

Factors Influencing Online Purchase Preference for Cosmetic Products Among College Students in Vadakara City

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Abstract: The present study examines the factors influencing consumer preference for online purchase of cosmetic products among selected college students in Vadakara City. The study focuses on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, their online purchasing behaviour, and the factors influencing their preference for purchasing cosmetic products through online platforms. The study is based on primary data collected from 100 college students using a structured questionnaire. Convenience sampling was adopted for selecting the respondents. The collected data were analysed using frequency, percentage, reliability analysis, and factor analysis. The findings of the study indicate that lower price is the major reported reason for online purchase of cosmetics, while makeup products are the most commonly purchased cosmetic category. Amazon is the most frequently used online platform among the respondents. The study concludes that students' preference for online cosmetic purchases is influenced by a combination of promotional, price-related, informational, digital, convenience, and post-purchase service factors.

Keywords: *Cosmetic, Online, Purchase, Students, Digital, Platform.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of internet connectivity, mobile devices, digital transaction systems, and electronic commerce platforms has substantially transformed the manner in which consumers engage in purchasing activities. E-commerce platforms afford consumers with expedient access to an extensive assortment of merchandise, comparative pricing analysis, discounted offerings, and doorstep delivery services. Within India, the electronic commerce industry has undergone considerable expansion, with this development progressively penetrating beyond principal urban centers into secondary and tertiary tier municipalities. This geographic expansion has precipitated modifications in consumer methodologies regarding information acquisition, product evaluation, and purchasing decision-making processes (IBEF, 2025).

The beauty and personal care sector represent a significant category that has benefited substantially from the expansion of digital commerce. India's beauty and personal care market has experienced rapid growth, with online channels assuming an increasingly prominent role in beauty product acquisitions. According to IBEF, India's beauty and personal care market is anticipated to reach approximately ₹2.61 lakh crore (US\$30 billion) by 2027, demonstrating substantial potential for sector development. Online beauty

sales have demonstrated accelerated growth compared to traditional physical retail channels, reflecting evolving consumer preferences and heightened digital adoption rates. (IBEF, 2026)

The Indian cosmetic industry caters to increasing needs of cosmetic products in all spheres such as rural area to cosmopolitan cities, poor to millionaires, and even the kids to the old aged people. It could be observed that the Indian cosmetic industry is undergoing active phase in terms of product development and marketing. Looking at the wide potential of cosmetic market, the cosmetic manufacturing companies spend sizeable amount of money and time to analyse the different demographic and psychographic characteristics of Indian population (Shaji, 2020). Cosmetic products hold particular relevance for younger consumers, as purchasing decisions may be shaped by factors including product assortment, pricing, promotional offers, accessibility, brand reputation, consumer testimonials, and social media engagement. Preceding research examining online cosmetic purchasing behavior in India has identified elements such as accessibility, product Caliber, brand diversity, promotional incentives, and cashback rewards as significant determinants influencing consumers' decisions to procure cosmetics through digital platforms (Ganjoo, 2020).

Contemporary research has further investigated the significance of confidence, perceived product excellence, price sensitivity, peer influence, and brand positioning in determining online beauty product purchase intentions. (Jain et al, 2026) Within the domain of internet-based cosmetic acquisition, purchasers lack the capacity to conduct tactile assessment of merchandise prior to transaction completion. Consequently, data derived from consumer testimonials, numerical evaluations, merchandise specifications, corporate standing, and exchange provisions may prove instrumental in determining consumer purchasing inclinations. Contemporary research examining Indian Generation Z consumers underscores the necessity of comprehending this younger demographic's perspectives and inclinations regarding digital beauty and wellness retail platforms. (Priyadharshini,2025). In this context study aim to identify the factors influencing preference for online purchase of cosmetic products among selected college students in Vadakara city.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to research conducted by Biby and Neethu in 2025, brand loyalty and peer influence constitute significant determinants of student purchasing decisions. The research demonstrated that students exhibit a marked preference for well-established brands and are substantially influenced by recommendations originating from peers and social media influencers. Digital platforms have proven instrumental as both a primary source of product information and a critical distribution channel for cosmetic products. The investigation further revealed heightened student consciousness regarding product safety and ethical considerations, with particular emphasis on cruelty-free and naturally-derived cosmetic formulations.

A study conducted by Min Lei and colleagues in 2023 investigated the determinants affecting consumer purchasing intentions for cosmetic products acquired through digital platforms. The study found that confidence in the platform, quality of cosmetic retail services, favourable and credible customer reviews, and endorsements from beauty content creators exerted statistically significant positive effects on consumer purchasing intentions. Notably, the cost of cosmetic products did not demonstrate a statistically significant effect on purchasing intention. The necessity of establishing credibility within digital retail environments, enhancing the Caliber of cosmetic retail operations, ensuring the consistency and authenticity of customer feedback, and leveraging beauty content creator partnerships to shape consumer purchasing behavior.

