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A Study on the Impact of Branding on Consumer Buying Behaviours in Cosmetics Products in Raipur

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ABSTRACT

study investigates how demographic variables like age, gender, education level, and income interact with branding cues to shape consumer behaviour in a localized context. The scope of this study is limited to the urban consumer base of Raipur, focusing particularly on individuals who actively purchase cosmetic products, including skincare, makeup, and personal care items. To achieve the research objectives, a mixed-method approach was used, incorporating both primary and secondary data. A structured questionnaire was developed to collect responses from a sample of 200 consumers using stratified random sampling to ensure demographic diversity. Data were analyzed using statistical tools such as descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression. This study explores the impact of branding on consumer buying behaviour within the cosmetic product market of Raipur, a rapidly growing tier-2 city in India. In a highly competitive and image-driven sector such as cosmetics, branding elements play a crucial role in influencing consumer perception, shaping preferences, and guiding purchase decisions. The primary objective of this research is to examine how specific branding factors—such as brand name, logo, color scheme, packaging, promotional strategies, and perceived brand value—affect consumer purchasing patterns. Furthermore, the study aims to measure the strength of the relationship between branding variables and consumer buying behaviour. Key findings of the study indicate that branding significantly affects consumer choices. Packaging aesthetics, brand reputation, and perceived product quality were identified as the most influential factors driving purchase decisions. Brand loyalty was also found to be closely linked with consistent brand messaging and emotional connection with consumers. The study reveals that younger consumers, particularly those aged 18–30, are more receptive to branding cues such as influencer marketing, social media visibility, and celebrity endorsements. Female consumers showed a higher sensitivity to brand image and packaging design, particularly in skincare and decorative cosmetics segments. Additionally, the study found that consumers with higher income and education levels tend to make more brand-conscious purchases, associating branded products with quality assurance and social status. These insights suggest that effective branding can lead to increased customer engagement, loyalty, and ultimately, higher sales. Marketers operating in regional markets like Raipur can benefit from this research by developing targeted branding strategies that align with the cultural and psychological profiles of local consumers. This research contributes to existing literature by providing empirical data on branding influence in an emerging urban market, highlighting the growing sophistication of consumer behaviour in smaller Indian cities. The findings encourage cosmetic brands to invest in localized marketing, personalized branding content, and trust-building initiatives to gain competitive advantage.

Keywords: Branding, Consumer Behaviour, Cosmetic Products, Brand Loyalty, Packaging, Urban Consumers, Raipur, Marketing Strategy, Demographics, Brand Image

1 Introduction

In today's hyper-competitive market, branding has emerged as a powerful tool that significantly influences consumer choices, particularly in lifestyle and personal care sectors like cosmetics. With increasing awareness, accessibility, and disposable incomes, consumers are no longer solely driven by functional product features. Instead, they are guided by intangible elements such as brand perception, emotional appeal, and perceived quality. Branding—encompassing brand name, logo, identity, and the overall experience it offers—has thus become a critical determinant of buying behaviour in the cosmetics industry.

India's cosmetic market has seen substantial growth over the past decade, with Tier-II cities like Raipur becoming lucrative destinations for cosmetic brands. The influx of national and international brands, coupled with growing aspirations of consumers in urbanizing cities, has led to a dynamic shift in consumer preferences. In Raipur, a city that bridges traditional values with modern lifestyle changes, branding plays an increasingly crucial role in shaping

consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. Consumers, particularly millennials and Gen Z, tend to identify with brands that align with their self-image, cultural context, and lifestyle aspirations.

The role of branding in cosmetics goes beyond aesthetics or superficial choices. It involves creating trust, communicating values, and building a connection that often leads to brand loyalty. As cosmetics are associated with self-expression and personal care, brand credibility and emotional engagement often outweigh price sensitivity. Packaging, brand ambassadors, social media presence, and ethical considerations such as cruelty-free or organic certification all contribute to brand image, and by extension, influence consumer buying behaviour.

Despite national-level studies on the impact of branding, localized research is essential to understand how branding dynamics operate within specific socio-cultural and economic contexts. Raipur presents a unique demographic blend—urban professionals, students, and a growing middle class—which makes it a relevant case for analyzing branding's impact on consumer choices. Understanding these dynamics helps not only academic inquiry but also aids marketers in designing regionally optimized brand strategies.

