



Social Media and Consumer Behaviour for Cosmetic Products: Empirical Study on Various Social Media Channels

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Abstract

In today's highly competitive market environment, the consumer holds a central and powerful position—often referred to as the 'king' of the market. This growing emphasis on individual consumer preferences has compelled marketers to closely study consumer buying habits, tastes, preferences, likes, and dislikes. As a result, businesses must continuously adapt their marketing strategies and revise their marketing mix to align with the evolving needs and expectations of consumers. Understanding consumer behavior is not just an advantage but a necessity for businesses seeking to maintain relevance, loyalty, and competitive edge in the modern marketplace. The Indian cosmetic industry has experienced remarkable growth over the past two decades, evolving into a dynamic and competitive sector. With the advent of technology social media play an important part in the growth of cosmetics business by providing useful information and valuable content about cosmetic products. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the most preferred channel for consumers of cosmetics among various social media channels. In this paper, data is collected through questionnaire from respondents and data was analyzed and interpreted with the help of statistical techniques. The study reveals that different platforms of social media such as instagram, whatsapp, facebook, youtube and many other channels have significant influence on buying behaviour of consumers. As the customers have the accounts over various channels and people spent lot of time over social media which influences their searching habits and their purchase decision. This study also contribute to the knowledge of how cosmetic companies will be able to understand buying preferences and buying behaviour of the consumers.

Key words: Consumer buying behavior, buying preferences, Cosmetics, social media.

Introduction

Cosmetics have become an integral part of daily life for millions, symbolizing not just beauty, but also self-expression, identity, and confidence. The cosmetic industry, traditionally driven by in-store marketing and word-of-

mouth, has undergone a major transformation with the rise of social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, whatsapp and snap-chat etc. These platforms have redefined how brands engage with consumers, creating a highly visual and interactive space where trends are born, product reviews go viral, and influencers shape purchase decisions.

The growing exposure to global beauty trends through satellite television, diverse media channels, and the internet has significantly influenced consumer preferences. Constant advertisements and promotional content have heightened awareness and created a stronger desire for cosmetic products among Indian consumers. Additionally, the boom in India's fashion and entertainment industries has emphasized the importance of personal appearance, further fueling the demand for beauty and skincare products.

Literature Review

The literature review part shows the earlier researches on related topic that can support the present research. The rise of digital media has significantly transformed consumer purchasing behavior, particularly in the cosmetics industry. Social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for marketing and influencing consumer decisions, owing to their visual appeal, interactive features, and influencer-driven content.

According to Kapoor et al. (2022), social media marketing has created a paradigm shift in how consumers interact with cosmetic brands. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube enable consumers to explore new products through tutorials, reviews, and influencer endorsements. These platforms also facilitate real-time engagement between brands and users, leading to higher trust and purchase intent.

Phua et al., 2017; Sudha & Sheena, 2017, highlight **Instagram** as the most preferred platform for cosmetic consumers due to its visual-centric nature. The platform supports aesthetic branding, user-generated content, and influencer marketing. Hashtags, reels, and stories offer dynamic tools for product discovery and brand communication, making Instagram a dominant player in influencing cosmetic purchases.

According to a study by Hootsuite (2021), consumers often rely on long-form video content, such as product reviews and makeup tutorials, to assess the credibility and effectiveness of cosmetic products. **YouTube** ranks second in influencing cosmetic buying decisions. Beauty vloggers have become trusted sources of information, especially for new or luxury cosmetic products.

Although **Facebook** still maintains a large user base, its influence on cosmetic purchases is lower compared to Instagram and YouTube. A study by Smith (2020) noted that younger demographics increasingly prefer visual-first platforms. **Snapchat**, while popular among Gen Z, is more effective for brand awareness than actual conversions or purchases.

Debi Prasad Mukherjee (2012), conducted a study highlighting the Impact of celebrity endorsement on Brand Image. This study shows that consumers report higher self-brand connection for brands with images that are consistent with the image of a celebrity they aspire to be like, particularly in the case when the image of the celebrity and the brand match.

