



Investigating Consumer Attitudes and Behaviours in Online Cosmetic Product Purchases: An Empirical Study

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Introduction:

The rise of e-commerce has significantly changed the way consumers purchase products, including cosmetic products. Consumers can now easily access a wide range of cosmetic products from different online retailers, making it easier to shop from the comfort of their homes. However, this shift towards online shopping has also presented new challenges for both consumers and retailers. One of the major challenges is the ability of consumers to evaluate the quality of products accurately. Therefore, understanding consumer attitudes and behaviors towards online cosmetic product purchases is essential in helping retailers to improve their online services and product offerings.

Consumer attitudes and behaviors in online cosmetic product purchases have evolved in recent years. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in online beauty product purchases, with 87% of consumers spending more or the same online than before the pandemic ¹. Younger generations, such as Gen Z and Millennials, are more reliant on ratings and reviews when shopping for beauty products online ¹. In the US, consumers often turn to big-box retail stores, pharmacies, and online platforms to purchase cosmetics ². Consumer attitudes and behaviors in online cosmetic product purchases in India have been influenced by increased earnings, exposure to new ideas and technologies, and the COVID-19 pandemic ². The pandemic has boosted online discovery and sales of cosmetic products due to the closure of physical stores and salons ². Indian consumers have shifted to online channels, benefiting direct-to-consumer (DTC) brands like Nykaa, which holds a significant share in the online beauty and personal care market ³.

Several factors influence consumer purchasing decisions in online cosmetic product purchases. These factors include the quality of argument on the review, source credibility, perceived usefulness of the products, quantity of review available on the internet, review valence, marketing mix factors (product, price, distribution channel, and marketing promotion factors), consumer perception about the available local and international cosmetic products, and cosmetic buying behavior (quality product, product price, brand name, product packaging, and advertising) ^{4 5 6 7}.

Research Problem:

Despite the growth of the online cosmetic market, little is known about consumer attitudes and behaviors towards online cosmetic product purchases. This lack of understanding hinders the ability of retailers to tailor their online offerings to the needs and preferences of their customers. Moreover, there is a need to identify factors that influence consumers' purchasing decisions, such as product quality, brand reputation, and online reviews. Therefore, the research problem addressed in this study is to investigate consumer attitudes and behaviors towards online cosmetic product purchases.

Objective of the Study:

The primary objective of this study is to examine consumer attitudes and behaviors towards online cosmetic product purchases. More specifically, the study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions in online cosmetic product purchases.
2. To investigate the role of online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitudes towards online cosmetic product purchases.

Significance of the Study:

The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into consumer attitudes and behaviors towards online cosmetic product purchases. Retailers can use these insights to tailor their online services and product offerings to the needs and preferences of their customers, improving customer satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, the study will contribute to the existing literature on consumer behavior in e-commerce, specifically in the cosmetic industry, and may be useful for future research in the field. Finally, policymakers may use the findings of this study to develop guidelines and regulations to protect online

Hypothesis:

1. There is no statistically significant difference between Factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions & Online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude by Gender
2. H₀: There is no statistically significant difference between Factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions & Online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude by Education
3. H₀: There is no statistically significant difference between Factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions & Online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude by Age

Literature Review:

Credibility is typically defined as the degree to which the individual receiving the communication recognizes the communicator as knowledgeable and trustworthy on a particular topic. The term *source* in the eWOM literature refers to the person who generates the message's content (Dou, Walden Justin, Lee, & Lee, 2012)¹⁴. Source credibility defines the perception of the message source's credibility, not the message's content (Chaiken, 1980)¹². (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2013)⁸ A persuasive message from a credible source has greater effects on product evaluation than a persuasive message from a less credible source.

(Bhattacharjee & Sanford)¹⁰ Argument quality indicates the persuasive power of arguments incorporated in an informative message. Discussion of argument quality focuses primarily on its persuasiveness.

Peer evaluation is regarded as a crucial suggestion that assists consumers in evaluating the quality of products (Krosnick, S., Chuang, Berent, & Camot, 1993)⁹.

Moe and Trusov (2011) discovered that the dynamics of valence in online reviews of specific fragrance and beauty products can have a direct impact on sales. This suggests that cosmetic products require time to demonstrate their effectiveness. (Park D. &., 2008) The valence of information can have a significant impact on consumers' attitude formation towards a product, thereby influencing their purchase decision.

