

“CONSUMER BUYING PROCESS FOR COSMETICS – AN ANALYSIS”

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Abstract-

Investigating consumer buying habits about cosmetic products was the primary goal of this particular study. The country's cosmetics and lifestyle industry has proliferated during the last few years. The factors influencing consumer behaviour include personality, perception, attitude, physical traits, pricing, and others. Consumers in India have seen a considerable increase in their purchasing power and disposable income over the past ten years, resulting in significant growth in this business. We found that various preferences exist among cosmetic consumers and that things like age, gender, and frequency of purchases influence these choices. Strategic marketing campaigns that are specifically aimed at the 25- to 34-year-old group are necessary. According to the study's findings, several factors, such as demographics, preferences for in-person or online shopping, and the interaction of rational and emotional factors, significantly influence people's decisions to buy cosmetics. In addition to considerations of price and brand reputation, environmental conscience is becoming more and more correlated with this decision-making process. The harmonious integration of superior products, public trust, and individual values fosters brand loyalty. Because social media, particularly through influencers, is a major factor in creating consumer attitudes, businesses must use these platforms to create enlightening and honest content for consumers looking to make informed cosmetic purchases.

Keywords- Consumer Buying Process, Consumer Buying Model, Brand Image, Cosmetics and Influencing

Introduction-

The cosmetics industry has witnessed incredible growth and development throughout the years due to changing consumer preferences, technological advancements, and social mores. The cosmetics industry's engagement with consumers and consumer decision-making is a complicated and dynamic phenomenon. Understanding the cosmetics purchasing process is crucial for cosmetics companies because it enables them to properly market and position their goods and provides analytical data on the psychological, social, and economic factors that influence consumer behaviour. This study looks at the various stages consumers go through as they consider, evaluate, and ultimately purchase cosmetic products. We achieve this by probing the intricate world of cosmetics consumer purchasing.

We wish to learn more about the underlying motivations, presumptions, and determining elements that influence consumers' pursuit of self-care and expression by looking into this process. Beyond just boosting appearance, cosmetics are tools for self-presentation, self-esteem development, and artistic expression. Cosmetic purchases entail more than just practical utility; they also involve brand loyalty, emotional attachment, and sensory experience. From the initial awareness of a need or desire for a cosmetic product through the post-purchase evaluation and potential repurchase, each stage of the consumer purchasing process provides valuable information on the interaction between personal preferences and external influences.

In order to conduct a thorough analysis, we will look into the factors that influence consumers' awareness and recognition of their cosmetic needs, the informational and motivating factors that shape their product considerations, the criteria they use to evaluate product options, and the psychological and social dynamics that underlie their final purchase decisions. We'll also look at how new channels made possible by e-commerce and digitalization have altered how people find, use, and purchase cosmetics.

By doing this research, we intend to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding consumer behaviour in the cosmetics industry and offer perceptions that can assist cosmetics companies in developing effective marketing strategies and product offerings. By gaining a deeper understanding of the consumer purchasing process, businesses may create products that speak to consumers' fluctuating wants and aspirations in the dynamic world of cosmetics. This enables them to anticipate trends, tailor their marketing, and create items that people will find appealing.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE-

Christopher (1989) investigated consumers' purchasing behaviours. Consumer Action: To determine whether the store concepts, product lines, and business strategies of the companies are adequate towards consumer requirements. While attempting to comprehend how people or groups choose to spend their available resources on consumption-related items, he believed that consumer behaviours are unpredictable and constantly changing. The elements, such as packaging, promotion, product presentation, and pricing, influence the buyer before, during, and after a purchase. Consumer purchasing behaviour is influenced by various external and internal factors, including demographic and social factors (family and home), group effects, the effect of advertising, and internal factors (learning, perception, attitude, etc.).

Understanding consumer behaviour concepts in-depth will help us see how important it is to our daily lives and the overall trend of business profit for different companies. This will help the researcher analyse the data, determine product positioning, and create a messaging and targeting strategy to reach the market. Marketers have traditionally been particularly interested in customer purchasing patterns. Consumers make purchases and are influenced by several factors, which marketers may help them with by understanding.

