

CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS COSMETIC PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products in Gurugram, one of India's rapidly urbanizing regions with a diverse demographic profile. The research focuses on identifying key factors influencing consumer decisions, such as quality, brand awareness, media influence, and price sensitivity. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 127 respondents, utilising a combination of primary and secondary data sources. Key findings reveal that quality and brand trust significantly impact purchasing decisions, with a noticeable preference for products with natural or herbal ingredients. Additionally, the study highlights the dominant role of digital media in shaping consumer awareness, with 40% of respondents relying on the internet for product information. While most respondents prefer a mix of domestic and international brands, affordability remains a critical factor, with 48.8% spending less than ₹1000 monthly on cosmetics. The findings underscore the growing demand for quality products at competitive prices, driven by increased consumer awareness and purchasing power in Gurugram. This study contributes valuable insights for marketers aiming to cater to the dynamic and discerning consumer base in urban markets. Recommendations include leveraging digital platforms for targeted marketing, emphasizing product quality, and offering competitive pricing to strengthen market presence in Gurugram's cosmetic sector.

Keywords: Consumer Behaviour, Cosmetic Products, Gurugram Market, Buying Preferences, Media Influence.

Introduction

Understanding consumer buying behaviour is fundamental to the success of any business, particularly in the cosmetics industry, which is characterised by rapidly changing trends and consumer preferences. The Indian cosmetics market, driven by rising disposable incomes, growing awareness of personal grooming, and a shift towards natural and organic products, has witnessed substantial growth in recent years (Desai & Galyara, 2023). Cities like Gurugram, a prominent urban hub and economic center, play a pivotal role in shaping consumer behaviour due to their diverse population and high purchasing power.

Consumer behaviour involves studying the attitudes, preferences, and purchasing patterns of individuals regarding products or services. It is influenced by multiple factors, including demographics, cultural values, lifestyle changes, and exposure to media (Katkar et al., 2024). For the cosmetics industry, understanding these influences is essential, as it enables marketers to tailor products and campaigns to meet the specific needs of their target audience. Factors such as brand awareness, quality, pricing, and digital media influence are critical in shaping consumer decisions (Emmanuel et al., 2023).

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This study aims to explore the consumer buying behaviour of cosmetic products in Gurugram, focusing on key determinants such as demographic profiles, media influence, and product preferences. The research highlights the growing importance of natural and herbal cosmetic products while examining the role of online platforms in shaping awareness and purchase decisions. By addressing these aspects, the study provides actionable insights for marketers and stakeholders to enhance their strategies and cater to the evolving demands of Gurugram's urban consumers.

Cosmetic Industry in India

The cosmetic industry in India is witnessing remarkable growth, driven by urbanisation, rising disposable incomes, and increasing awareness of personal grooming and wellness. The market, valued at approximately USD 8.1 billion in 2023, is projected to reach USD 18.4 billion by 2032, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.2% (Custom Market Insights, 2024). This growth is attributed to evolving consumer preferences for specialised products such as organic, herbal, and cruelty-free cosmetics. Women dominate the market, accounting for about 60% of sales, largely due to the rising empowerment, changing societal norms, and greater focus on professional appearance and self-expression (IBEF, 2023).

Key trends reshaping the industry include the rising popularity of ingredient-driven beauty products, such as those featuring salicylic acid and niacinamide, which address specific concerns like anti-aging and sun protection (Statista, 2024). Social media and beauty influencers have significantly influenced purchasing behaviour, particularly among younger consumers, popularising microtrends like tinted moisturisers and graphic eyeliners (Redseer Strategy Consultants, 2024). Technology also plays a transformative role, with AI-driven personalisation and virtual try-on tools enhancing consumer engagement and satisfaction. The increasing reliance on online retail channels, alongside the dominance of specialty stores, underscores the shift towards convenient and curated shopping experiences (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). The industry's competitive landscape includes prominent domestic players like Dabur and Himalaya and international giants such as L'Oréal and Estée Lauder (Mehre et al., 2021). With growing demand for innovative, sustainable products and advanced marketing strategies, the Indian cosmetic sector remains a vibrant and expanding segment of the global market.