According to Mayzlin and Chevalier (2006)¹⁵, the number of online reviews can be used as an indicator of a product's efficacy on the market. According to Chatterjee et al. (2001)¹³, the number of reviews may indicate the number of prospective consumers who have previously purchased and used the product. The number of reviews contributes to boosting online consumers' confidence and decreasing the uneasy feelings of risk exposure when purchasing specific products (Buttle, 1998)¹¹

Jalilvand, M.R., Ebrahimabadi, F. and Samie, N. (2011), Brand is always an important factor for a company. Brand image can induce brand loyalty from consumers. Therefore, brand recognition begins an important issue for brand management^{16 17}. Dolatabadi, H.R., Kazemi, A. and Rad, N.S. (2012) Brand image is brand personality or the reflection of products. What affect consumers to buy which brands is “the need of consumers”¹⁸. Batra, R. and Homer, P.M. (2004) Consumers tend to buy the brands or products which others expect them to buy, and they also like to buy the same brands or products which others have, so that they can be recognized by others¹⁹.

Methodology:

This study used a survey method to Investigating Consumer Attitudes and Behaviours in Online Cosmetic Product Purchases. Convenient sampling was used to select 100 sample as participants. Structured questionnaires were prepared to collect data from participants in person. Secondary data were referred from scientific papers and internet websites as source.

The questionnaire was designed to identify the factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions in online cosmetic product purchases. To investigate the role of online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitudes towards online cosmetic product purchases. The questionnaire was of Likert scale.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the collected data, including frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, and measures of variability. For testing the Hypothesis Independent T-Test & One Way Anova was used by using the SPSS 26 version software

A Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated for the Perception towards Banking Ombudsman scale. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was evaluated using the guidelines suggested by George and Mallery (2018)²⁰ where $> .9$ excellent, $> .8$ good, $> .7$ acceptable, $> .6$ questionable, $> .5$ poor, and $\leq .5$ unacceptable.

Table 1: Reliability Table

Scale	No. of Items	α
Factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions	9	.752
Online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitudes	8	.901

To ensure ethical considerations, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participants were told about the goal of the study, and their identity and confidentiality were preserved throughout the investigation. The study also adhered to ethical principles and guidelines for research involving human subjects

Result & Finding:

Descriptive Analysis

Table 2: Frequencies	
Gender	% of Total
Female	54.0 %
Male	46.0 %
Education	% of Total
Secondary Education	11.0 %
Higher Secondary	15.0 %
Graduation	34.0 %
Post-Graduation	40.0 %
Age	% of Total
21-30	18.8 %
31-40	48.5 %
41-50	26.7 %
51 & above	5.9 %

The data (table 2) provided presents information on the frequencies and percentages of three variables: gender, education, and age. In terms of gender distribution, 54.0% of the total population are identified as female, while the remaining 46.0% are identified as male. Moving on to education, 11.0% of the population has completed secondary education, 15.0% has completed higher secondary education, 34.0% has graduated from college, and 40.0% has completed post-graduation. Shifting the focus to age groups, we observe that 18.8% of the population falls within the 21-30 age range, 48.5% falls within 31-40, 26.7% falls within 41-50, and a smaller proportion of 5.9% is aged 51 and above. These figures provide insights into the distribution of genders, educational achievements, and age brackets within the given population.

Table 3: How important is the following factors when making a purchasing decision?		Extremely important	Moderately important	Not at all important	Slightly important	Very important
Product quality	%	10.0 %	46.0 %	5.0 %	14.0 %	25.0 %
Price of the product	%	10.0 %	30.0 %	3.0 %	12.0 %	45.0 %
Customer reviews of the product	%	0	0	54.0 %	15.0 %	31.0 %
Brand reputation	%	25.0 %	21.0 %	1.0 %	13.0 %	40.0 %
Variety of products available	%	19.0 %	26.0 %	3.0 %	10.0 %	42.0 %
Ease of use of the website	%	22.0 %	33.0 %	3.0 %	13.0 %	29.0 %
Shipping and return policies	%	5.0 %	41.0 %	4.0 %	17.0 %	33.0 %
Discounts and promotions	%	9.0 %	33.0 %	1.0 %	15.0 %	42.0 %
Environmental and ethical considerations	%	8.0 %	43.0 %	4.0 %	7.0 %	38.0 %

The provided table 3 presents insights into the importance attributed to different factors when making purchasing decisions. Respondents rated each factor on a scale ranging from "Not at all important" to "Extremely important." Examining the results, it is evident that product quality and price are considered significant by the majority of respondents. 25.0% find product quality to be very important, with 10.0% rating it as extremely important. In terms of price, 45.0% find it very important, and 10.0% rate it as extremely important. Brand reputation also holds considerable weight, with 40.0% considering it very important and 25.0% rating it as extremely important. Furthermore, the variety of products available (42.0%), ease of use of the website (29.0%), and shipping and return policies (33.0%) were recognized as influential factors. Interestingly, customer reviews of the product were not deemed important by the majority, with 54.0% indicating they were not at all important. The significance of discounts and promotions (42.0%) and environmental/ethical considerations (38.0%) was also acknowledged.