By understanding the consumer decision-making process and its contributing factors, marketing professionals may determine and design several strategies to increase customer happiness, market share, and brand loyalty. Cultural, societal, personal, and psychological factors influence consumer behaviour when making purchases. While the majority of these factors are beyond the marketers' control and uncontrollable, they must be included while seeking to understand complex consumer behaviour.

In another article on the Consumer Buying Process, it is said that emotional, physiological, and psychological aspects influence the complicated process of consumer purchasing behaviour. Purchase decisions are influenced by the cost, alternatives offered, advertising, and customer income. The decision-making process is more involved with occasional purchases than with regular purchases. Along with pricing, other factors such as culture, religion, and motivation affect customer behaviour. Across all industries, price has an impact on consumer satisfaction and purchasing decisions. Promotional strategies like discounts, free samples, and buy-one-get-one deals are well received by customers, which affects both short-term and long-term sales. Environmentally friendly items are valued by millennials, who are willing to pay more. In contrast to other considerations, peer pressure, product impressions, and customer personality substantially influence online purchasing behaviour.

There are few studies on consumer behaviour, particularly in the Indian environment. The following papers briefly review a few of these significant studies.

Subrahamanyam and colleagues (1982), a study was published on "Marketing of consumer goods" was out in Vishakapatnam. It was discovered that a significant portion of respondents made purchases from private retail shops, followed by super bazaars and consumer cooperative stores and that homemakers were crucial in influencing purchasing decisions.

Debiprasad Mukherjee.(2012)"Impact of Celebrity Endorsement on Brand Image A study demonstrates that consumers report stronger self-brand connections with brands whose pictures are similar to those of celebrities they aspire to be like, especially when the star and brand's image coincide.

Kisan Shivajirao Desai (2014)"A Study on Consumer Buying Behaviour of Cosmetic Products in Kolhapur" The study is an effort to examine how Indian consumers choose their cosmetics, with particular regard to Kolhapur. This essay looks into the numerous elements that influence consumers' purchasing decisions. Respondents were selected for this study using a practical sampling methodology, and statistical techniques were used to analyse and interpret the results. The study shows that various factors significantly affect consumers' purchasing decisions. The knowledge gained from this study will help cosmetic companies better understand consumer purchasing patterns.

Mohammad, Hiran Roy, Muhammad Sabbir Rahman, Anisur R. Faroque, Vikas Gupta &Humayra Tasnim Prova A paper published on the Effect of social media influence on consumer's purchase intention of cosmetics products: the role of customer's engagement and generativity states that

Pardo (2017). Consumers' growing awareness of the potentially negative consequences of conventional beauty products has increased demand for organic beauty products as a safer and more environmentally friendly substitute. The growing understanding of the adverse effects traditional cosmetics and skin care products have on human health and the environment is what is causing this shift in consumer behaviour .Because of this, this review investigates how social media and consumer involvement affect consumers' interest in organic beauty products and their decision to buy.

Smith, Fischer, and Yongjian (2012), social media platforms have become significant avenues for influencing consumer attitudes and behaviours. Consumers now have access to a wide range of user-generated content, reviews, and recommendations connected to beauty items because of the quick development of social media. Peer-to-peer sharing and interaction on social media platforms encourage

consumer engagement and make a substantial contribution to the spread of information and viewpoints about organic beauty products. The Impact of Consumer Engagement and Social Media on Purchase Intentions

Alalwan et al., (2017). The results of this study, which examined 213 internet datasets, confirm that social media and consumer engagement have a favourable and significant influence on consumers' intentions to buy organic beauty goods. Customers can interact with like-minded people, engage with content about organic beauty, and access a variety of product reviews and recommendations on social media. This interaction successfully increases their drive and interest in buying organic beauty products.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY-

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH-

1. The main goal is to Understand the Consumer Buying Process for Cosmetics.
2. Identifying the Factors Influencing the Consumer Buying Process for Cosmetics
3. Analyze the Impact of Social Media on the Consumer Buying process for Cosmetics
4. Analyze the role of Online and Offline Channel in the Cosmetic Buying Process
5. Analyse the role of Price, Brand Reputation, eco-friendliness and Customer Review as deciding factors for a Consumer.