A study by Hamzah and associates (2020) demonstrated that the degree of risk perceived by consumers and the perceived simplicity of the purchasing process maintained statistically significant associations with consumer purchasing intentions for cosmetic products obtained through digital channels, whereas product pricing demonstrated no statistically significant correlation with purchasing intention. This research accentuated the critical role of user convenience and risk perception in determining the propensity of younger

demographic segments to acquire cosmetic products via internet-based retail channels.

➤ *Need for the Study*

The growth of internet access, smartphones, digital payment facilities, and e-commerce platforms has significantly changed the way consumers purchase cosmetic products. Online shopping provides consumers with convenient access to a wide variety of cosmetic products, different brands, price comparisons, discounts, customer reviews, and home delivery services. College students represent an important group of young consumers who are increasingly familiar with digital platforms and online purchasing. Their preference for cosmetic products may be influenced by factors such as price, product variety, convenience, discounts and offers, customer reviews, brand image, social media influence, product information, and delivery services. Understanding these factors can provide useful information about the changing purchasing behaviour of young consumers. Therefore, the present study focuses on the factors influencing consumer preference for online purchase of cosmetic products among selected college students in Vadakara City.

➤ *Objectives of the Study*

- To study the socio-Demographic profile of the selected college students.
- To examine the level of consumer preference towards online purchase of cosmetic products among the selected students.
- To identify the factors influencing students' preference for online purchase of cosmetic products.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive methodology to investigate the determinants affecting college students preference for purchasing cosmetic products online within Vadakara City. The investigation relies predominantly on primary data obtained directly from college students via a structured questionnaire. A sample comprising 100 college students with prior experience or knowledge of online cosmetic purchases will be recruited for the research. Convenience sampling will be employed to identify participants based on their availability and readiness to engage in the study. The questionnaire will encompass inquiries regarding respondents' socio-economic characteristics, online shopping patterns, determinants influencing cosmetic purchases, and their inclination toward online purchasing channels. The gathered data will be processed using appropriate statistical methodologies including frequency distribution, percentage analysis, and factor analysis, selected according to the characteristics of the variables under examination. Secondary information are sourced from academic texts, peer-reviewed journals, scholarly publications, digital platforms, and other pertinent materials to strengthen the research findings.

➤ *Findings of the Study*

The socio-demographic profile of the students provides an overview of the characteristics of the respondents participating in the study on the online purchase of cosmetic products.

Table 1 Socio-Demographic Profile of the Selected Students

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	34	34.0
	Female	66	66.0
Age	Less than 20 years	23	23.0
	20-22 years	56	56.0
	Above 22 years	21	21.0
Education	Undergraduate	49	49.0
	Postgraduate	35	35.0
	Others	16	16.0
Year of studying	First year	44	44.0
	Second year	39	39.0
	Third year	17	17.0
Family Monthly Income	Less than ₹30,000	37	37.0
	₹30,000–₹50,000	43	43.0
	Above ₹50,000	20	20.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The aforementioned table delineates the socio-economic characteristics of the 100 college students selected for participation in this study. Concerning gender distribution, female respondents represent 66 percent of the sample, whereas male respondents constitute 34 percent, demonstrating that females comprise the predominant portion of the participant cohort. Pertaining to age demographics, 56 percent of respondents fall within the 20–22 years, with 23 percent below 20 years and 21 percent exceeding 22 years of age. Consequently, the 20–22 years age category encompasses the majority of participants.

Regarding educational attainment, 49 percent of respondents are pursuing undergraduate degrees, 35 percent are engaged in postgraduate studies, and the remaining 16 percent are classified within alternative educational categories. Accordingly, undergraduate students represent the most substantial segment of the sample. Concerning academic year of enrolment, 44 percent of respondents are enrolled in the first year, 39 percent in the second year, and 17 percent in the third year. Therefore, first-year students account for the highest proportion among respondents.

With respect to household monthly income, 43 percent of respondents originate from families earning ₹30,000–

₹50,000 monthly, followed by 37 percent from families with monthly earnings below ₹30,000. The remaining 20 percent derive from households with monthly incomes exceeding ₹50,000. Thus, the ₹30,000–₹50,000 family income encompasses the largest proportion of respondents.

➤ *Online Purchase Behaviour of Cosmetic Products of Selected Students*

Online shopping has emerged as a significant component of consumer purchasing patterns, especially among younger generation students. The creation of mobile devices, broadband access, electronic payment systems, and digital retail platforms has streamlined the process for students to identify, evaluate, and acquire cosmetic products through online channels. Cosmetic offerings including skincare, haircare, makeup, and personal hygiene products are extensively accessible via multiple online retailers, affording consumers enhanced product selection and streamlined purchasing convenience. Table 2 presents the online purchasing behaviours of students, encompassing their purchase frequency, cosmetic product categories selected, favoured e-commerce platforms and variables influencing their online shopping decisions.

