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EDITORIAL

It is heartening to see that the ninth issue of the VICHAARA AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT has been brought out successfully. An educational journal is a platform where knowledge gets amplified and disseminated; research results and innovations are documented and unique experiences are shared for enhancement of knowledge. The design architecture of Vichaara is made in such a way that it becomes a comprehensive document to reflect the different dimensions of Management discipline. Business Research forms the core part wherein original, empirical based research papers are included. This issue comprises articles on recent issues in business world from different disciplines. These articles show a methodological way of conducting a research and presenting their findings. Findings on technology influence, cultural changes in the organizations, behavioural changes among the consumers and their expectations have been presented with relevant facts. We invite scholarly articles and research papers and write ups on robust cases. Suggestions and views from readers and scholars are solicited for the qualitative improvement of the Journal.

A STUDY ON EXPLORING THE BEHAVIORAL IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ONLINE CONSUMERISM IN THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY

Ms. S. Kalai Selvi, Research Scholar, AVP College of Arts and Science- Co Education, Thirupur, Tamilnadu India

Abstract

The rise of social media has transformed consumer behavior in the beauty industry, making platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok key spaces for product discovery, peer interaction, and personalized marketing. Influencers play a major role by shaping trends and building trust through relatable and authentic content such as tutorials, reviews, and endorsements. User-generated content (UGC), including reviews and testimonials, fosters community and credibility, helping consumers make confident purchasing decisions. Additionally, interactive features like live videos, polls, and direct messaging allow brands to engage directly with consumers, boosting loyalty and personalization. Algorithm-driven content feeds further influence behavior by introducing users to new products and trends based on their interests. Overall, social media has redefined beauty marketing, creating a dynamic ecosystem where influencers, brands, and consumers interact closely. Understanding these digital behaviors is crucial for beauty brands to remain competitive in today's content-driven marketplace.

Keywords: *Social Media, Influencers, Consumer Behavior, Online Beauty Marketing, Decision-Making*

Introduction

Consumer behavior, a cornerstone of understanding how and why individuals make purchasing decisions, is undergoing a significant transformation due to the rise of social media. These digital platforms have moved beyond their initial role as marketing channels to become dynamic forums where consumer attitudes and behaviors are actively shaped. Within the beauty industry, this is particularly pronounced, as social media empowers consumers to engage with brand narratives, share authentic experiences, and influence their peers through user-generated content and the rise of influencers. These new forms of digital engagement often hold more persuasive power than traditional advertising, fundamentally altering the relationship between consumers and brands.

This study will investigate the behavioral impact of social media on online consumerism within the beauty industry. It will explore how factors such as motivation, income, demographics, and shopping preferences interact with digital engagement to influence purchasing decisions. By employing a comprehensive literature review and robust research methodologies, this research aims to offer insights into this evolving relationship.

Review of Literature

Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (1991) offers a foundational framework for understanding consumer intention. According to this theory, individual behaviour is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In the context of social media, these variables are shaped by influencers, peer interactions, and user-generated content (UGC), all of which impact the decision-making processes of online consumers. Shih (2004), drawing from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), examined how perceived ease of use, usefulness, customer satisfaction, and web security affect consumer tendencies toward e-shopping. His findings demonstrated that increasing perceived usefulness and satisfaction strengthens positive attitudes toward online shopping, thereby enhancing behavioural intention.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as internet-based platforms built on Web 2.0 technologies, which enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Their work emphasized the participatory nature of social media, which allows consumers to actively engage with and influence brand messaging. This aligns with Solomon et al. (2012), who argued that the boundaries between content creation and consumption are increasingly blurred, affecting how consumers relate to brands.

To understand user interaction with brand content, Muntinga, Moorman, and Smit (2011) developed the COBRA (Consumers' Online Brand-Related Activities) framework, which identifies three tiers of engagement: consumption (viewing), contribution (commenting or sharing), and creation (producing original content). These behaviours reflect varying levels of consumer involvement, each with implications for brand perception and purchase intention. Phelan et al. (2013) found that UGC is often perceived as more authentic and trustworthy than corporate messaging. In the beauty industry, where visual evidence and peer reviews hold significant sway, content such as product reviews, tutorials, and before-and-after photos help bridge the information gap and serve as credible forms of social proof.

Schivinski, Christodoulides, and Dabrowski (2016) expanded upon the COBRA framework by developing a scale to measure consumer engagement in social media contexts. Their empirical research demonstrated that higher levels of engagement—particularly at the contribution and creation levels—positively influence brand attitudes and consumer purchase intentions. Bedard and Tolmie (2018) explored how millennials' use of social media influences eco-conscious purchasing behaviours. Their study concluded that platforms which highlight environmental issues and green lifestyles can foster peer pressure and normative behaviours, making environmentally friendly consumption more visible and desirable.