DATA COLLECTION -

To achieve the above objectives, a mixed-method research approach will be used. The study will consist of qualitative and quantitative elements to understand the Consumer Buying Process for Cosmetics comprehensively.

- **Quantitative Analysis** – A survey will be conducted to collect data from the sample Consumers who buy Cosmetics. The Survey will help to understand the Consumer Buying Process for Cosmetics as well as collect Information on the Influence of Social Media, Sustainable Products, and different ways Consumers can gather Information about products.

- **Data Analysis** – The data will be analysed using statistical tools, such as regression analysis, and the qualitative data will be analysed based on pie charts and Bar Graphs to get a fair understanding of the Consumer Buying Process for Cosmetics or Certain Factors that influence the Consumer

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION -

To Investigate the consumer buying process for Cosmetics for all age groups from 18 to 45, a structured questionnaire was designed to collect the primary data. While collecting the data, the total number of responses I got was around 150 from potential customers. The questionnaire comprised 14 questions containing demographic variables, purchase Intentions, price factors, sustainability and Eco-Friendly Products, Packaging design, the type of Products the potential customers are willing to buy before purchasing, and how the customers gather Information regarding the same product. The survey was conducted using Google Forms, and the respondents' Contact and Perceived Details were also collected.

Age
151 responses

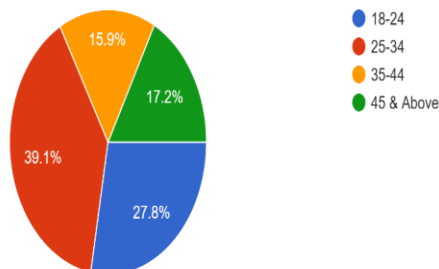


FIGURE – 1

How often do you buy Cosmetics?

151 responses

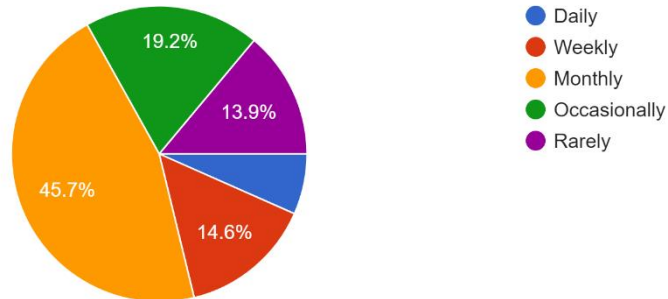


FIGURE – 2

Which cosmetic products do you typically buy?

151 responses

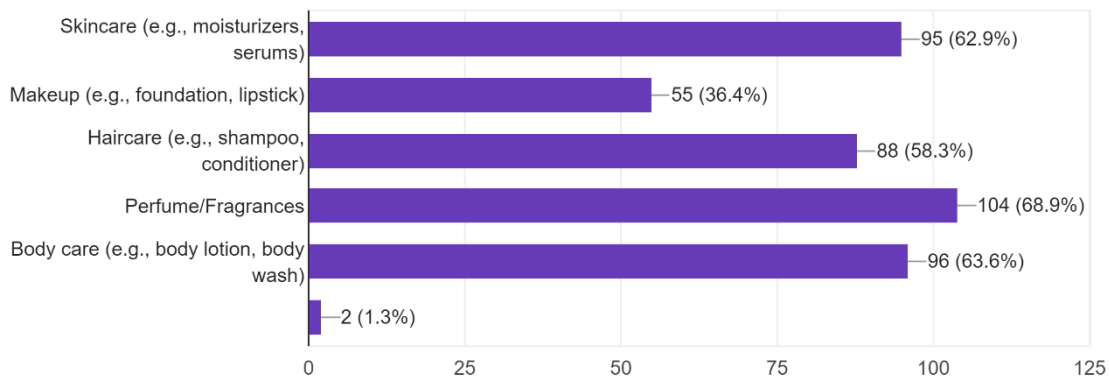


FIGURE – 3

How do you usually gather information about cosmetic products?