Rationale of the Research

The cosmetics industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors globally, with a significant contribution to economic development and employment generation. In India, the industry has experienced exponential growth, spurred by increasing disposable incomes, heightened awareness of personal grooming, and a preference for quality products (Ghai, 2018). Urban centres like Gurugram, which boast diverse demographics and a cosmopolitan consumer base, present a dynamic market ripe for exploration. However, despite its growth, understanding the factors that drive consumer behaviour in this sector remains under-researched, especially in regional contexts.

Consumer behaviour is influenced by numerous variables, including demographic factors, cultural values, technological adoption, and media exposure (Desai & Galyara, 2023). The rise of digital platforms has particularly transformed the way consumers access product information and make purchasing decisions. In the competitive cosmetics market, understanding these influences is crucial for companies seeking to design effective marketing strategies and establish a loyal consumer base (Katar et al., 2024). This research addresses an important gap by focusing on the consumer buying behaviour of cosmetics in Gurugram. While numerous studies have examined consumer behaviour in broader contexts, the specific motivations, preferences, and habits of consumers in a rapidly urbanising city like Gurugram remain underexplored.

The rationale for this study lies in its potential to provide actionable insights for marketers and policymakers. By identifying key factors such as brand loyalty, quality preferences, and the influence of digital media, this research assists businesses in tailoring their offerings to meet consumer needs, thereby driving both customer satisfaction and market growth in this region.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

Aim of the Study

To examine consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products in Gurugram, focusing on key factors such as demographic influences, media communication, brand preferences, and product attributes to provide actionable insights for marketers and stakeholders.

Objectives

- To analyse the demographic profile of consumers in Gurugram and its influence on their purchasing decisions for cosmetic products.
- To identify the factors that most significantly affect consumers' buying decisions, including quality, price, brand reputation, and product type.
- To assess the role of media communication, particularly digital platforms, in shaping awareness and preferences for cosmetic products among consumers in Gurugram.
- To evaluate consumer preferences for domestic versus international cosmetic brands and their willingness to adopt natural or herbal products.

Literature Review

The study of consumer buying behaviour is an interdisciplinary field drawing from psychology, sociology, economics, and marketing to understand how individuals make purchasing decisions. In the cosmetics industry, understanding these behaviours is critical, given its reliance on consumer preferences and evolving market trends. This literature review synthesises previous studies to explore factors influencing buying behaviour, particularly in the context of cosmetic products.

Desai (2014) conducted a study on consumer buying behaviour for cosmetic products, focusing on media communication's role in influencing decisions. The research highlighted significant factors, such as age and gender, impacting consumer preferences. However, the study's reliance on percentage analysis and a small sample size limited its reliability. Similarly, Hemanth et al. (2014) examined the influence of income levels and socio-cultural factors on cosmetic purchases. Their findings revealed that income significantly shaped social and cultural preferences but had minimal impact on personal and psychological factors. Despite its insights, the study lacked advanced statistical methods like factor analysis to refine results.

The role of demographic profiles in influencing cosmetic purchases has also been explored extensively. Poddar (2013) found that brand and product quality were the most critical factors driving consumer choices, with brand loyalty playing a significant role. However, the study's presentation through charts and graphs without robust statistical backing limited its academic depth. Similarly, Emmanuel et al. (2023) and Pal et al. (2020) analysed how marketing strategies and demographic factors like age and occupation influenced consumer behaviour. These studies emphasised the importance of targeted marketing but often overlooked broader psychological and cultural factors.

Other studies have investigated consumer attitudes towards natural and herbal cosmetic products. Maheswari et al. (2022) examined the correlation between family income and spending on herbal cosmetics. Their research concluded that brand loyalty and quality were significant determinants for purchasing decisions. However, the study's limited sample size restricted the generalisability of its findings. Likewise, Hemanth et al. (2024) demonstrated that demographic factors like age and occupation positively influenced attitudes towards cosmetic products. Still, their findings diverged from other studies by suggesting that income had no critical impact.