Table 2 Online Purchase Behaviour of Cosmetic Products of Selected Students

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Frequency of Online Purchase	Very often	37	37.0
	Often	22	22.0
	Sometimes	30	30.0
	Rarely	11	11.0
Type of Cosmetic Products Purchased	Skin-care products	13	13.0
	Hair-care products	29	29.0
	Makeup products	42	42.0
	Personal-care products	16	16.0
Online Platform Mainly Used	Amazon	35	35.0

	Flipkart	23	23.0
	Nykaa	14	14.0
	Myntra	16	16.0
	Meesho	12	12.0
Average Monthly Spending	Below ₹500	33	33.0
	₹501–₹1,000	43	43.0
	Above ₹1,000	24	24.0
Main Reason for Online Purchase	Convenience	14	14.0
	Lower price	28	28.0
	Discounts and offers	18	18.0
	Wide variety	13	13.0
	Easy comparison	11	11.0
	Customer reviews	16	16.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary Data, 2026

- **Frequency of Online Purchase:** The table shows that 37 percent of the respondents purchase cosmetic products online very often, while 22 percent purchase them often. About 30 percent purchase cosmetics online sometimes, and only 11 percent purchase them rarely. Thus, the majority of respondents (59 percent) purchase cosmetic products online either very often or often, indicating that online purchasing is relatively common among the respondents.
- **Type of Cosmetic Products Purchased:** Among the different types of cosmetic products, makeup products are the most commonly purchased, accounting for 42 percent of respondents. This is followed by hair-care products (29 percent), personal-care products (16 percent), and skin-care products (13 percent). Therefore, makeup products constitute the most preferred category of cosmetics purchased online by the respondents.
- **Online Platform Mainly Used:** The findings indicate that Amazon is the most commonly used online platform, accounting for 35.0 percent of respondents. It is followed by Flipkart (23 percent), Myntra (16 percent), Nykaa (14 percent), and Meesho (12 percent). Hence, Amazon is the most frequently used platform among the respondents for purchasing cosmetic products online.
- **Average Monthly Spending:** Regarding monthly spending, 43 percent of respondents spend between ₹501 and ₹1,000 on cosmetic products purchased online. About 33 percent spend below ₹500, while 24 percent spend above ₹1,000. This indicates that the majority of respondents fall within the ₹501–₹1,000 monthly spending category.
- **Main Reason for Online purchase:** The major reason for purchasing cosmetic products online is lower price, reported by 28 percent of respondents. This is followed by discounts and offers (18 percent), customer reviews (16 percent), convenience (14 percent), wide variety (13 percent), and easy comparison (11 percent). Thus, price-related factors, particularly lower prices and discounts, appear frequently among the reasons reported by respondents for purchasing cosmetics online.

➤ *Factors Influencing Students' Preference for Online Purchase of Cosmetic Products*

Nowadays students as primary cosmetics consumers, significantly influence the industry's direction. Their purchasing decisions are shaped by multiple elements, including individual preferences, cultural values, social influences, and personal aspirations regarding self-presentation and confidence. Psychological motivations such as the drive to improve appearance and conform to established beauty ideals further strengthen their propensity to buy cosmetic products. Furthermore, practical factors including brand credibility, product excellence, and cost-effectiveness substantially impact their choices (Biby and Neethu, 2025). The factor analysis was used to uncover the underlying factors influencing students' preference for online purchase of cosmetic products.

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.730 is above the generally accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating that the 15 items have acceptable internal consistency. Therefore, the items can be considered reliable and suitable for factor analysis. Before extracting factors, the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis was evaluated using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The KMO statistic assesses the adequacy of the sample for factor analysis, while Bartlett's Test determines whether the variables are sufficiently correlated to warrant factor extraction.

To determine the appropriateness of applying factor analysis, the KMO and Bartlett's test measure were computed and the results are presented in table 3. KMO statistics is .775 which is signifying higher than acceptable adequacy of sampling. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 674.241$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the variables are sufficiently correlated for factor analysis.

Table 3 KMO and Bartlett's Test Measures

KMO and Bartlett's Test	
Kaiser-Mayer -Olkin measures of sampling adequacy	.775
Bartlett's test of sphericity Approx. Chi-square	674.241
Degrees of freedom	105
Significance level	.000

Source: Estimation Based on Field Survey, 2026

The communalities for each variable were assessed to determine the amount of variance accounted by the variable to be included in the factor rotations. All the variables had value greater than 0.50 signifying substantial portions of the variance accounted by the factors. Table 4 enlists the Eigen values, their relative explanatory powers and factor loadings for 14 linear components identified within the data set.