151 responses

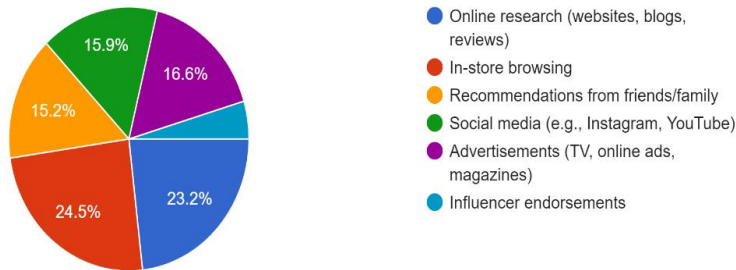


FIGURE – 4

What factors influence your decision to buy a cosmetic product? (Rank from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least influential and 5 being the most influential)

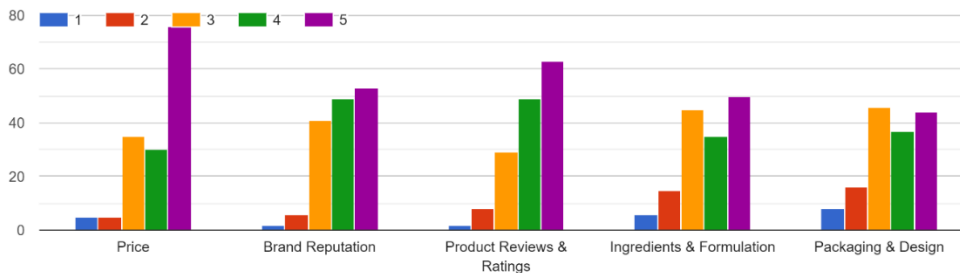


FIGURE – 5

Do you prefer to try out samples or testers before purchasing a new cosmetic product?

151 responses

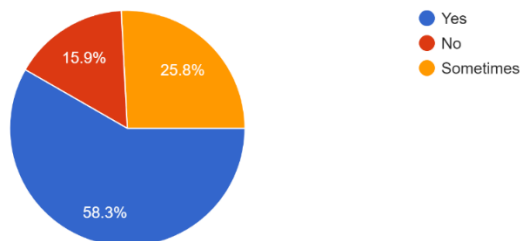


FIGURE – 6

How important is sustainability and eco-friendliness when choosing cosmetic products?

151 responses

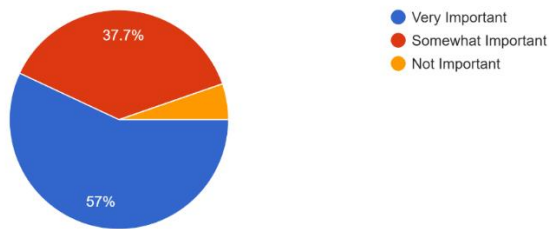


FIGURE – 7

. Have you ever switched from one cosmetic brand to another? If yes, what motivated you to make the switch?

151 responses

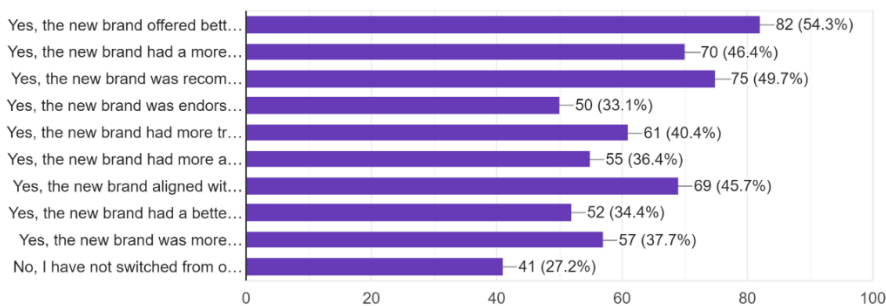


FIGURE – 8

How satisfied are you with your recent cosmetic purchases?