Pawner, 2015, Qualitative research methods are utilized for gathering non-numerical data. It is used to determine the underlying reasons, views, or meanings from study participants or subjects. Under the qualitative research design, empirical studies had evolved to test the conventional concepts of evidence and truth while still observing the fundamental principles of recognizing the subjects' beings studied as empirical.

Research Methodology

Empirical means gathering of data using Evidence that derived from experience and observation or scientific tools. Quantitative research methods are used for gathering information via numerical data. This type is used to measure behavior, personal views, preferences, and other variables. Quantitative studies are in a more structured format, while the variables used are predetermined. Data gathered from quantitative studies is analyzed to address the empirical questions. Some of the commonly used quantitative methods are polls, surveys, and longitudinal or cohort studies. There are situations when using a single research method is not enough to adequately answer the questions being studied. In such cases, a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods is necessary. Also researcher have used both primary and secondary research methods. The present study is based on both primary and secondary data.

- Primary data was collected through a well-structured questionnaire designed to understand consumer behaviour towards cosmetic products and the influence of social media.
- Secondary data was obtained from relevant books, magazines, research journals, and credible online sources, which provided foundational context and supported the analysis.

A total of 600 respondents were selected from four districts of Haryana to represent a diverse set of consumers. The stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure fair representation across different demographic segments such as age, gender, income level, and location. For the analysis of the collected data, the following statistical tools were used:

- Simple Percentage Technique: To calculate the distribution and trends of responses.
- Ranking Technique: To prioritize the preference of social media channels by the consumers.

After data collection, all responses were carefully edited and validated. The data were then organized into tables and figures for clarity. The interpretation was carried out using these visual aids to draw meaningful insights into the buying patterns and preferences of consumers.

Analysis and interpretation

The demographic profile of respondents described as the 26% male and 74% are female respondents that belongs to various age groups. Respondent's belongs to different age categories 20 years or less, 21-30 years, 31-40 years and above 40 years are 20%, 55%, 17% and 8% respectively. Thus the respondents having diverse characteristics are taken for present study. The table given below reveals the preference of respondents regarding various social media channels. Each channel has been evaluated on the basis of five statements. The analysis and interpretation part will cover here the objective of the study that is related with most preferred channel or the best social media channels.

Table 1: Responses on usage of various Social Media Channels both total count and Percentage response

Social Media Channels	Responses	Statements										Total
		Which Social Media Channel is more appealing for you (1)		On which social media channel You spent more time (2)		Which Social Media Channel you use on daily basis (3)		On which social media Platforms you have accounts (4)		Which social media channel influence your purchase decision (5)		
Facebook	No	77.50%	465	81.70%	490	78.00%	468	40.70%	244	82.50%	495	838
	Yes	22.50%	135	18.30%	110	22.00%	132	59.30%	356	17.50%	105	
whatsapp	No	47.70%	286	59.80%	359	26.80%	161	17.00%	102	81.30%	488	1604
	Yes	52.30%	314	40.20%	241	73.20%	439	83.00%	498	18.70%	112	
Instagram	No	32.50%	195	40.80%	245	41.50%	249	24.30%	146	46.70%	280	1885
	Yes	67.50%	405	59.20%	355	58.50%	351	75.70%	454	53.30%	320	
YouTube	No	68.80%	413	68.50%	411	65.20%	391	51.80%	311	81.50%	489	985
	Yes	31.20%	187	31.50%	189	34.80%	209	48.20%	289	18.50%	111	
LinkedIn	No	91.00%	546	96.80%	581	91.70%	550	72.20%	433	97.70%	586	304
	Yes	9.00%	54	3.20%	19	8.30%	50	27.80%	167	2.30%	14	
Other	No	96.50%	579	95.00%	570	97.00%	582	92.00%	552	88.20%	529	188
	Yes	3.50%	21	5.00%	30	3.00%	18	8.00%	48	11.80%	71	

Source: Self-Generated

Detailed analysis and Interpretation

The above table depicts the five statements on which data regarding social media channels have been obtained to know about the usage of social media platforms by the respondents. The data highlighting the user's choices and preferences regarding various social media channels. The respondents have marked on questionnaire for giving responses on the statements as which social media channel appealing them, on which social media channel they spent more time, which channel they use on daily basis and on which social media platforms people have accounts, which channels influences people in making their purchase decision.