Media influence, particularly digital platforms, has been another area of focus. Emmanuel et al. (2021) explored the role of marketing strategies and media channels in promoting consumer awareness. They found that consumers increasingly shifted towards organic and Ayurvedic-based cosmetics, influenced by advertisements and celebrity endorsements. However, the study narrowly focused on marketing factors and did not incorporate other crucial variables such as pricing or availability.

Consumer behaviour research has also highlighted the significance of external factors, including advertisements and brand endorsements. Ajitha and Sivakumar (2017) examined the impact of attitudes and cultural values on buying decisions, identifying social influences as a critical determinant. Similarly, Katkar et al. (2024) concluded that consumers in India were highly brand-conscious, favouring branded products over generic alternatives due to perceived quality and trust.

While these studies provide valuable insights, they often face methodological limitations. Many rely on small sample sizes or focus narrowly on specific aspects of consumer behaviour, such as income or marketing strategies, without considering the broader interplay of factors. Additionally, most research focuses on rural or semi-urban areas, leaving urban hubs like Gurugram underexplored. This literature review underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to studying consumer buying behaviour in the cosmetics industry. Factors such as demographics, media influence, product preferences, and brand loyalty must be examined holistically. By addressing these gaps, this study aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of consumer behaviour in a dynamic urban market like Gurugram.

Research Methodology

Research methodology provides the framework for conducting a study and ensures its reliability, validity, and replicability. This study adopts a systematic approach to investigate consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products in Gurugram. The methodology involves research design, data collection methods, sampling techniques, and analytical tools to ensure comprehensive and accurate insights.

Research Design

This research employs a descriptive research design to systematically analyse consumer behaviour towards cosmetic products. A descriptive approach is well-suited for understanding the preferences, attitudes, and habits of consumers, as it allows for detailed exploration of various factors influencing purchase decisions. The primary tool for data collection was a structured questionnaire, designed to capture both qualitative and quantitative aspects of consumer behaviour.

The questionnaire included Likert-scale items, closed-ended questions, and multiple-choice questions to assess demographic profiles, preferences for product attributes, and the influence of external factors such as media communication and pricing. Additionally, the study incorporated ranking questions to determine the relative importance of factors like quality, price, and brand awareness.

Sources of Data

Data for this study was collected from both primary and secondary sources:

- **Primary Data:** The primary data was obtained through a survey administered to consumers in Gurugram. The questionnaire was distributed online and in person to ensure a diverse sample.
- **Secondary Data:** Secondary data was gathered from academic journals, industry reports, books, and online databases. These sources provided background information and supported the interpretation of primary data.

Sampling Techniques

- **Population and Sampling Method:** The population for this study consists of individuals residing in Gurugram who are consumers of cosmetic products. A convenience sampling technique was employed to select participants. This non-probabilistic sampling method was chosen due to its efficiency in reaching respondents within the time and resource constraints of the study.
- **Sample Size:** The sample size for the study was 127 respondents. While relatively small, this sample size provides sufficient data for meaningful analysis within the context of Gurugram. Efforts were made to ensure diversity in the sample, covering various age groups, occupations, and income levels.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process spanned a period of two months. Respondents were approached through online platforms and in-person interactions. The structured questionnaire was designed to be easy to understand, ensuring accurate responses. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their data to encourage honest and thoughtful participation.

The questionnaire was divided into sections to capture:

- **Demographics:** Age, gender, occupation, and income levels of respondents.
- **Buying Patterns:** Frequency of cosmetic purchases, preferred product types, and spending habits.
- **Factors Influencing Decisions:** Importance of factors such as price, quality, and brand reputation.
- **Media Influence:** Role of media, including digital platforms, advertisements, and word of mouth in shaping consumer behaviour.
- **Brand Preferences:** Preferences for domestic versus international brands and inclination towards natural or herbal products.

