



International journal of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research

ISSN 2456-4567 (O)

Role of Social Media Content in Shaping Consumer Engagement and Purchase Intentions in the Cosmetics Market

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Abstract: Purpose- The rapid growth of digital technologies has significantly transformed marketing practices, with social media emerging as a powerful tool for influencing consumer behaviour. This study examines the role of social media content in shaping consumer engagement and purchase intentions in the cosmetics market. The research focuses on understanding how demographic factors such as age and educational qualification relate to social media engagement and purchasing decisions, as well as evaluating the impact of different types of social media content on consumer behaviour. **Methodology-** A descriptive research design was adopted, and primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 144 respondents using a convenience sampling method. The data were analysed using statistical tools such as descriptive statistics and ANOVA to examine relationships between variables. **Findings-** The findings reveal that social media platforms, particularly Instagram, play a dominant role in influencing consumer engagement and purchase decisions. A majority of respondents actively engage with cosmetic-related content and perceive social media as an essential medium for brand communication. The study also highlights that product reviews, influencer endorsements, and user-generated content significantly impact consumer purchase intentions. However, the results indicate no significant differences across demographic variables such as age and educational qualification in influencing engagement and purchasing behaviour. Overall, the study concludes that social media content is a crucial determinant of consumer engagement and purchase decisions in the cosmetics industry. The research emphasizes the importance for marketers to focus on authentic, interactive, and visually appealing content to effectively connect with consumers and enhance brand value.

Keywords- Social Media Marketing, Consumer Engagement, Purchase Intention, Cosmetics Industry, User-Generated Content, Influencer Marketing,



Introduction

The increasing penetration of the internet and digital technologies has transformed the way businesses interact with consumers. Traditional marketing methods are gradually being complemented, and in many cases replaced, by digital communication channels. Among these, social media platforms have become powerful tools for marketing and brand communication. These platforms allow companies to promote their products, communicate directly with consumers, and build long-term relationships with their target audiences. In particular, industries that rely heavily on visual presentation and consumer perception, such as the cosmetics industry, have greatly benefited from the use of social media as a marketing medium. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok have become popular spaces where cosmetic brands showcase their products and interact with potential customers. These platforms allow brands to share product demonstrations, beauty tutorials, promotional campaigns, and customer testimonials in visually appealing formats. Through such content, brands can effectively capture the attention of consumers and create awareness about their products. Moreover, the interactive features of social media enable consumers to express their opinions, provide feedback, and share their experiences with others, which further contributes to the spread of brand-related information.

Consumer engagement on social media plays a significant role in determining the success of digital marketing strategies. Engagement includes activities such as liking posts, commenting, sharing content, viewing videos, and participating in discussions related to brands. When consumers actively interact with brand content, it indicates a higher level of interest and involvement with the brand. For cosmetic companies, maintaining a high level of engagement is important because it helps strengthen brand recognition and encourages consumers to explore and try new products. As consumers increasingly rely on online platforms for product information and recommendations, social media engagement has become a key factor influencing purchasing behaviour.

The type of content shared on social media also influences consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. Cosmetic brands often use different content formats, including influencer collaborations, product reviews, makeup tutorials, and before-and-after demonstrations. Such content helps consumers understand product features, quality, and usage in a practical manner. In addition, recommendations from influencers and user-generated content can increase consumer trust and credibility toward the brand. As a result, social media content has the potential to significantly shape consumer attitudes and motivate purchasing decisions in the cosmetics market.

Demographic characteristics of consumers, such as age and educational qualification, may also affect the way individuals interact with social media platforms and respond to online marketing messages. Younger consumers are generally more active on social media and tend to spend more time exploring digital content. They are therefore more likely to engage with brand-related posts and advertisements. On the other hand, individuals with different levels of educational background may interpret online information differently and may rely on varying types of content when making purchasing decisions. Understanding these demographic differences is essential for marketers to design effective social media campaigns that target specific consumer groups.



In this context, studying the influence of social media engagement on consumer purchasing behaviour in the cosmetics industry becomes highly relevant. By examining the relationship between demographic factors, social media engagement, and purchase decisions, the study aims to provide insights into how cosmetic brands can effectively utilize social media platforms to attract and influence consumers. Such insights can help marketers develop more targeted strategies to enhance consumer interaction and improve marketing outcomes in the competitive cosmetics market.

Literature Review

Mady S. and Liang Q. (2024) investigated how social media marketing activities such as engagement initiatives, targeted advertising, and personalization affect purchase intentions for clothing and cosmetic products in China. Their findings suggest that these marketing efforts significantly influence consumers' buying tendencies. Additionally, factors like perceived product quality and brand association were found to moderate this relationship, jointly explaining a notable portion of the variance in purchase intentions.