151 responses

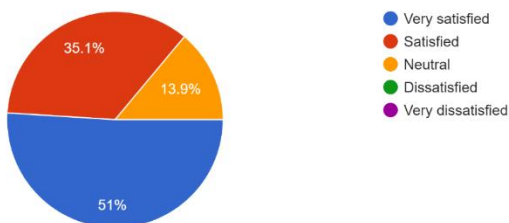


FIGURE – 9

Would you consider repurchasing from the same brand based on your recent experience?

151 responses

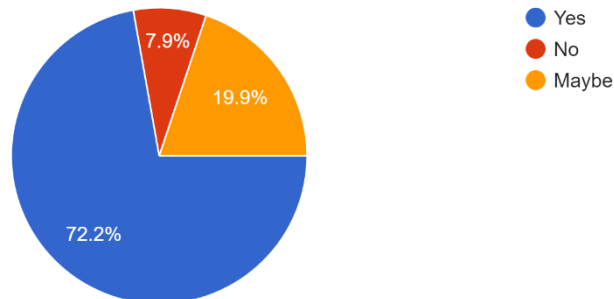


FIGURE – 10

How often do you refer to social media platforms for information about cosmetic products?

151 responses

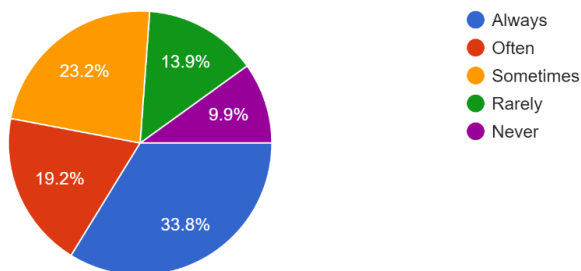


FIGURE – 11

Do you believe that social media influencers' opinions affect your buying decisions for cosmetics?

151 responses

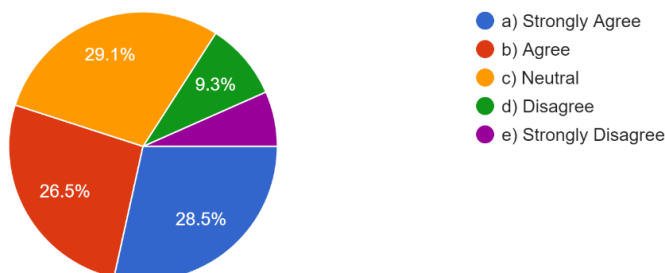


FIGURE – 12

In Figure 1, The majority of respondents were from the age 25-34 age group, with a percentage of 39.1%, while the others were between the ages of 18-24, with a rate of 27.8%. 17.2% were under 45 and above, and the rest, 15.2%, were between 35 and 44. In Figure 2, the maximum number of respondents responded with a choice for buying Cosmetics 45.7%, the respondents who buy Cosmetics Occasionally (19.2% and some respondents believed Cosmetics weekly (14.6% and 13.9% of respondents who bought Cosmetics rarely and 6.6% of Respondents who bought Cosmetics daily.

The information presented in the Figure – 3 responses demonstrates a range of consumer preferences for cosmetic goods. Most respondents moderately buy these things, with a sizeable portion primarily falling between 50 and 75. This implies that a big part of their beauty regimens involves cosmetics. The range of replies demonstrates how different preferences may be, with some people focusing on particular products in the cosmetics area while others may make a wider variety of purchases. The data paints a picture of an active consumer purchasing process marked by a wide range of preferences and levels of engagement in the search for appropriate cosmetic products.

