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## Consumer satisfaction in the digital age: E-commerce and branded cosmetics

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### Abstract

In the digital age, the proliferation of e-commerce has significantly transformed consumer behavior and expectations, particularly in the beauty and personal care industry. This study examines the impact of e-commerce on consumer satisfaction with a specific focus on branded cosmetic products. By analyzing various factors such as product quality, website usability, customer service, delivery experience, and return policies, the research aims to understand the determinants of consumer satisfaction in online cosmetic purchases. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed among 200 online cosmetic shoppers. The findings highlight the critical role of trust, user-friendly interface, and timely delivery in enhancing satisfaction. The study provides valuable insights for e-commerce platforms and cosmetic brands to improve customer experiences and loyalty.

**Keywords:** Consumer satisfaction, e-commerce, branded cosmetics, online shopping behavior, digital marketing

### 1. Introduction

E-commerce has become a defining feature of the modern retail landscape, transforming how consumers access products and services across various sectors. In particular, the cosmetic industry has seen a significant surge in online sales due to the convenience, accessibility, and personalization offered by e-commerce platforms. Branded cosmetics, which traditionally relied on in-store experiences for product trial and brand engagement, are increasingly being sold through digital channels. This shift has been fueled by factors such as the rise in smartphone usage, widespread internet penetration, and evolving consumer lifestyles that prioritize convenience and efficiency.

The global beauty and personal care market is projected to continue growing, with e-commerce emerging as a primary distribution channel. Platforms like Amazon, Nykaa, Sephora, and others have leveraged digital marketing tools, customer reviews, and personalized recommendations to enhance the online shopping experience. However, the absence of physical interaction with the product before purchase introduces challenges related to trust, satisfaction, and perceived product authenticity. Consumers often rely on visual representations, written descriptions, and peer reviews, which can significantly influence their buying decisions.

Consumer satisfaction in this context goes beyond the product itself to include the entire digital journey—from website navigation and payment security to customer service and return policies. Brands and e-commerce platforms are therefore required to innovate continuously to meet the evolving expectations of tech-savvy and quality-conscious consumers. Understanding the key drivers of satisfaction in this dynamic environment is essential for retaining customers, building brand loyalty, and sustaining competitive advantage.

### Understanding Customer Needs

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This study aims to analyze the impact of e-commerce on consumer satisfaction with a specific focus on branded cosmetic products. By examining critical factors such as product authenticity, digital user experience, delivery efficiency, and customer support, the research seeks to offer insights into consumer priorities and preferences in the digital marketplace. The findings can guide cosmetic brands and e-commerce platforms in enhancing their strategies to deliver superior customer experiences.

**India (example market):** India is a rapidly expanding beauty market (one of world's largest), with forecasts of ~40% growth by 2026 driven by youth, incomes, and e-commerce / q-commerce access.

## 2. Review of Literature

The relationship between e-commerce and consumer satisfaction has been extensively studied in recent years, particularly in the context of the retail and service industries. The dynamic nature of online shopping necessitates a deep understanding of the variables that contribute to a satisfying consumer experience.

Laudon and Traver (2021) <sup>[5]</sup> highlight several dimensions of online retail that influence customer satisfaction, including the convenience of shopping, ease of website navigation, payment security, and efficiency of the delivery system. They argue that these elements form the foundation of a positive consumer experience in the digital environment.

Kotler and Keller (2019) <sup>[4]</sup> emphasize the role of brand trust and product authenticity, especially in sectors like cosmetics where consumers are highly sensitive to quality and safety. They assert that branded cosmetic products require a high level of trust, which can be established through transparent product descriptions, credible customer reviews, and reliable return policies.

Bilgihan *et al.* (2016) <sup>[2]</sup> investigate the importance of personalized services in e-commerce, suggesting that tailoring the shopping experience to individual preferences can enhance satisfaction and loyalty. This is particularly relevant in the cosmetics industry, where personalization in product recommendations and targeted marketing can significantly affect consumer choices.

According to Park and Kim (2020) <sup>[6]</sup>, the absence of tactile and visual engagement in online shopping necessitates a strong reliance on user-generated content, such as reviews and ratings. Their study found that positive reviews and high ratings correlate strongly with increased consumer trust and satisfaction.

Additionally, research by Chiu *et al.* (2014) <sup>[3]</sup> identified customer service quality and responsiveness as critical determinants of satisfaction in e-commerce. Their findings suggest that timely resolution of issues and effective communication during the purchasing process can significantly enhance the consumer's perception of the brand.

Furthermore, studies by Bhatti (2020) <sup>[1]</sup> have shown that social media integration and influencer marketing also play a pivotal role in shaping consumer attitudes and satisfaction in the cosmetics industry. The digital presence of a brand across various platforms contributes to consumer engagement and trust, thereby influencing purchasing decisions.