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Table 4 Rotated Component Matrix

Factors	Components					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Online shopping is convenient for purchasing cosmetic products.		.884				
Attractive discounts influence my purchase decision.	.814					
Lower prices encourage me to purchase cosmetics online.		.807				
Availability of a wide variety of products influences my preference.	.711					
Customer reviews influence my purchase decision.	.891					
Product ratings influence my purchase decision.				.845		
Brand reputation influences my choice of cosmetic products.	.680					
Social media advertisements influence my online cosmetic purchases.					.795	
Easy comparison of products and prices influences my choice.				.809		
Detailed product information increases my confidence in online purchases.		.643				
Free or low-cost delivery encourages me to purchase cosmetics online.					.845	
Easy return and refund facilities influence my purchase decision.						.933
Secure online payment facilities encourage me to purchase cosmetics online.			.647			
Attractive product presentation/images influence my purchase decision.			.892			
Eigen value	4.117	1.879	1.770	1.294	1.098	1.080
Percentage of Variance	27.446	12.525	11.801	8.630	7.323	7.202
Cumulative percentage	27.446	39.971	51.772	60.402	67.725	74.927

- Extraction method: principal component analysis
- Rotation method: varimax with kaiser normalization
- Rotation converged in 7 iterations

Factor 1 consists of attractive discounts influence my purchase decision (.814), availability of a wide variety of products influences my preference (.711), customer reviews influence my purchase decision (.891), and brand reputation influences my choice of cosmetic products (.680). This factor has an eigenvalue of 4.117 and explains 27.446 percent of the total variance. These items indicate that consumers' online cosmetic purchase decisions are influenced by promotional offers, product variety, customer feedback, and brand reputation. Therefore, this factor may be termed "Promotional and Product Choice Factors."

Factor 2 consists of lower prices encourage me to purchase cosmetics online (.807), product ratings influence my purchase decision (.845), and detailed product

information increases my confidence in online purchases (.643). This factor has an eigenvalue of 1.879 and accounts for 12.525 percent of the total variance. The items indicate that consumers consider affordable prices, product ratings, and adequate product information when making online cosmetic purchase decisions. Therefore, this factor may be termed "Price and Product Evaluation."

Factor 3 consists of secure online payment facilities encourage me to purchase cosmetics online (.647) and attractive product presentation/images influence my purchase decision (.892). This factor has an eigenvalue of 1.770 and explains 11.801 percent of the total variance. These items indicate that payment security and attractive product presentation contribute to consumers' confidence and purchase decisions in online cosmetic shopping. Therefore, this factor may be termed "Online Shopping Security and Product Presentation."

Factor 4 consists of easy comparison of products and prices influences my choice (.809) and social media advertisements influence my online cosmetic purchases (.795). This factor has an eigenvalue of 1.294 and contributes 8.630 percent of the total variance. The items indicate that consumers are influenced by the ability to compare products and prices and by advertisements encountered through social media. Therefore, this factor may be termed “Digital Comparison and Advertising.”

Factor 5 consists of online shopping is convenient for purchasing cosmetic products (.884). This factor has an eigenvalue of 1.098 and explains 7.323 percent of the total variance. This indicates that convenience is an important consideration influencing consumers’ preference for purchasing cosmetic products through online platforms. Therefore, this factor may be termed “Online Shopping Convenience.”

Factor 6 consists of free or low-cost delivery encourages me to purchase cosmetics online (.845) and easy return and refund facilities influence my purchase decision (.933). This factor has an eigenvalue of 1.080 and accounts for 7.202 percent of the total variance. These items indicate that delivery costs and convenient return and refund facilities are important considerations in consumers’ online cosmetic purchases. Therefore, this factor may be termed “Delivery and Post-Purchase Services.” Overall, the six factors have eigenvalues greater than one and together explain 74.927 percent of the total variance, indicating that the extracted factors provide a substantial explanation of the underlying dimensions influencing students online cosmetic purchase decisions.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study found that e-commerce has emerged as a significant distribution channel for cosmetic acquisitions among the student demographic, driven by elements including cost-effectiveness, product selection, discount campaigns, accessibility, product details, online comparison capabilities, payment security, and after-sales support. The study reveals that cost reduction represented the predominant motivation for purchasing cosmetics via online retailers. Makeup items emerged as the most frequently acquired product category, with Amazon identified as the preferred e-commerce platform among participants. These insights underscore that price competitiveness, product accessibility, user convenience, and informational resources significantly influence students' online cosmetic buying patterns. Recognizing these dynamics enables online cosmetic vendors and marketplaces to enhance product presentation, refine pricing approaches, optimize promotional campaigns, strengthen customer communication, streamline shopping experiences, and strengthen post-purchase support mechanisms to align with the preferences of younger consumer segments.

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