Sokolova and Kefi (2019) examined how parasocial relationships—one-sided emotional connections between consumers and influencers—impact purchasing decisions. Their study revealed that influencer credibility and emotional engagement significantly affect consumer trust and purchase intention, especially within the beauty and fashion sectors. This highlights the persuasive power of social media influencers, particularly in industries reliant on visual aesthetics and personal identity.

Research Gap

Although previous studies have explored the influence of social media on consumer behaviour, limited research specifically examines its impact within the beauty industry—a sector heavily shaped by visual content, influencer culture, and peer engagement. Foundational models like the Theory of Planned Behavior and COBRA provide useful frameworks, but they often overlook industry-specific dynamics such as parasocial interactions and the persuasive power of user-generated content in beauty-related purchases.

Additionally, while the authenticity of user content has been acknowledged, there is a lack of empirical evidence linking this directly to actual purchase behaviour in online beauty markets. Cultural and demographic variations in consumer responses to social media are also underrepresented, limiting the broader applicability of current findings. This study addresses these gaps by focusing on how social media platforms influence online consumerism specifically in the beauty industry, integrating psychological, social, and demographic factors.

Problem Statement

Social media has become a powerful force in shaping consumer behaviour, particularly in the beauty industry where visual appeal, influencer marketing, and peer-generated content strongly influence purchasing decisions. However, existing research often takes a broad view of digital consumerism and lacks a focused analysis of how these social media elements specifically impact online beauty consumption. Key factors such as influencer credibility, parasocial interactions, and the perceived authenticity of user-generated content remain underexplored in relation to actual buying behaviour. This gap limits the understanding of how psychological, social, and demographic factors intersect on digital platforms to drive consumer decisions in the beauty sector.

Objectives of the research

- To analyse how social media platforms influence consumer purchasing behaviour in the cosmetic industry.
- To examine ethical considerations and gaps in current social media marketing practices within the cosmetic sector.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of different social media content types in driving consumer engagement.
- To assess the influence of content formats (e.g., reviews, tutorials, promotions) on consumer attitudes and buying decisions
- To explore demographic differences in consumer responses to social media marketing in the beauty industry.

Research Methodology

Research Design - This study adopts a quantitative research methodology to examine the influence of social media on consumer purchasing behaviour within the cosmetic industry

Sampling Technique –

A probability sampling technique, specifically simple random sampling, is used to ensure that every individual within the defined population (i.e., active social media users who purchase cosmetics online) has an equal chance of selection.

This enhances the representativeness and generalizability of the findings. The target population includes individuals across diverse age groups, genders, and income levels who actively engage with beauty-related content on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.

Source of Data

- **Primary Data:** Collected through structured surveys using a comprehensive questionnaire comprising multiple-choice and closed-ended questions.
- **Secondary Data:** Gathered from relevant academic journals, marketing reports, industry publications, and textbooks.

Sample Size

A total of 150 respondents, including both male and female participants, were surveyed.

Tools Used

To examine the behavioural influence of social media on cosmetic purchasing decisions, Chi-square tests of independence were employed as the statistical tools.

Sampling Unit

The sampling unit for this research is individuals residing in the Mumbai Metro who engage in online and offline shopping.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis1

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant relationship between time spent on social media and the likelihood of purchasing cosmetic products after seeing them on social media.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between time spent on social media and the likelihood of purchasing cosmetic products after seeing them on social media.

Hypothesis	Null (H ₀)	Test	Chi ²	df	p-value	Decision (α = 0.05)	Inference
H ₀	No significant relationship between time spent on social media and purchasing cosmetic products after seeing them.	Chi-square independence	19.955	16	0.222	Fail to reject H ₀	No significant relationship was detected.

For Hypothesis 1, the chi-square test revealed no statistically significant relationship between the amount of time spent on social media and the likelihood of purchasing cosmetic products after seeing them online ($\chi^2 = 19.955, p = 0.222$). Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, indicating that time spent on social media alone may not be a strong predictor of purchasing behaviour.

Hypothesis 2

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant association between trust in user-generated content and the influence of beauty influencers on purchasing decisions.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant association between trust in user-generated content and the influence of beauty influencers on purchasing decisions.