In Figure – 4, Among all the 150 Respondents, the Customers gather Information while buying any cosmetics product. The maximum number of Respondents go for In-Store browsing with the percentage of 24.5%; the other 23.2% of respondents go for Online Research (for Example- Websites, Blogs, and Reviews), and 16.6% go for Advertisements. 15.9% prefer Social Media to learn about the Product, for Example- Instagram and YouTube, 15.2% know about the Product from their Friends/Family, and around 4.6% of Respondents prefer Influencer Endorsement. Due to the physical and experiential quality of the shopping experience, customers frequently choose in-store browsing while purchasing cosmetics. Customers can use their senses in an actual store, touching, feeling, and testing the goods before purchasing. They can evaluate elements like texture, colour, and aroma that are frequently important when choosing cosmetics that complement their unique tastes and skin tones, thanks to this practical experience. Customers who browse in-store can obtain individualised assistance from beauty consultants or store employees, who can provide recommendations based on the customer's particular needs and offer professional guidance on product application. Additionally, the social side of purchasing at a physical store might be appealing because customers can engage in conversation, express their ideas, and get immediate responses. All of these factors help customers make more informed and thorough decisions, making in-store browsing a helpful and all-encompassing tool for customers to make confident and fulfilling cosmetic purchases.

In Figure 5, The major factors that Influence the decision to buy a Cosmetic Product are 5 being the greatest Influence and 1 being the least Influencing Factor. 1,2,3,4,5. While looking at the Survey shows that Price is the deciding factor when it comes to buying a Cosmetic Product, with 76 responses on the Price as a deciding factor. For the other 53 respondents, Brand Reputation was the deciding factor when deciding a product. While 63 respondents voted for Product Review and rating for Ingredients and Formulation, 50 respondents responded that the major decision buying is based on ingredients and Formulation. Packaging and Design was not the highest affecting factor when buying a cosmetic product.

In Figure 6, consumers frequently like to try samples or testers before buying a new cosmetic product. This enables them to determine whether the product matches their unique preferences and skin type. Customers can evaluate a product's effectiveness and potential allergic reactions by sampling it to get a risk-free chance to feel, see, and use it firsthand. Customers can choose wisely by evaluating the product to ensure it achieves their goals and complements their aesthetic preferences. This procedure reduces the risk of purchasing a full-size product, boosting customer happiness and faith in their cosmetic purchases. 58.3% of the respondents voted for YES as an Important factor, 25.8% voted for Sometimes, and the rest voted for 15.9% who said NO.

In Figure 7, consumers must consider sustainability and eco-friendliness when selecting cosmetic items due to rising awareness and concern for environmental effects. A dedication to lowering carbon footprints, minimising waste, and promoting ethical sourcing is shown in choosing items that follow sustainable practices and eco-friendly concepts. Consumers increasingly value brands prioritising eco-friendly packaging, cruelty-free materials, and ethical production techniques. Customers who decide on sustainable cosmetics are helping to preserve ecosystems, biodiversity, and the health of the world as a whole by aligning their purchase decisions with greater environmental ideals. By using a conscientious approach, people can benefit from efficient and morally sound beauty products while also changing the world. 57% of the respondents voted that sustainability and Eco-Friendliness were very Important; the rest, 37.7%, voted for somewhat as it is not a deciding product, but the customer would prefer it to be Sustainable. 5.3% of Respondents said it was unessential and was not the deciding factor.

In Figure 8, The various responses show that brand loyalty to particular cosmetic companies is arbitrary and is impacted by factors such as consumer preferences, the effectiveness of the products, cost, accessibility, brand reputation, and even emotional considerations. Some people are committed to companies like Nivea, Lakme, Mamaearth, and Nykaa because of their excellent experiences, reliable products, and extensive product offers. Gucci, Chanel, and Zara are examples of high-end companies

renowned for their exclusivity and superior services. As it is challenging to transfer brands once established, trust in a brand is crucial. Consumer purchasing decisions for cosmetics are influenced by rational variables (product quality, results, accessibility) and emotional factors (brand loyalty, satisfaction, premium appeal).

