning, but a shift in how meaning is constructed away from inherited systems and toward individualized meaning-making, where the value of an object lies in how it resonates personally rather than how it fits within a larger doctrinal structure.

This process aligns with broader global trends, particularly among younger consumers who are increasingly drawn to “wellness symbolism” symbols and objects associated with healing, self-care, mindfulness, and emotional well-being. As Carrette and King (2005) argue, contemporary spirituality has become deeply intertwined with consumer culture, often detaching itself from institutional religion and instead manifesting in commodified forms that emphasize personal empowerment, emotional expression, and lifestyle alignment. In this framework, Feng Shui stones function not only as metaphysical tools but also as *lifestyle accessories*, offering symbolic comfort, personal narrative, and a sense of control in an uncertain world.

What emerges is a form of post-traditional spirituality, in which consumers selectively adopt cultural symbols from various traditions and reinterpret them to meet their psychological and aesthetic needs. This is not necessarily a dilution of meaning, but rather a recontextualization, a way of keeping tradition alive by making it compatible with modern values such as authenticity, individuality, and emotional wellness. In Vietnam, this trend is particularly evident among urban youth who are navigating rapid modernization, cultural hybridity, and rising interest in global wellness discourses. The popularity of Feng Shui stones among millennials and Gen Z illustrates how spiritual practices can remain relevant by adapting to the evolving landscape of identity, consumption, and belief. Rather than abandoning tradition, young consumers are carving out new ways of engaging with it, transforming Feng Shui from a rigid set of practices into a dynamic, symbolic language of self-care and personal meaning.

5. Conclusion

This study has explored the evolving demand for Feng Shui stones in Vietnam, highlighting the interplay between cultural belief, consumer behavior, and modern market dynamics. While rooted in centuries-old traditions, the contemporary consumption of Feng Shui stones reflects significant shifts in how symbolic goods are interpreted, marketed, and integrated into daily life. Survey data from 149 respondents reveals that although traditional spiritual values remain influential, the ways in which consumers engage with Feng Shui have become increasingly personalized, aestheticized, and digitally mediated. Younger generations, in particular, are redefining Feng Shui through the lens of self-care, wellness, and lifestyle. Rather than abandoning belief systems, millennials and Gen Z are selectively adopting and reinterpreting them in ways that reflect their individual identities and emotional needs. The rise of wearable Feng Shui items, the popularity of quartz over jade, and the use of social media as a key knowledge source all indicate a broader trend of *secularized spirituality*, where cultural symbols are maintained, but reshaped to fit contemporary, urban life. At the same time, challenges such as a growing trust gap, concerns over authenticity, and the commercialization of sacred objects point to ongoing tensions between cultural preservation and market expansion. These issues highlight the need for businesses to approach this market with sensitivity, ensuring that product integrity and cultural meaning are not sacrificed for profit. Strategies such as independent quality certification, transparent sourcing, and culturally grounded storytelling may help bridge the gap between consumer expectations and product credibility. Feng Shui stones in Vietnam today serve as a compelling example of how tradition and modernity coexist not as opposing forces, but as dynamic partners in the evolving landscape of belief and consumption. As consumer behavior continues to change, the enduring appeal of these stones suggests that cultural practices can remain relevant when they are allowed to adapt, personalize, and resonate within the lives of new generations.

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