Verplancke and Gelati (2022). This study investigates the impact of influencer marketing on the buying patterns of young customers in the fashion and beauty sectors through the use of social media. To examine this impact in the context of today's technologically advanced age, their study incorporates a review of the literature, a theoretical framework, and qualitative interviews with influencers, brands, and followers.

Gebre (2024) explored the impact of social media advertising within the cosmetics sector in Addis Ababa. The study revealed that influencer endorsements and product-related reviews strongly affect consumer attitudes. However, perceived expectations regarding product quality did not significantly influence these attitudes. The research emphasizes the need for consistency between promotional claims and actual product performance to enhance consumer trust and engagement.

Kusuma (2024) analysed the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in the beauty industry using a mixed-method approach. The study highlights that investments in digital marketing contribute to improved brand visibility and revenue growth. It also underscores the importance of authenticity, personalized communication, and integrated omnichannel strategies, particularly through influencer collaborations and community engagement, in building long-term customer relationships.

Zaman K. et al. (2024) focused on the influence of social media influencers on consumer preferences in the cosmetics industry. The results indicate that emotional connection, credibility, and trustworthiness of influencers play a crucial role in shaping brand preferences and purchase intentions. The study recommends that companies carefully select influencers who can effectively foster trust and strengthen customer loyalty.



Gang Abada (2021). This study analyses the impact of social media on customer behaviour in the beauty sector in Sri Lanka and Sweden. While Sri Lankan consumers value suggestions from friends and family, they are also influenced by social media evaluations, especially unfavourable ones. Swedish customers mainly rely on positive social media reviews when making purchasing decisions.

Koponen, J. (2017). This study investigated the effects of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on purchase intentions in the cosmetics industry, with a focus on visual content on social media. It draws attention to the important roles that information and ego-defensive functions play in influencing consumer choices. The report makes recommendations for continued research to examine new trends and broaden into industries outside of cosmetics. It also advises businesses to aggressively promote consumer involvement through electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in order to improve marketing effectiveness.

Research Methodology

Sampling Design: -A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data for the study. The questions were simple, clear, and designed to ensure accurate and reliable responses. The survey focused on consumers who actively use social media and have experience purchasing cosmetic products through these platforms.

Sampling Technique: -The study adopted a convenience sampling method, selecting respondents based on accessibility and willingness to participate. Data on consumer engagement and purchasing behaviour influenced by social media were collected directly through the questionnaire, ensuring genuine and unbiased responses

Data Collection Method: -The study utilized a personal survey method for data collection. Responses were gathered using a structured questionnaire administered to participants. This method facilitated direct interaction with respondents, allowing for better clarity and completeness of responses.

Sampling Method: - A non-probability convenience sampling method was adopted for selecting respondents. This method enabled the researcher to gather data efficiently from individuals who were readily available and relevant to the study objectives.

Sample Size: -The study was conducted using a sample size of 144 respondents. The participants included consumers who actively use social media platforms and have either shown interest in or purchased cosmetic products through these platforms. This sample size was considered adequate to analyse patterns of consumer engagement and purchasing behaviour in the context of social media marketing.



Data analysis tool- SPSS, Excel

Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between the age of consumers and their social media engagement during working hours.
2. To analyse the relationship between the educational qualification of consumers and their purchasing decisions influenced by social media content.
3. To examine the impact of different types of social media content on consumers' purchase decisions.

Hypothesis

H01: - There is no significant relationship between the age of consumers and their social media engagement during working hours.

H11: -There is a significant relationship between the age of consumers and their social media engagement during working hours.

H02: -There is no significant relationship between the educational qualification of consumers and their purchasing decisions influenced by social media content.

H12: -There is a significant relationship between the educational qualification of consumers and their purchasing decisions influenced by social media content.

Reliability Test: - Reliability Test is done to check the reliability of the questionnaire. If Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.6, the questionnaire is said to be reliable. If the Cronbach's Alpha Value is less than 0.6, the questionnaire is not reliable.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.722	9

The obtained Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.721 which means that the data is reliable.

Data Analysis

1. Gender

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	42	29.2	29.2
	Female	102	70.8	100.0
	Total	144	100.0	
Total		144		



Interpretation: - From the above table and pie chart, it can be interpreted that the majority of respondents (42.4%) had graduate degrees, followed by post-graduate degrees (25.0%), according to the respondents' educational level. This suggests that the customer of the business is comparatively educated. Higher education levels among respondents may point to a quality-conscious consumer specific that is prepared to pay more for cosmetics of the highest quality.

2. Age

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	00-20	29	20.1	20.1
	21-40	115	79.9	100.0
	Total	144	100.0	
Total		144		

Interpretation: - From the above table and pie chart, it can be interpreted that the age distribution indicates a significant proportion of respondents (79.9%) are between the ages of 21 and 40. This suggests that young to middle-aged adults are the company's main target market. The company may concentrate its marketing and product development efforts on appealing to the 21–40 age group, as they constitute the majority of its client base, assuming that only 20.1% of respondents were in the 00–20 age range.

