

***An Analysis of Consumer Buying Behaviour Towards Cosmetic Products***

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**Abstract**

This study investigates consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products in Patiala, 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 Patiala. 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 Patiala's cosmetic sector.

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

**Introduction**

An understanding of consumer buying behaviour is crucial for business success, especially in the cosmetics industry, which is marked by dynamic trends and evolving consumer preferences. The Indian cosmetics market has experienced significant expansion in recent years, driven by increasing disposable incomes, heightened awareness of personal grooming, and a growing preference for natural and organic products (Desai & Galyara, 2016). Urban centres such as Patiala, an important economic and metropolitan hub, play a vital role in influencing consumer behaviour due to their heterogeneous population and strong purchasing power.

Consumer behaviour refers to the study of consumers' attitudes, preferences, and purchasing patterns related to goods and services. It is shaped by various factors, including demographic characteristics, cultural influences, lifestyle shifts, and media exposure (Katkari et al., 2017). In the context of the cosmetics sector, understanding these determinants is particularly important, as it allows marketers to design products and promotional strategies that align with the expectations of their target market. Key elements such as brand recognition, product

quality, pricing strategies, and the impact of digital media significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions

This study seeks to examine consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products in Patiala, with particular emphasis on key influencing factors such as demographic characteristics, media exposure, and product preferences. It also highlights the increasing significance of natural and herbal cosmetic products and evaluates the impact of online platforms on consumer awareness and purchasing decisions. By addressing these dimensions, the research offers practical insights for marketers and industry stakeholders to refine their strategies and effectively respond to the changing needs and preferences of urban consumers in Patiala.

## **Cosmetic Industry in India**

The cosmetic industry in India is experiencing substantial growth, fuelled by rapid urbanisation, rising disposable incomes, and heightened awareness of personal grooming and wellness. Valued at approximately USD 8.1 billion in 2016, the market is expected to expand to USD 18.4 billion by 2032, registering a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.2% (Custom Market Insights, 2016). This expansion is largely driven by shifting consumer preferences towards specialised offerings, including organic, herbal, and cruelty-free cosmetic products. Women constitute a major share of the market, accounting for nearly 60% of total sales, a trend attributed to increasing empowerment, evolving social norms, and a greater emphasis on professional appearance and self-expression (IBEF, 2017).

Several emerging trends are reshaping the industry landscape. Ingredient-focused beauty products, featuring components such as salicylic acid and niacinamide, have gained popularity for addressing specific concerns like anti-ageing and sun protection (Statista, 2015). Social media platforms and beauty influencers play a significant role in influencing purchase decisions, particularly among younger consumers, by popularising microtrends such as tinted moisturisers and graphic eyeliners (Redseer Strategy Consultants, 2016). Technological advancements have further transformed the sector, with AI-based personalisation and virtual try-on technologies enhancing consumer engagement and satisfaction. The growing dependence on online retail channels, alongside the continued prominence of specialty stores, reflects a shift towards more convenient and curated shopping experiences (Mordor Intelligence, 2017). The competitive environment comprises leading domestic brands such as Dabur and Himalaya, along with global players like L'Oréal and Estée Lauder (Mehtre et al., 2016). With increasing demand for innovative, sustainable products and sophisticated marketing approaches, the Indian cosmetic industry continues to emerge as a dynamic and rapidly expanding segment of the global market.

### **Foundation of the Research**

The cosmetics industry is among the fastest-growing sectors worldwide, contributing significantly to economic development and employment generation. In India, the industry has witnessed rapid expansion, driven by rising disposable incomes, increased awareness of personal grooming, and a growing preference for high-quality products (Ghai, 2018). Urban centres such as Patiala, characterised by diverse demographics and a cosmopolitan consumer base, represent a dynamic and promising market for in-depth study. Despite this growth, there remains a limited understanding of the factors influencing consumer behaviour within this sector, particularly at the regional level.

Consumer behaviour is shaped by a variety of factors, including demographic characteristics, cultural influences, technological adoption, and media exposure (Desai & Galyara, 2016). The proliferation of digital platforms has notably altered how consumers obtain product

information and make purchasing decisions. In a highly competitive cosmetics market, gaining insight into these influences is essential for organisations aiming to develop effective marketing strategies and build long-term consumer loyalty (Katkar et al., 2017). This study addresses a critical research gap by examining consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products in Patiala. Although existing literature has explored consumer behaviour in broader contexts, the specific motivations, preferences, and purchasing patterns of consumers in a rapidly urbanising city like Patiala remain insufficiently examined.