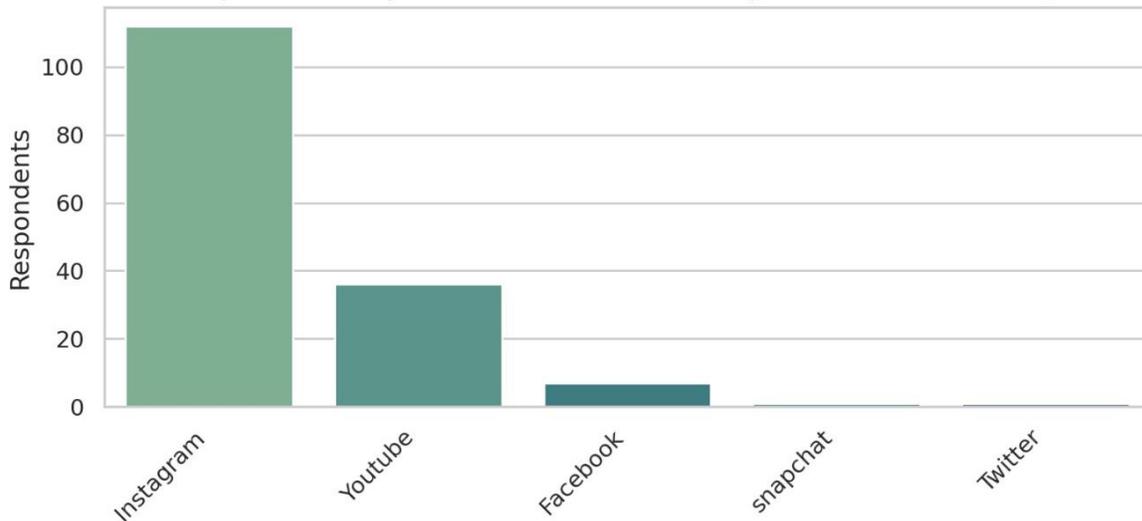
Hypothesis	Null (H ₀)	Test	Chi ²	df	p-value	Decision (α = 0.05)	Inference
H ₀	No significant association between trust in user-generated content and the influence of beauty influencers.	Chi-square	28.363	16	0.029	Reject H ₀	Significant association was detected.

For Hypothesis 2, the chi-square test showed a **statistically significant association** between trust in user-generated content and the influence of beauty influencers on purchasing decisions ($\chi^2 = 28.363, p = 0.029$). Thus, we **reject the null hypothesis**, suggesting that higher trust in user-generated content is meaningfully linked to the impact influencers have on consumer behavior.

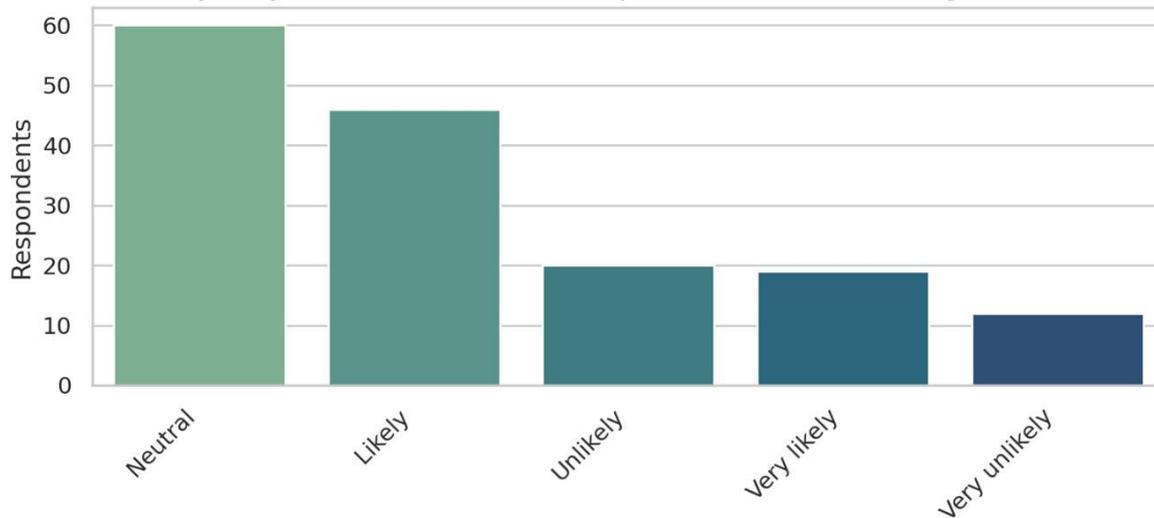
Analysis and Findings

- The age distribution of respondents reveals a strong concentration in the 15–20 age group, with participation gradually declining among older demographics, indicating a youth-dominated sample. Female respondents significantly outnumber males, though males still represent roughly one-third of the total sample. In terms of academic background, most participants are undergraduates, reflecting a student-centric population.
- Regarding social media usage, daily engagement peaks between 1 to 4 hours, with a noticeable segment reporting heavier usage. Instagram clearly dominates as the preferred platform for beauty-related content, followed distantly by YouTube, while other platforms hold minimal influence. The smartphone is the primary device used to access beauty content, with desktops and laptops playing a relatively minor role.
- In terms of consumer behavior, approximately half of respondents have purchased a cosmetic product after seeing it on social media, whereas about one-third reported never doing so. The most influential purchase trigger is user reviews, which far outpace influencer endorsements and paid advertisements. When it comes to consumption frequency, the majority of participants browse beauty content either weekly or daily, with very few indicating no engagement at all.