These results shed light on the preferences and priorities of respondents when making purchasing decisions. It indicates which factors hold more significance for consumers, such as product quality, price, brand reputation, variety, website usability, shipping and return policies, discounts and promotions, and environmental/ethical considerations. The findings can assist businesses in understanding and catering to consumer preferences more effectively.

Table 4: Investigate the role of online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitudes towards online cosmetic product purchases		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree
Online reviews significantly influence my attitude towards purchasing cosmetic products online.	%	35.0 %	12.0 %	31.0 %	13.0 %	9.0 %
I consider online reviews as a reliable source of information when deciding to purchase cosmetic products online.	%	29.0 %	14.0 %	31.0 %	17.0 %	9.0 %

Positive online reviews increase my confidence in purchasing cosmetic products online.	%	33.0 %	10.0 %	27.0 %	17.0 %	13.0 %
I trust the opinions and experiences shared in online reviews when it comes to cosmetic products.	%	41.0 %	11.0 %	19.0 %	18.0 %	11.0 %
The reputation of a brand significantly affects my attitude towards purchasing cosmetic products online.	%	38.0 %	13.0 %	29.0 %	11.0 %	9.0 %
I am more likely to purchase cosmetic products online from brands with a positive reputation.	%	34.0 %	17.0 %	30.0 %	15.0 %	4.0 %
Brand reputation plays an important role in building trust for online cosmetic product purchases.	%	33.0 %	16.0 %	28.0 %	14.0 %	9.0 %
I am willing to pay a premium for cosmetic products from brands with a strong reputation.	%	42.0 %	13.0 %	24.0 %	14.0 %	7.0 %

Table 4 explores the role of online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitudes towards online cosmetic product purchases. The table presents the percentages of respondents who agree, disagree, are neutral, strongly agree, or strongly disagree with various statements.

The findings indicate that online reviews significantly influence consumer attitudes towards purchasing cosmetic products online, with 35.0% agreeing and only 12.0% disagreeing. Similarly, 29.0% of respondents consider online reviews a reliable source of information, while 14.0% disagree with this statement. Positive online reviews have a considerable impact on consumers' confidence in purchasing cosmetic products online, as indicated by 33.0% agreeing and only 10.0% disagreeing. Moreover, a significant portion of respondents (41.0%) trust the opinions and experiences shared in online reviews when it comes to cosmetic products. Brand reputation also plays a substantial role in shaping consumer attitudes. 38.0% of respondents agree that the reputation of a brand significantly affects their attitude towards purchasing cosmetic products online. Additionally, 34.0% are more likely to purchase from brands with a positive reputation, and 33.0% believe brand reputation is crucial in building trust for online cosmetic product purchases. Furthermore, the results show that 42.0% of respondents are willing to pay a premium for cosmetic products from brands with a strong reputation, demonstrating the influence of brand reputation on purchase decisions.

In conclusion, online reviews and brand reputation play significant roles in shaping consumer attitudes towards online cosmetic product purchases. Consumers rely on online reviews as a reliable source of information and are influenced by positive reviews when making purchasing decisions. Brand reputation strongly affects consumer attitudes, building trust and increasing the likelihood of purchasing from reputable brands. Businesses operating in the online cosmetic product industry should prioritize managing their brand reputation and actively seek positive online reviews to enhance consumer trust and drive sales.

Testing of Hypothesis:

1. **H0: There is no statistically significant difference between Factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions & Online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude by Gender**

Result

The provided statistical analysis presents the results of an independent samples t-test conducted on two groups. The first group focuses on factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions, while the second group examines the role of online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude.

The t-test results reveal that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups regarding factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions ($t = -0.218$, $df = 98$, $p = 0.828$). This suggests that both genders have similar perceptions and considerations when it comes to factors influencing their purchasing decisions.