The significance of this research lies in its ability to generate practical insights for marketers and policymakers. By identifying key determinants such as brand loyalty, quality expectations, and the impact of digital media, the study enables businesses to customise their offerings in line with consumer preferences, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and fostering sustained market growth within the region.

### **Objectives of study**

- 1) To examine the demographic characteristics of consumers in Patiala and analyse their impact on purchasing decisions related to cosmetic products.
- 2) To determine the key factors influencing consumers' buying decisions, such as product quality, pricing, brand reputation, and type of cosmetic product.
- 3) To evaluate the influence of media communication, with particular emphasis on digital platforms, on consumer awareness and preference formation for cosmetic products in Patiala.
- 4) To analyse consumer preferences for domestic and international cosmetic brands and assess their inclination towards natural or herbal cosmetic 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. (2016) and Pal et al. (2017) 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. (2017) 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. (2015) 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. (2016) 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. (2015) 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 Patiala 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 Patiala.

## **Research Methodology**

Research methodology outlines the structured approach adopted for conducting a study and ensures the reliability, validity, and replicability of the findings. The present study follows a systematic framework to examine consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products in Patiala. It encompasses the research design, data collection methods, sampling procedures, and analytical techniques employed to generate comprehensive and accurate insights.

## **Research Design**

The study adopts a descriptive research design to systematically examine consumer behaviour towards cosmetic products. This approach is appropriate for gaining insights into consumers' preferences, attitudes, and purchasing habits, as it enables a detailed analysis of the various factors influencing buying decisions. Data were primarily collected using a structured questionnaire developed to capture both qualitative and quantitative dimensions of consumer behaviour.

The questionnaire comprised Likert-scale statements, closed-ended items, and multiple-choice questions to assess respondents' demographic characteristics, preferences related to product attributes, and the impact of external influences such as media communication and pricing. In addition, ranking questions were included to evaluate the relative importance of key factors, including product quality, price, and brand awareness.

## **Sources of Data**

The data for the present study were collected from both primary and secondary sources.

**Primary Data:** Primary data were obtained through a survey conducted among consumers in Patiala. A structured questionnaire was administered both online and in person to ensure wider reach and to capture responses from a diverse group of participants.

**Secondary Data:** Secondary data were sourced from academic journals, industry reports, books, and reputable online databases. These sources provided theoretical support, contextual background, and aided in the interpretation and validation of the primary data findings.

## **Sampling Techniques**

**Population and Sampling Method:** The target population comprised residents of Patiala who use cosmetic products. A convenience sampling technique was adopted for respondent selection. This non-probability sampling method was chosen for its practicality and effectiveness in accessing respondents within the limited time and resource constraints of the study.

**Sample Size:** The study was based on a sample of 127 respondents. Although modest, the sample size is adequate for conducting meaningful analysis within the scope of Patiala. Care was taken to include respondents from varied age groups, occupational backgrounds, and income levels to ensure reasonable diversity in the sample.

## **Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection process was carried out over a period of two months. Respondents were contacted through both online platforms and in-person interactions to ensure broader participation. A structured questionnaire was employed as the primary data collection instrument and was designed to be clear and user-friendly to facilitate accurate and reliable responses. To promote honest and thoughtful participation, respondents were assured that their information would be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

The questionnaire was organised into distinct sections to capture the following information:

**Demographic Details:** Age, gender, occupation, and income levels of the respondents.

**Buying Patterns:** Frequency of cosmetic purchases, preferred categories of products, and spending behaviour.

**Decision Influencing Factors:** The significance of factors such as price, product quality, and brand reputation in purchase decisions.

**Media Influence:** The impact of various media sources, including digital platforms, advertisements, and word-of-mouth communication, on consumer behaviour.

**Brand Preferences:** Consumer preferences for domestic versus international cosmetic brands and their inclination towards natural or herbal products.

### **Analytical Tools**

The study utilised simple percentage analysis and ranking methods for data interpretation. These analytical tools were selected for their effectiveness in presenting consumer preferences and identifying trends in a clear and easily understandable manner. The results were organised in tabular form and illustrated using charts and graphs to improve clarity and facilitate better interpretation.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Despite efforts to ensure methodological rigour, the study is subject to certain limitations:

**Sample Size and Scope:** The sample comprised 127 respondents, which may not fully represent the entire population of Patiala. Future studies with a larger sample size could enhance the generalisability of the findings.