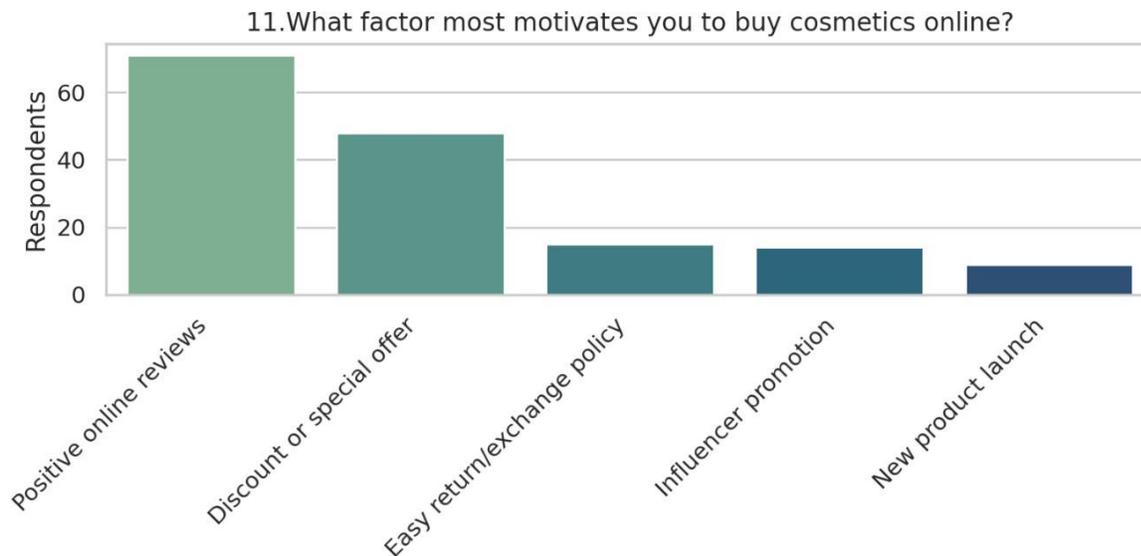
Social Media platform that most used for beauty or cosmetic content



Influence of Social Media to research a cosmetic product online



Factors influencing to buy cosmetics online



- Trust in beauty information found on social media is generally moderate, with extremes of total trust or skepticism being relatively rare. Brand reputation holds substantial weight, with most respondents rating it as “very” or “extremely” important in their decision-making. In terms of engagement, liking or reacting to brand posts is common, while active forms of engagement like commenting or sharing are less frequent.
- When asked about advocacy, most respondents expressed a willingness to recommend products discovered on social media, suggesting positive brand influence. However, concern about misleading or deceptive advertising is high, highlighting consumer skepticism. Finally, responses on price sensitivity show a near-even divide—some participants are willing to pay a premium for socially hyped products, while others remain budget-conscious.

Conclusion

This study highlights the significant yet nuanced impact of social media on consumer behavior in the beauty industry. With a predominantly young (15–20 years) and female sample, findings reveal that Instagram is the leading platform for beauty content, and user reviews/testimonials are the most persuasive form of content. Despite regular exposure to beauty promotions, the largest group of respondents reported never purchasing a product after seeing it online, and most rated influencers as only "somewhat influential," with neutral trust in user-generated content (UGC) over brand promotions. Chi-square analysis showed no significant relationship between time spent on social media and purchasing behavior, indicating that screen time alone does not drive cosmetic buying decisions. Dr. N. Visalakshi, et al. (2025) reveals that the rapid rise of e-commerce has greatly influenced the way consumers shop, especially in the electronics sector. The study found clear differences between male and female customers in how they perceive website experience, support services, and delivery and packaging. These insights suggest that online retailers should customize their services and support strategies to better meet the needs of different gender groups and improve overall customer satisfaction. However, a significant association was found between trust in UGC and the influence of beauty influencers, emphasizing that authenticity and perceived credibility play a stronger role in shaping consumer decisions than simple exposure or advertisement frequency. Thus, social media's power lies not in volume but in the trusted and relatable nature of content, particularly within visually driven, peer-influenced sectors like beauty.

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