Analytical Tools

The study employed simple percentage analysis and ranking techniques to interpret the data. These tools were chosen for their suitability in presenting consumer preferences and trends in an

accessible and comprehensible manner. The findings were tabulated and visualised using charts and graphs to enhance clarity.

Limitations of the Study

While the methodology was designed to ensure robustness, the study faced certain limitations:

- **Sample Size and Scope:** The sample size of 127 respondents may not be representative of the broader population in Gurugram. Further research with a larger sample size would improve generalisability.
- **Geographic Focus:** The study is limited to Gurugram and may not reflect consumer behaviour in other urban centres or rural areas.
- **Self-Reported Data:** Responses were self-reported, which may introduce biases such as social desirability or inaccurate recall.
- **Convenience Sampling:** This method may limit the representativeness of the sample, as it may exclude certain demographic groups not readily accessible.

Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to ethical standards to ensure the integrity and reliability of the study:

- **Informed Consent:** Respondents were briefed about the study's objectives and provided their consent to participate.
- **Confidentiality:** Participant information was anonymised to protect their privacy.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any stage without any repercussions.

This research methodology provides a structured approach to understanding consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products in Gurugram. By combining descriptive research design, primary and secondary data sources, and robust analytical tools, the study ensures comprehensive insights into the factors influencing consumer decisions. Despite its limitations, the methodology lays a strong foundation for exploring trends and preferences in this dynamic urban market. Future studies can build on this framework by incorporating larger samples and advanced statistical analyses to further validate the findings.

Data Findings

The findings of this study, based on data collected from 127 respondents in Gurugram, provide a comprehensive overview of consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products. These findings explore demographic influences, consumer preferences, and the role of external factors such as media in shaping purchasing decisions.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

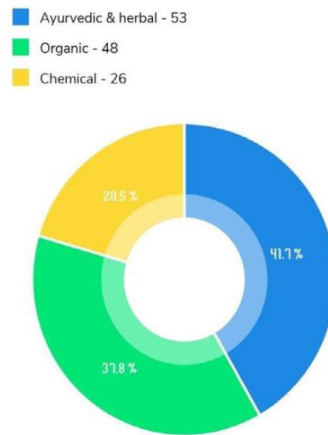
The demographic composition of respondents highlights the significant role of age, gender, and occupation in influencing cosmetic buying behaviour:

- **Gender:** Female respondents constituted the majority at 57.5%, while male respondents accounted for 42.5%. This indicates a slightly higher inclination of female consumers towards cosmetic products, consistent with global trends.
- **Age:** A majority of respondents (85%) belonged to the 15-30 years age group, highlighting the preference for cosmetics among younger consumers. This segment is often more influenced by trends and media communication.
- **Occupation:** Students formed the largest occupational group (52.8%), followed by employed individuals (20.5%) and self-employed respondents (10.2%). This suggests that younger, urban populations with lower financial responsibilities are key consumers of cosmetics.

Product Preferences and Usage Patterns

The study revealed several key preferences and patterns among cosmetic consumers:

- **Product Type:** Ayurvedic and herbal products were the most preferred (41.7%), followed by organic cosmetics (37.8%), while chemical-based products were the least favoured (20.5%). This reflects a growing preference for natural and sustainable products in Gurugram.

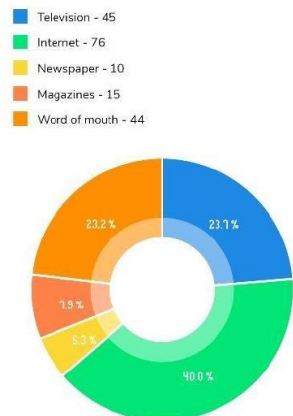


- **Brand Preference:** Most respondents (74%) expressed no strict allegiance to either domestic or international brands, opting for both based on product quality and affordability. However, 14.2% preferred domestic brands, and 11.8% favoured international brands.
- **Spending Habits:** A significant proportion of respondents (48.8%) spent less than ₹1000 monthly on cosmetic products, indicating price sensitivity in the market. The remaining respondents spent between ₹1000 and ₹5000, with only 5.5% spending over ₹5000.