**Geographical Limitation:** The research was confined to Patiala, and therefore the results may not be applicable to consumers in other urban regions or rural settings.

**Self-Reported Responses:** The reliance on self-reported data may have led to response biases, including social desirability bias and errors arising from inaccurate recall.

**Sampling Technique:** The use of convenience sampling may restrict the representativeness of the sample, as certain consumer segments that were less accessible could have been excluded.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study adhered to established ethical principles to maintain the integrity and credibility of the research process:

**Informed Consent:** Participants were clearly informed about the objectives of the study and provided their consent prior to participation.



**Confidentiality:** All respondent information was kept confidential, and data were anonymised to safeguard participants' privacy.

**Voluntary Participation:** Respondents were made aware that participation was entirely voluntary, with the option to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences.

Overall, the research methodology offers a systematic and structured approach to examining consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products in Patiala. By integrating a descriptive research design with both primary and secondary data sources and appropriate analytical techniques, the study ensures a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing consumer decision-making. Although certain limitations exist, the methodology provides a strong foundation for analysing trends and preferences in this rapidly evolving urban market. Future research may extend this framework by employing larger sample sizes and advanced statistical methods to further strengthen and validate the findings.

## Data Findings

The findings of this study, based on data collected from 127 respondents in Patiala, 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

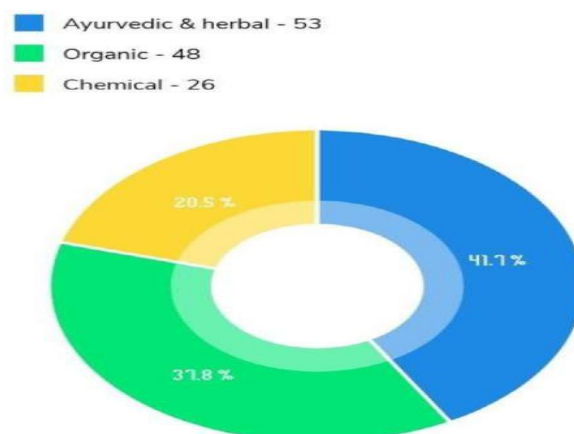
The demographic composition of respondents highlights the significant role of age, gender, and occupation in influencing cosmetic buying behaviour:

- **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 Patiala.

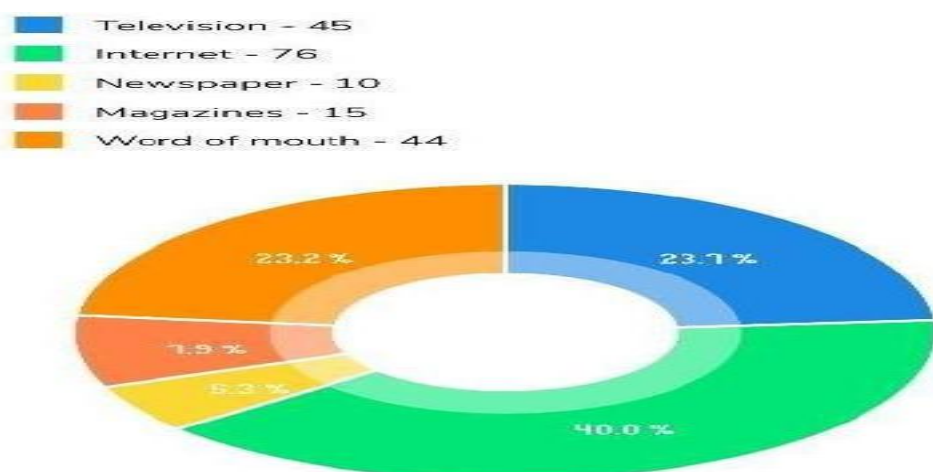


- **Brand Preference:** Most respondents (74%) expressed no strict allegiance to either domestic or international brands, opting for both based on product quality and affordability. However, 14.2% preferred domestic brands, and 11.8% favoured international brands.
- **Spending Habits:** A significant 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 Patiala 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 Patiala 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 Patiala'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 Patiala, 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 Patiala'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 Patiala 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 Patiala; 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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