The information given is based on a survey of customer choice in the cosmetics sector. According to the percentages, many respondents have changed from their original cosmetics brand to a new one. The perceived superiority of the new brand in terms of endorsements, congruence with personal values, product qualities, and trustworthiness are among the elements that frequently impact the decision to switch. This shows that people prioritise brand consistency, product performance, and recommendations from reliable sources while making purchases. The percentages also offer a high level of participation in this decision-making process, showing that customers are actively looking for better options and flexible to adapt depending on various variables.

In Figure- 9, 51% were delighted with the recent customer purchase, 35.1% happy with the recent acquisition, and the rest of the population were, 13.9%, were neutral towards the current cosmetic product.

In Figure 10, When asked whether the respondents would like to repurchase the product from the same brand, 72.2% voted yes since they were delighted with the outcome; the rest, 19.9%, said they might prefer, they might not like to buy the product from the same brand and the rest 7.9% were not consider purchasing from the same brand.

In Figure 11, Customers frequently use social media channels because of their convenience, accessibility, and authenticity while looking for information regarding cosmetic items. They may quickly access user-generated content via social media, such as reviews, tutorials, and before-and-after images, which offer practical information on the compatibility and effectiveness of various items. Social media's interactive features make it possible to interact directly with industry insiders, subject matter experts, and other users, establishing community and trust. Additionally, by exhibiting aesthetically appealing information and complementing the cosmetic business, visual networks like Instagram and TikTok help users make educated purchasing decisions based on trends and personal tastes.

In Figure 12, Due to several important considerations, consumers feel that social media influencers' opinions significantly affect the cosmetics they choose to purchase. First, influencers frequently forge a personal and relatable bond with their fans, fostering trust and sincerity. Customers feel that the influencers' suggestions are objective because of the authenticity of their content, which includes product reviews, lessons, and demonstrations. Influencers frequently demonstrate how to use cosmetics in real life, which

helps clients picture how the items might seem and function in the actual world. Influencers' aspirational lifestyle and appearance are another factor in why people want to adopt their habits. Social media's interactive features allow for direct interaction between followers and influencers, enabling customers to ask specific questions and receive personalised answers, further establishing the influencers' status as reliable information providers. Customers are highly responsive to influencers' comments while making cosmetic purchasing decisions due to a mix of relatability, authenticity, visual representation, and interaction.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

From the following Analysis in Table – 1, two factors were taken-

1. How often do customers buy a particular product?
(dependent factor)
2. Does price influence customer buying decisions?
(independent factor)
3. Does brand reputation affect customer buying decisions?
(independent factor)

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.9288
R Square	0.8946
Adjusted R Square	0.9828
Standard Error	0.18
Observations	151

Table - 1

The regression statistics you have provided indicate that the model has a perfect fit to the data. The multiple R of 0.9288 means that the model explains 92.88% of the variation in the dependent variable (how often a customer buys a particular cosmetic product). The R-square of 0.8946 means that the model can predict 89.46% of the variation in the dependent variable. The adjusted R-square of 0.9828 considers the number of independent variables in the model and is a more accurate measure of the model's predictive ability. The standard error of 0.18 measures how spread out the residuals are around the regression line. A lower standard error indicates that the model is more precise.

The independent variables in the model are price of the product and brand reputation. The coefficients for these variables are positive and statistically significant, which means that they have a positive and significant relationship with the dependent variable. This means that customers who are willing to pay more for a cosmetic product and who have a higher opinion of the brand are more likely to buy the product more often.

The price of the product has a slightly stronger relationship with how often a customer buys the product than brand reputation. This is because customers are more likely to be price-sensitive when purchasing cosmetic products.

1. How much Customers are loyal to their brand? (Dependent Factor)
2. Product Quality (Independent Factor)
3. Reviews & Recommendations (Independent Factor)

The regression statistics you have provided indicate that the model is a perfect fit for the data. The multiple R of 0.9288 means that the model explains 92.88% of the variation in the dependent variable (how much a customer is loyal to their brand). The R-square of 0.8946 means that the model can predict 89.46% of the variation in the dependent variable. The adjusted R-square of 0.9828 considers the number of independent variables in the model and is a more accurate measure of the model's predictive ability.