Influence of Media and Awareness Channels

Media communication and word of mouth played pivotal roles in shaping consumer awareness and preferences:

- **Media Influence:** The internet was the most influential medium, with 40% of respondents citing it as their primary source of information about cosmetic products. Television and word of mouth followed closely, with 23.7% and 23.2%, respectively. Print media, such as newspapers and magazines, had minimal influence, with only 5.3% and 7.9% of respondents relying on these sources.



- **E-Shopping Dominance:** Online shopping emerged as the most popular channel for purchasing cosmetics, preferred by 37.8% of respondents. This reflects the growing convenience and accessibility of e-commerce platforms. Traditional shops and shopping malls each accounted for 24.4% of purchases, while 13.4% preferred other avenues.

Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions

- **Key Determinants:** Quality was identified as the most significant factor influencing purchasing decisions, followed by price and brand reputation. These preferences align with consumer demands for reliable and value-for-money products.

- **Loyalty to Brands:** A majority of respondents indicated loyalty to their chosen cosmetic brands, with limited inclination to switch unless significant improvements or promotional offers were presented by competitors.

Findings on Demographic Influences

Younger consumers (15-30 years) showed a preference for innovative, trendy products, heavily influenced by social media and online reviews.

Students and employed individuals prioritised affordability and quality, indicating that price sensitivity and value propositions are critical to their purchasing decisions.

Summary of Key Findings

- **Demographics:** The study highlighted a young, predominantly female consumer base with varied occupational profiles.
- **Product Preferences:** There is a strong inclination towards natural and organic cosmetics, with a balanced preference for domestic and international brands.
- **Media Role:** The internet is the dominant source of product awareness, reflecting the importance of digital marketing strategies.
- **Shopping Habits:** E-commerce platforms are the most preferred shopping channels, indicating the need for brands to strengthen their online presence.
- **Consumer Loyalty:** Respondents showed brand loyalty, with quality being the primary driver for repeat purchases.

These findings provide valuable insights into the behaviour of cosmetic consumers in Gurugram and offer actionable data for marketers aiming to target this growing market. Future marketing strategies should prioritise digital outreach, affordability, and quality enhancements to cater to the needs and preferences of this demographic.

Conclusion

This study on consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products in Gurugram offers valuable insights into the preferences, influences, and purchasing patterns of urban consumers. The findings underscore the dynamic nature of the cosmetic industry in India, shaped by a young and diverse demographic, increasing digital media penetration, and a growing preference for quality and natural products.

The majority of respondents belonged to the 15-30 years age group, highlighting the significance of younger consumers in driving market trends. Gender differences were also evident, with female respondents forming the majority of cosmetic users, a trend that aligns with global consumer behaviour in this sector. Students and young professionals emerged as the largest consumer group, reflecting the influence of lifestyle factors and social aspirations on purchasing decisions.

The study revealed a clear preference for Ayurvedic and herbal products, with 41.7% of respondents favouring these over chemical-based alternatives. This indicates a rising awareness of health and sustainability, driven by broader societal trends. Additionally, there was no strict loyalty to either domestic or international brands, with most consumers opting for a mix based on quality and affordability. This suggests that brand equity and product features play a more significant role than geographical origins in influencing consumer choices.

Media, particularly digital platforms, emerged as a critical influence on consumer awareness and decision-making. The internet was the most cited source of information, reinforcing the importance of digital marketing in today's consumer landscape. Traditional media, such as newspapers and magazines, showed minimal impact, reflecting a shift in how urban consumers engage with brands.

Spending habits revealed that affordability remains a key factor, with most respondents spending less than ₹1000 monthly on cosmetics. This price sensitivity indicates the need for brands to strike a balance between quality and cost. E-commerce platforms were the most preferred shopping channels, showcasing the growing reliance on online purchasing for convenience and variety.

The study also highlighted strong brand loyalty among respondents, driven primarily by product quality. However, this loyalty is not absolute, as consumers showed willingness to explore alternatives when offered improved features, competitive pricing, or promotional incentives.