However, when examining the role of online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude, a statistically significant difference is observed between the two groups ($t = -1.758$, $df = 98$, $p = 0.042$). This indicates that there is a difference in how males and females perceive the impact of online reviews and brand reputation on their attitudes towards purchasing decisions.

Looking at the group descriptive, it can be observed that both genders have similar means in terms of factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions, with females having a mean of 30 and males having a slightly higher mean of 30.2. The standard deviations (SD) and standard errors (SE) also show comparable values for both groups.

In contrast, when considering online reviews and brand reputation, females have a lower mean of 25.6 compared to males with a higher mean of 28.1. This suggests that males may place slightly more importance on online reviews and brand reputation when forming their consumer attitudes.

In conclusion, the results of the t-test indicate that there is no significant difference between genders regarding factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions. However, a significant difference is observed when examining the role of online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude, suggesting that males and females may have differing perceptions in this regard.

		Statistic	df	p		
Factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions	Student's t	-0.218	98	0.828		
Online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude	Student's t	-1.758	98	0.042		
Group Descriptive						
	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions	Female	54	30	30	3.93	0.535
	Male	46	30.2	30	5.19	0.765
Online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude	Female	54	25.6	25.5	7.68	1.045
	Male	46	28.1	30	6.16	0.908

2. H0: There is no statistically significant difference between Factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions & Online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude by Education

Result:

The provided statistical analysis presents the results of a one-way ANOVA (Welch's) conducted on two groups. The first group examines factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions, while the second group focuses on online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude.

For factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions, the one-way ANOVA does not reveal a statistically significant difference between the educational groups ($F = 1.39$, $df1 = 3$, $df2 = 31.1$, $p = 0.264$). This suggests that the level of education does not significantly affect the factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

In contrast, for online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude, the one-way ANOVA shows a highly significant difference between the educational groups ($F = 24.31$, $df1 = 3$, $df2 = 33.9$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that the level of education has a significant impact on how online reviews and brand reputation shape consumer attitudes.

Examining the group descriptives, it can be observed that for factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions, the means across the educational groups range from 28.1 to 31.5. The standard deviations (SD) and standard errors (SE) also show varying values, indicating some degree of variability within the groups.

Regarding online reviews and brand reputation, the means across the educational groups range from 18.7 to 31.4. The standard deviations (SD) and standard errors (SE) also display varying values, suggesting different levels of dispersion within the groups.

In conclusion, the one-way ANOVA (Welch's) results indicate that there is no significant difference between the educational groups regarding factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions. However, a highly significant difference is observed when considering online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude, highlighting the influence of education on these factors.

The findings suggest that the level of education plays a role in how consumers perceive and are influenced by online reviews and brand reputation.

Table 6: One-Way ANOVA (Welch's)

	F	df1	df2	p	
Factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions	1.39	3	31.1	0.264	
Online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude	24.31	3	33.9	< .001	
Group Descriptive					
	Education	N	Mean	SD	SE
Factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions	Secondary Education	11	31.5	6.27	1.89
	Higher Secondary	15	28.1	4.17	1.076
	Graduation	34	30.5	4.46	0.765
	Post-Graduation	40	30.1	4.09	0.646
Online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude	Secondary Education	11	18.7	5.22	1.573
	Higher Secondary	15	21.1	4.67	1.205
	Graduation	34	26.4	5.88	1.008
	Post-Graduation	40	31.4	5.55	0.878

3. **H0: There is no statistically significant difference between Factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions & Online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude by Age**

Result:

The provided statistical analysis presents the results of a one-way ANOVA (Welch's) conducted on two groups. The first group examines factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions, while the second group focuses on online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude.

For factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions, the one-way ANOVA does not reveal a statistically significant difference among the age groups ($F = 0.644$, $df1 = 3$, $df2 = 18.4$, $p = 0.597$). This suggests that age does not have a significant impact on the factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

Similarly, for online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude, the one-way ANOVA does not show a statistically significant difference among the age groups ($F = 1.465$, $df1 = 3$, $df2 = 17.8$, $p = 0.258$). This indicates that age does not significantly affect how online reviews and brand reputation shape consumer attitudes.

Examining the group descriptives, we observe that for factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions, the means across the age groups range from 29.7 to 31.4. The standard deviations (SD) and standard errors (SE) also exhibit some degree of variability within the groups.