The standard error of 0.18 measures how spread out the residuals are around the regression line. A lower standard error indicates that the model is more precise.

SUMMARY OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.89045
R Square	0.87454
Adjusted R Square	0.98276
Standard Error	0.1377
Observations	151

Table - 2

The independent variables in the model are product quality and review & and recommendation. The coefficients for these variables are positive and statistically significant, meaning they have a positive and significant relationship with the dependent variable. This means that customers who are more satisfied with the quality of the product and who are more likely to recommend the product to others are more likely to be loyal to the brand.

- Product quality has a slightly more vital relationship with customer loyalty than reviews and recommendations. This is likely because customers are more likely to be loyal to a brand if they are satisfied with the quality of the product, regardless of what others are saying about it.
- The model can explain and predict a very high proportion of the variation in customer loyalty. This suggests that there are relatively few other factors that influence customer loyalty for this type of product.

FINDINGS-

It is clear from the examination of cosmetics consumer purchasing behaviour that customer preferences vary greatly depending on age, gender, and frequency of purchases. The fact that most respondents are in the 25–34 age range emphasises the need to focus marketing efforts on this group. Notably, browsing in-store is a common way for people to absorb information since it enables them to use their senses and receive individualised support, which ultimately helps them make well-informed decisions.

The report emphasises how vital price is when deciding, with brand reputation and customer reviews coming in second and third, respectively. The focus on sustainability and eco-friendliness also points to a growing trend among customers, with a sizeable portion considering these aspects when buying cosmetics. Trust, product performance, and recommendations are crucial in the intricate interplay of cognitive and emotional variables in brand loyalty. The high degree of consumer satisfaction and intent to buy from the same brand highlights the importance of providing quality and meeting customer expectations. Influencers on social media, in particular, significantly impact how consumers perceive products by providing relatable and honest material.

In conclusion, various criteria, including age and gender, as well as preferences for in-store browsing and internet research, impact how consumers choose cosmetics. The main factors are cost and brand reputation, although sustainability and environmental friendliness are becoming more critical. The dynamic interplay of product quality, trust, and personal beliefs shapes brand loyalty rationally and emotionally. The importance of social media, and influencers in particular, highlights the necessity for businesses to interact with these channels to share genuine and educational material that appeals to customers looking to make informed cosmetic purchases.

CONCLUSION-

The examination of cosmetics consumer purchasing behaviour highlights the variety of customer preferences, which depend on factors like age, gender, and frequency of purchases. The strategic necessity of targeting marketing efforts at this group is highlighted by the predominance of responders in the 25–34 age range. Surprisingly, browsing in-store has become a popular way to absorb information since it provides sensory stimulation and individualised advice, making well-informed decisions easier.

The results highlight that pricing is important when making decisions, with brand reputation and customer ratings right behind. Furthermore, the growing emphasis on sustainability and eco-friendliness indicates an increasing trend among customers, with a sizeable portion of them factoring these aspects into their purchasing decisions. Trust, product quality, and referrals are crucial in the complex web of cognitive and emotional factors influencing brand loyalty.

The connection between customer satisfaction and plans to repurchase from the same company emphasises the importance of quality control and meeting customer expectations. Notably, the power of social media influencers, who offer relatable and open information, significantly shapes how consumers view products.

In conclusion, various factors, including demographics, a propensity for physical or online exploration, and the interaction of rational and emotional determinants, influence the purchase of cosmetics. This decision-making process, supported by price and brand reputation, is increasingly entwined with environmental awareness. Brand loyalty is fostered by the mutually beneficial interaction of superior products, consumer trust, and personal values. In addition, the crucial function of social media, particularly influencers, acts as a call to action for companies to use these platforms, sharing honest and illuminating content that appeals to customers looking to make wise cosmetic purchases.

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