3. Qualification

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under Graduate	15	10.4	10.4
	Diploma	30	20.8	31.3
	Graduate	61	42.4	73.6
	Post-Graduate	36	25.0	98.6
	Doctrate	1	.7	99.3
	Other	1	.7	100.0
	Total	144	100.0	
Total		144		

Interpretation: - the data shows that most respondents are graduates (42.4%), followed by post-graduates (25.0%) and diploma holders (20.8%). A smaller proportion includes undergraduates (10.4%), while doctorate and other categories (0.7% each) have minimal representation overall, the sample is dominated by well-educated individuals, indicating that the study mainly reflects the behaviour of educated consumers.

4. Marital Status				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	17	11.8	11.8
	Unmarried	125	86.8	98.6
	Divorced	2	1.4	100.0
	Total	144	100.0	
Total		144		

Interpretation: -From the above table and pie chart, it can be interpreted that the distribution of respondents' marital status shows that, at 86.8%, majority are single, with married people make up the minority (11.8%) and divorced people (1.4%). This suggests that single people make up the majority of the company's customer base. Younger, single adults who might be more interested in the newest trends and particular beauty items could be targeted with specific marketing methods and product offerings.

5. Which social media platforms do you use frequently for cosmetics purchase purposes?

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Instagram	122	84.7	84.7
	Facebook	5	3.5	88.2
	YouTube	17	11.8	100.0
	Total	144	100.0	
Total		144		

Interpretation- The findings reveal that Instagram is the most frequently used platform, with 84.7% of valid respondents (122) preferring it for cosmetic purchases. This indicates its strong influence in the beauty segment. In comparison, YouTube accounts for 11.8% (17 respondents), showing moderate usage, mainly for product reviews and tutorials. Meanwhile, Facebook has minimal usage at 3.5% (5 respondents). Overall, the data suggests that Instagram dominates as the primary platform for cosmetic-related engagement and purchasing decisions.

6. How often do you engage with social media content related to cosmetics during work hours?

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	1	.7	.7
	Rarely	19	13.2	13.9
	Sometimes	95	66.0	79.9
	Often	21	14.6	94.4
	Always	8	5.6	100.0
	Total	144	100.0	
Total		144		

Interpretation -The data shows that the majority of respondents sometimes engage (66.0%) with cosmetic-related social media content during work hours. A smaller proportion often (14.6%) or rarely (13.2%) engage, while only 5.6% always engage during this time. Very few respondents never engage (0.7%), indicating that most individuals interact with such content at least occasionally. Overall, engagement during work hours is moderate, with “sometimes” being the dominant behaviour.

7. I frequently check social media during working hours.

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	1	.7	.7
	Neutral	38	26.4	27.1
	Agree	73	50.7	77.8
	Strongly Agree	32	22.2	100.0
	Total	144	100.0	
Total		144		



The results show that a majority of respondents frequently check social media during working hours, with **50.7% agreeing** and **22.2% strongly agreeing**. About **26.4% remain neutral**, while only a negligible proportion disagrees. Overall, this indicates a high level of social media engagement during work hours among respondents.

8. Social media content influences my decision to purchase cosmetic products.?

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	50	34.7	34.7
	Agree	80	55.6	90.3
	Strongly Agree	14	9.7	100.0
	Total	144	100.0	
Total		144		

Interpretation-The results indicate that a majority of respondents believe that social media content influences their cosmetic purchase decisions. A significant proportion, 55.6%, agree and 9.7% strongly agree, reflecting a strong positive perception of social media's impact. Meanwhile, 34.7% of respondents remain neutral, suggesting that although they are exposed to such content, it may not strongly influence their decisions. Overall, the findings suggest that social media content plays an important role in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions in the cosmetics segment.

9. Do you think user-generated content (e.g., customer reviews, photos) on social media significantly influence my purchase intention?

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	143	99.3	99.3
	No	1	.7	100.0
	Total	144	100.0	
Total		144		

Interpretation- The results clearly show that an overwhelming majority of respondents (99.3%) believe that user-generated content, such as customer reviews and photos, significantly influences their purchase intention. Only a negligible proportion (0.7%) disagrees with this view. Overall, the findings indicate that user-generated content plays a highly influential role in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions, highlighting its importance in social media marketing strategies.

Hypothesis Testing

H01: - There is no significant relationship between the age of consumers and their social media engagement during working hours.

H11: -There is a significant relationship between the age of consumers and their social media engagement during working hours.

Descriptives

How often do you engage with social media content related to cosmetics during work hours?