Regarding online reviews and brand reputation, the means across the age groups range from 25.1 to 30.4. The standard deviations (SD) and standard errors (SE) also display varying values, suggesting different levels of dispersion within the groups.

In conclusion, the one-way ANOVA (Welch's) results indicate that there is no significant difference among the age groups regarding factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions or online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude.

These findings suggest that age does not play a substantial role in determining the factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions or the impact of online reviews and brand reputation on consumer attitudes

	F	df1	df2	p	
Factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions	0.644	3	18.4	0.597	
Online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude	1.465	3	17.8	0.258	
Group Descriptive					
	Age	N	Mean	SD	SE
Factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions	21-30	19	29.7	3.02	0.693
	31-40	49	29.7	5.06	0.723
	41-50	27	30.9	4.6	0.886
	51 & Above	5	31.4	3.65	1.631
Online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude	21-30	19	25.5	7.54	1.729
	31-40	49	27.7	6.84	0.977
	41-50	27	25.1	7.25	1.395
	51 & Above	5	30.4	5.86	2.619

Discussion:

The study aimed to address the research problem of the lack of understanding of consumer attitudes and behaviors towards online cosmetic product purchases. By identifying the factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions and investigating the role of online reviews and brand reputation, the study aimed to

provide valuable insights to retailers and contribute to the existing literature on consumer behavior in e-commerce.

The findings of the current study align with and expand upon previous research in the field of consumer behavior in e-commerce, particularly in the context of online cosmetic product purchases. Firstly, the current study confirmed the significance of factors such as product quality, price, brand reputation, variety of products, website usability, shipping and return policies, discounts and promotions, and environmental/ethical considerations as influencers of consumer purchasing decisions. These findings are consistent with prior studies that have identified similar factors impacting consumer behavior in online retail settings.

In terms of the role of online reviews and brand reputation, the current study's results are consistent with previous research indicating their importance in shaping consumer attitudes. Positive online reviews were found to significantly influence consumer confidence in purchasing cosmetic products online, corroborating previous findings. Similarly, the impact of brand reputation on consumer attitudes aligns with prior research that highlights the role of brand perception in building consumer trust and influencing purchase decisions.

However, the current study also contributes new insights by examining the specific influence of online reviews and brand reputation in the context of online cosmetic product purchases. This study delved deeper into understanding the significance of these factors and their differential impact based on gender and level of education. Such analysis provides a nuanced understanding of consumer behavior, which complements the existing literature.

Comparing the findings of the current study with previous research, it is evident that gender plays a role in the perception of online reviews and brand reputation. This aligns with some previous studies that have reported gender-based differences in consumer attitudes and behaviors. However, the current study did not find a significant gender difference in terms of the factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions. These variations highlight the need for further investigation into the role of gender in consumer behavior in the online cosmetic product industry.

Regarding the impact of education, the current study's results align with prior research that has shown the influence of education level on consumer attitudes and behaviors. The finding that the level of education significantly affects how online reviews and brand reputation shape consumer attitudes is consistent with previous studies that have emphasized the role of education in shaping consumer preferences and decision-making processes.

In terms of age, the study did not find a significant difference among the age groups regarding factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions or the impact of online reviews and brand reputation on consumer attitudes. This suggests that age does not play a substantial role in determining the factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions or the influence of online reviews and brand reputation on consumer attitudes in the context of online cosmetic product purchases.

Conclusion:

The findings of the current study both confirm and expand upon previous research in the field of consumer behavior in e-commerce, specifically in the online cosmetic product industry. The study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions and the role of online reviews and brand reputation. By examining the influence of gender, age and education, the study contributes new knowledge and highlights the need for further investigation into these areas. Males and females had differed perceptions of the impact of online reviews and brand reputation on their attitudes towards purchasing decisions. A highly significant difference was observed in the role of online reviews and brand reputation in shaping consumer attitude based on the level of education. The study did not find a significant difference among the age groups regarding factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions or the impact of online reviews and brand reputation on consumer attitudes. Retailers can utilize these findings to tailor their strategies and improve customer satisfaction and loyalty, while policymakers can use them to develop appropriate guidelines and regulations to protect online consumers.

Overall, this study provides valuable insights into consumer attitudes and behaviors towards online cosmetic product purchases. The findings indicate that factors such as product quality, price, brand reputation, variety, website usability, shipping and return policies, discounts and promotions, and environmental/ethical considerations significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions. Moreover, online reviews and brand reputation were shown to play important roles in shaping consumer attitudes and building trust.

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