It is observed through the table for **Facebook** responses in favour of each statement percentage 22.50, 18.30, 22, 59.30 and 17.50 respectively. Which shows that with the highest score many people have Facebook accounts which is followed by they uses the Facebook on daily with a good percentage of response.

While analyzing the social media platform **whatsapp** it is found that people responses are in favour of questions as on which platform people have account, which platform people use on daily basis, which channel is more appealing and on which platform they spent more time with the score percentages 83, 73.20, 52.30 and 40.20 respectively. With the lower percentage score 18.70 for the statement influence on purchase decision.

It is observed through the table for **Instagram** responses in favour of each statement percentage 67.50, 59.20, 58.50, 75.70 and 53.30 respectively. Which shows that with the highest score many people have Instagram accounts, more appealing to people which is followed by they uses the Instagram on daily basis and people spent more time with instagram with a good percentage of response. It also influences the respondents purchase decision.

While analyzing the social media platform **YouTube** it is found that people responses are in favour of questions as on which platform people have account, which platform people use on daily basis, which channel is more appealing and on which platform they spent more time with the score percentages 48.20, 34.80, 31.20 and 31.50 respectively. With the lower percentage score 18.50 for the statement influence on purchase decision.

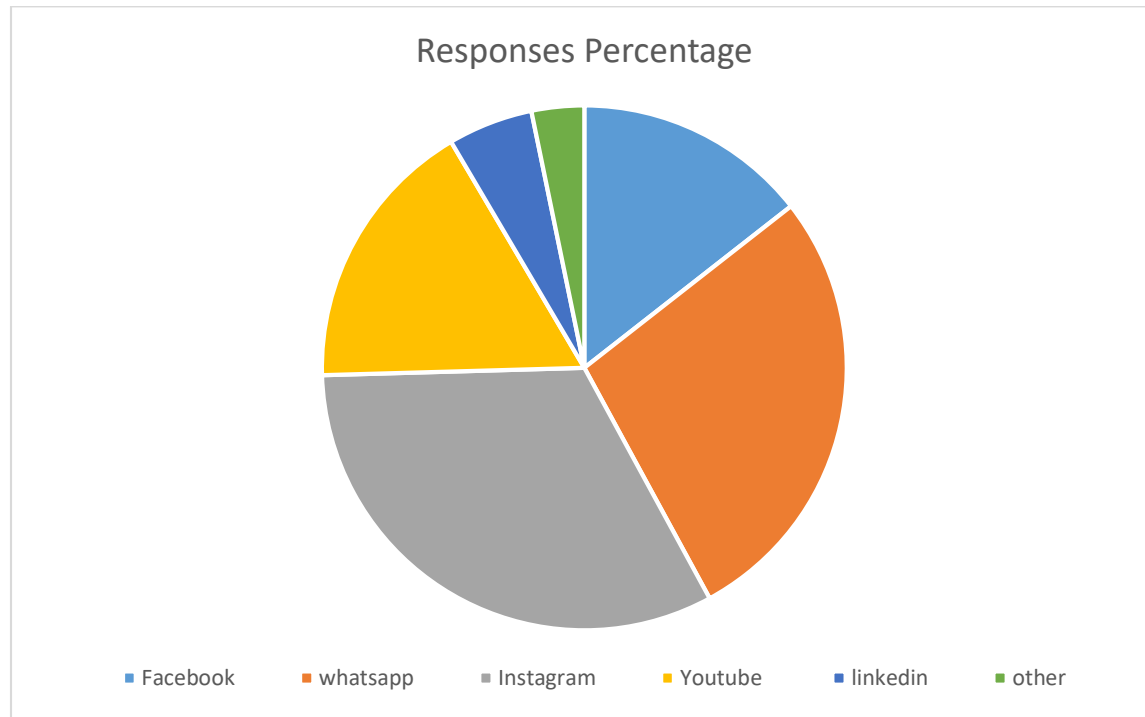
For **LinkedIn** and **other platforms** responses percentage are lower than other social media channels. With lower percentage of responses in favour of LinkedIn for all the five statements are 9, 3.20, 8.30, 27.80 and 2.30 respectively. Similarly it is analyzed through table for other channels responses percentage in favour of each statement is 3.50, 5, 3, 8, and 11.80 respectively.