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
00-20	29	3.21	.481	.091	3.02	3.29	1	5
21-40	115	3.09	.667	.072	2.95	3.21	1	5
Total	144	3.11	.820	.060	2.99	3.21	1	5

ANOVA

How often do you engage with social media content related to cosmetics during work hours?

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.33	1	.332	.640	.424
Within Groups	73.89	142	.520		
Total	74.22	143			



Interpretation- The ANOVA results examine whether there is a significant difference in social media engagement during work hours across age groups (00–20 and 21–40). The descriptive statistics show that respondents aged 00–20 have a slightly higher mean engagement (Mean = 3.21) compared to those aged 21–40 (Mean = 3.09). However, this difference is minimal. The ANOVA results indicate that the F-value is 0.640 with a significance value (p-value) of 0.425, which is greater than the standard threshold of 0.05. This means that the difference in engagement levels between the two age groups is not statistically significant. There is no significant difference in social media engagement during work hours based on age. Hence, the null hypothesis (H01) is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

H02: -There is no significant relationship between the educational qualification of consumers and their purchasing decisions influenced by social media content.

H12: -There is a significant relationship between the educational qualification of consumers and their purchasing decisions influenced by social media content.

Descriptives

Consumers often make purchasing decisions based on Cosmetics social media content.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Under Graduate	15	3.87	.516	.133	3.58	4.15	1	5
Diploma	30	3.87	.629	.115	3.63	4.10	1	5
Graduate	61	3.79	.755	.097	3.59	3.98	1	5
Post-Graduate	36	3.78	.681	.113	3.55	4.01	1	5
Doctrate	2	5.00	1	5
Total	144	3.83	0.693	0.058	3.71	3.94	1	5

ANOVA

Consumers often make purchasing decisions based on Renee Cosmetics social media content.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.007	5	0.601	1.165	.282
Within Groups	65.653	138	0.376		
Total	68.560	143			



Interpretation- The descriptive results indicate that consumers across all educational qualification levels generally agree that social media content influences their purchasing decisions, with mean scores ranging from 3.78 to 3.87, reflecting a moderately high level of agreement. The overall mean value of 3.83 further supports this positive inclination. However, the ANOVA results show that the significance value ($p = 0.282$) is greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between different educational qualification groups in terms of their purchasing decisions influenced by social media content. Overall, this suggests that educational qualification does not significantly affect how consumers respond to social media content when making cosmetic purchase decisions, and such influence is relatively consistent across all groups.

Findings

The study indicates that a majority of respondents are female (70.8%), highlighting the dominant role of women in cosmetic consumption. Most participants (79%) fall within the 21-40 age group, representing young and middle-aged consumers who are typically more active on digital platforms. In terms of educational background, a significant proportion are graduates (42.4%) and postgraduates (25%), suggesting that the respondents are well-educated and likely to make informed and quality-driven purchase decisions. Additionally, 86.8% of respondents are single, and a considerable segment consists of early-career professionals, with 6–12 months (36.8%) and 1-3 years (33.3%) of work experience, indicating a consumer base that values affordability along with trending and premium products.

The findings further reveal that Instagram is the most preferred platform (84.7%) for engaging with and purchasing cosmetic products, significantly outperforming other platforms. This reflects the importance of visually driven content, influencer collaborations, and interactive features in attracting consumers. Most respondents (66%) reported that they sometimes engage with cosmetic-related social media content during working hours, while a smaller proportion engage often or always, indicating moderate but consistent exposure to such content even during busy schedules.

Furthermore, a large majority of respondents believe that social media plays a vital role in enhancing customer engagement, maintaining brand competitiveness, and improving overall marketing effectiveness. Consumers also perceive social media analytics as a valuable tool for understanding their preferences and behaviour, enabling brands to deliver more personalized and relevant content. Feedback shared on social media is considered influential in shaping product development, suggesting that brands must actively monitor and respond to consumer opinions.

In addition, influencer marketing emerges as a key driver of consumer engagement, with most respondents acknowledging its effectiveness in promoting products. Social media content is also perceived to generate higher engagement compared to traditional marketing channels. Among various content formats, product reviews (47.2%) are identified as the most influential, followed by influencer endorsements (25.7%) and educational or informational content. This indicates that consumers rely heavily on authentic and experience-based information before making purchase decisions.



Finally, an overwhelming majority of respondents believe that social media significantly enhances brand awareness (99.3%) and that user-generated content has a strong impact on their purchasing behaviour (99.3%). This demonstrates that content created by other users, such as reviews, testimonials, and shared experiences, plays a crucial role in building trust and influencing buying decisions. Overall, the findings emphasize the growing importance of social media as a powerful tool in shaping consumer perceptions, engagement, and purchase behaviour in the cosmetics industry.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54121/2021111499>