Collectively, these studies underscore the multifaceted nature of consumer satisfaction in e-commerce, particularly for branded cosmetics. Factors such as trust, website usability, customer support, delivery efficiency, and digital

engagement emerge as key drivers that must be addressed to ensure a rewarding consumer experience.

## 3. Research Methodology

This research employed a quantitative approach using a structured questionnaire. A sample of 200 individuals who had purchased branded cosmetics online in the past six months was selected using purposive sampling. The questionnaire included sections on demographics, online shopping behavior, and satisfaction dimensions such as product authenticity, delivery experience, and website interface. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

## Research Objectives

1. To examine the key factors influencing consumer satisfaction in the online purchase of branded cosmetic products.
2. To analyze the role of website usability, product authenticity, and delivery service in shaping customer experiences on e-commerce platforms.
3. To evaluate consumer preferences regarding different e-commerce platforms for purchasing branded cosmetics.
4. To identify the relationship between online consumer satisfaction and their intention to repurchase branded cosmetic products.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The following tables summarize the responses collected from 200 participants:

**Table 1: Frequency of Online Cosmetic Purchases**

| Frequency    | Respondents | Percentage |
|--------------|-------------|------------|
| Frequently   | 89          | 44.5%      |
| Occasionally | 71          | 35.5%      |
| Rarely       | 29          | 14.5%      |
| Never        | 11          | 5.5%       |

**Interpretation:** The majority (44.5%) frequently purchase cosmetics online, indicating a strong reliance on e-commerce for beauty products.

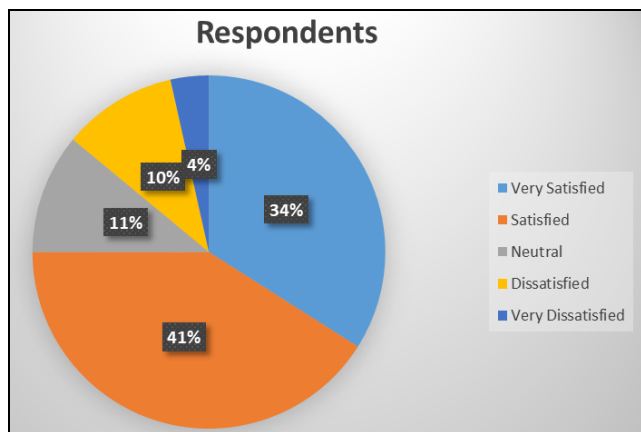
**Table 2: Satisfaction with Key E-Commerce Factors (Mean Scores)**

| Factor                         | Mean Score (out of 5) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Product authenticity           | 4.6                   |
| Timely delivery                | 4.4                   |
| Website usability              | 4.2                   |
| Product descriptions & reviews | 4.1                   |
| Customer service               | 4.0                   |
| Return and refund process      | 3.8                   |

**Interpretation:** Product authenticity and delivery service are the highest-rated factors, suggesting that trust and efficiency are central to consumer satisfaction. The relatively lower score for returns suggests room for improvement in that area.

**Table 3: Overall Consumer Satisfaction Level**

| Satisfaction Level | Respondents | Percentage |
|--------------------|-------------|------------|
| Very Satisfied     | 68          | 34.0%      |
| Satisfied          | 82          | 41.0%      |
| Neutral            | 22          | 11.0%      |
| Dissatisfied       | 21          | 10.5%      |
| Very Dissatisfied  | 7           | 3.5%       |



**Fig 1:** Query successful this pie chart, titled "Respondents," illustrates a breakdown of survey responses, showing that 41% of respondents were "Satisfied," 34% were "Very Satisfied," 11% were "Neutral," 10% were "Dissatisfied," and 4% were "Very Dissatisfied"

**Interpretation:** A large majority (75%) of participants are either satisfied or very satisfied, indicating a generally positive experience with online branded cosmetic purchases.

**Table 4:** Preferred Platforms for Purchasing Cosmetics

| Platform    | Respondents | Percentage |
|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Nykaa       | 98          | 49.0%      |
| Amazon      | 54          | 27.0%      |
| Flipkart    | 23          | 11.5%      |
| Brand sites | 12          | 6.0%       |
| Others      | 13          | 6.50%      |

### Interpretation

Nykaa dominates as the preferred platform, possibly due to its specialization in beauty and personal care.

These tables collectively highlight consumer behavior and satisfaction levels, emphasizing the importance of authenticity, ease of use, and delivery in shaping the online cosmetic shopping experience.

### 5. Conclusion

E-commerce has become a critical channel for branded cosmetics, driven by technological advancements and changing consumer preferences. This study underscores the importance of a seamless and trustworthy digital shopping experience in ensuring consumer satisfaction. For cosmetic brands and e-commerce platforms, focusing on website optimization, accurate product representation, and robust customer service can lead to higher consumer loyalty and sustained business growth.

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