Table 2: Total Responses, percentage Total Responses and Rank showing order of preferences for Channels

Social Media Channels	Responses Total	Rank	Responses Percentage
Facebook	838	IV	14.438%
whatsapp	1604	II	27.636%
Instagram	1885	I	32.478%
YouTube	985	III	16.971%
LinkedIn	304	V	5.2378%
other	188	VI	3.2391%

Source: Self-Generated

Figure 1: Chart depicting percentage responses for various social media Channels



Source: Self-Generated

To fulfill the requirements of the objective as which social media channel is used and preferred most by customers, the responses have been collected from users of social media channels on the basis of five different statements regarding usage of social media channel. By summing up the scores of these five questions that highlighted the interest, involvement and usage of various social media channels a table has been generated given above. A pie chart is also made referring to the table data given above. The table depicts that **Instagram** is most preferred channel followed by **whatsapp**. YouTube and Facebook with the percentage score of 32.478%, 27.636%, 16.971 and 14.438 respectively. The LinkedIn and other channel comes at lower places with percentages 5.2378 and 3.2391 respectively. Ranks are also given for showing order of preferences by respondents.

Interpretation: On social media channels whatsapp and Instagram people have more accounts followed by Facebook and YouTube than the LinkedIn and other social media channels. Besides that instagram whatsapp, Facebook and YouTube have more usage percentage than the LinkedIn and other channels.

Findings and Suggestions

- Most of the people have accounts on social media channels such as instagram and whatsapp followed by facebook and youtube. Mostly professional and educated persons have account on LinkedIn. Some other channels are also attracting people but have lesser number of accounts on other channels.
- Instagram with 53.30% influences most the purchase decision of customers regarding cosmetic products. The literature clearly suggests that Instagram is the most preferred social media platform for cosmetic

consumers due to its visual appeal, influencer ecosystem, and engagement tools. YouTube closely follows, offering in-depth content and educational value. Other Emerging platforms like pinterest and snap chat are also gaining momentum.

- The overall shift indicates that cosmetic consumers are increasingly dependent on social media not just for product discovery but also for decision-making based on trust, reviews, and social proof.
- People uses whatsapp on daily basis with 73.20% but they spent more time on instagram daily with score of 59.20%. Marketers of cosmetic products can access these channels for increasing the sales effectively.
- People like to check social media platforms first before they make a buy decision.
- Usage of social media is increasing day by day among cosmetics customers.
- With a score of 67.50% instagram is considered as more appealing social media platform. With this information businesses marketing program can be tailored that best suits the customers' needs by using popular social media channels.
- Social media influencers on instagram, facebook, whatsapp youtube and other channels can be a source for approaching people for their cosmetics brands.
- It has been observed that even though the cosmetic market is dominated by female consumers, male consumers are also becoming the part of cosmetic market. The knowledge of changing trends of market helps and encourages the marketers and businesses to focus their business strategy in the light of changing trends. A company should market exclusive cosmetic products for male consumers through social media.

Conclusion

Consumer behaviour in the cosmetics sector has shifted—buyers now rely more on peer reviews, influencer endorsements, and real-time feedback via social media rather than traditional advertisements. Social media has empowered consumers with more information, greater choice, and a stronger voice, ultimately influencing their preferences, brand loyalty, and buying patterns. Consumer behaviour is a multifaceted concept that includes consumption patterns, individual preferences, motivations, and the overall buying process. In the competitive landscape of the cosmetic industry, marketing plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and driving sales. Cosmetics is a popular business in today's era having greater potential for growth and this growth is possible with the help of social media channels. To develop effective marketing strategies, companies must first understand the expectations, desires, and behaviors of their potential customers. Additionally, exposure to media, peer influence, and digital content significantly shape consumers' attitudes and purchase choices.

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