Overall, the study demonstrates the multifaceted nature of consumer behaviour in Gurugram's cosmetic market. It reflects the evolving preferences of urban consumers who value quality, affordability, and convenience while being influenced by digital media and lifestyle aspirations. The insights gained provide a robust foundation for marketers to design strategies that cater to the specific needs of this dynamic consumer base.

Recommendations

- **Leverage Digital Marketing:** Brands should focus on strengthening their presence on digital platforms, given the significant role of the internet in shaping consumer awareness. Strategies such as influencer collaborations, targeted advertising, and engaging social media campaigns can effectively capture the attention of younger consumers.
- **Focus on Natural and Herbal Products:** The growing preference for Ayurvedic and organic cosmetics suggests a need for brands to expand their product lines to include sustainable and chemical-free options. Emphasising these attributes in branding and packaging can appeal to health-conscious consumers.
- **Enhance E-Commerce Presence:** With a majority of consumers preferring online shopping, brands must invest in user-friendly and visually appealing e-commerce platforms. Offering exclusive online discounts, loyalty programmes, and quick delivery options can further enhance consumer satisfaction.
- **Maintain Competitive Pricing:** Given the price sensitivity of consumers in Gurugram, brands should develop strategies to deliver high-quality products at competitive prices. Bundling offers, smaller packaging sizes, and seasonal discounts can attract a larger audience.
- **Engage with Consumer Insights:** Regular market research should be conducted to stay updated on changing consumer preferences. Insights into trends and emerging needs can help brands adapt their strategies proactively and maintain relevance in the competitive market.

By implementing these recommendations, cosmetic brands can position themselves effectively to meet the demands of Gurugram's evolving consumer landscape.

Implication of the Study

The findings of this study have significant implications for marketers, policymakers, and stakeholders in the cosmetic industry. For marketers, the insights into consumer behaviour in Gurugram highlight the importance of quality, affordability, and digital engagement in influencing purchase decisions. With younger consumers driving demand, brands can tailor their strategies to resonate with this demographic by leveraging digital platforms, incorporating trend-driven marketing, and expanding product lines to include Ayurvedic and herbal cosmetics. The study also underscores the growing shift towards e-commerce, emphasising the need for robust online sales channels and personalised shopping experiences. For policymakers, the preference for natural and organic products calls for stricter regulations and labelling standards to ensure transparency and consumer trust in sustainable claims. Additionally, small and medium enterprises in the cosmetic sector can use these insights to carve a niche by offering competitively priced, high-quality products catering to specific consumer needs. The study's findings can also guide retailers to focus on optimising inventory with a mix of domestic and international brands and enhancing customer service. Overall, this research bridges critical gaps in understanding urban consumer behaviour and provides actionable insights that can drive innovation, market expansion, and consumer satisfaction in the growing cosmetic industry.

Further Scope of Research

This study provides a foundational understanding of consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products in Gurugram; however, there is ample scope for further research to build on its findings. Future studies could explore larger and more diverse samples to ensure the generalisability of the results across different demographic segments, such as higher-income groups or rural consumers, to provide a broader perspective. Advanced statistical tools, such as regression analysis or structural equation modelling, could be employed to identify the strength of relationships between influencing factors like price, quality, and brand loyalty. Longitudinal studies would also add value by tracking shifts in consumer preferences over time, especially with the evolving trends towards sustainability and natural products. Additionally, examining the psychological and cultural aspects of cosmetic consumption, including the influence of societal norms, beauty standards, and self-perception, could provide deeper insights into purchase motivations. Comparative studies across different cities or regions could help

identify location-specific behaviours, aiding brands in tailoring regionally focused strategies. Furthermore, research into the impact of emerging technologies, such as augmented reality for virtual try-ons and AI-driven product recommendations, would shed light on how innovation influences consumer decisions. Such extended research efforts would significantly contribute to the dynamic and growing field of consumer behaviour studies in the cosmetic industry.

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