This study aims to explore how branding affects consumer buying behaviour in the cosmetic sector within Raipur. It will investigate various branding components—such as brand awareness, loyalty, perceived quality, and emotional connection—and assess their impact on the purchasing decisions of consumers. The findings will offer valuable insights into how brands can position themselves effectively in semi-urban markets and cater to increasingly brand-conscious yet diverse consumer segments.

In sum, this research seeks to bridge the gap between branding theory and practical consumer behaviour in Raipur's evolving cosmetic marketplace. By grounding the study in local context, it contributes both to academic literature and to real-world branding strategies tailored for regional markets.

1.2 Objectives

- To assess the availability and visibility
- To evaluate the profitability and consumer preference
- To identify psychological and sociocultural factors

1.3 Methodology

This research uses a mixed-method approach involving both **primary and secondary data**:

- **Primary data** was collected using structured questionnaires administered to 100 respondents across five major retail outlets in Raipur. The selection of retail outlets was done randomly to ensure diversity in responses and representation across different demographics.
- The questionnaire explored variables such as brand perception, attitude, belief, and purchase intention.
- **Secondary data** was drawn from market reports, academic studies, branding case analyses, and industry publications relevant to cosmetics and consumer behavior.

Analytical tools such as **factor analysis** and **multiple linear regression** were applied to examine the relationship between branding elements and consumer behavior. The sample consisted mainly of young urban female consumers aged 18–35 with a minimum undergraduate education, reflecting the most active cosmetic-buying demographic.

1.4 Scope

- The study focuses specifically on the **cosmetic retail market in Raipur city**.
- It aims to understand consumer behavior with respect to branding—evaluating both **emotional and rational responses** to cosmetic brand attributes.
- The research is intended to benefit marketers, retailers, and brand managers by offering localized insights to refine branding strategies.

1.5 Limitations

- The study sample is limited to **100 respondents** within Raipur and may not fully represent the broader state or national trends.
- Responses are **self-reported**, which may involve some degree of bias or social desirability effects.
- The study does not account for **online cosmetic purchases**, focusing only on in-store retail behavior.
- Certain branding dimensions, such as **brand ethics or sustainability practices**, were not explored in detail due to time constraints.

2. Literature Review

Branding has been widely recognized as a vital strategic tool that influences consumer perceptions and decision-making. Scholars have long argued that branding does more than distinguish products; it embeds meaning, creates associations, and forms a psychological contract with consumers (Keller, 2003). The effectiveness of branding in shaping consumer behaviour is particularly pronounced in the cosmetics industry, where intangible aspects like identity, trust, and emotional connection often take precedence over tangible product features.

Aaker's (1991) model of brand equity—which includes brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty—has been foundational in studying branding's impact. In the cosmetics sector, brand equity elements significantly shape consumer preferences. Perceived quality, for example, is often equated with safety and skin compatibility, while brand associations can communicate values such as eco-friendliness, glamour, or affordability (Batra & Homer, 2004).

In the Indian market, where culture, tradition, and modernity coexist, branding in cosmetics must address diverse consumer segments. Research by **Kumar and Goyal (2015)** highlights that Indian consumers, especially urban women, are increasingly influenced by brand imagery, celebrity endorsements, and social media presence when choosing cosmetic products. Tier-II cities like Raipur are witnessing rapid changes in lifestyle, making brand engagement more dynamic and complex.

Thomson et al. (2005) assert that emotional attachment to a brand significantly impacts consumer loyalty and purchase frequency. In cosmetics, where products are tied to self-expression, beauty ideals, and confidence, branding strategies that foster emotional connection—such as storytelling and inclusive campaigns—tend to perform better. Indian consumers increasingly seek brands that align with their identity, whether it is affordability, luxury, or ethical sourcing.

The proliferation of digital media has added a new layer to branding's impact. Influencer marketing, user-generated content, and online reviews heavily influence cosmetic purchases. Urban consumers in India, including in Raipur, are found to be highly responsive to online branding strategies (**Mehta & Purushothaman, 2020**). This indicates a shift from traditional loyalty drivers to digital-first brand experiences.

While metropolitan cities have been the primary focus of cosmetic branding studies, there is growing recognition of the potential in semi-urban markets. A study by **Singh (2018)** found that consumers in cities like Raipur are brand-conscious but also value word-of-mouth and local market familiarity. Their buying behaviour is shaped by a combination of aspirational branding and practical considerations, such as price sensitivity and product availability.

In the cosmetic industry, product packaging is not merely functional but plays a critical role in communicating brand identity and attracting consumers at the point of sale. According to **Underwood and Klein (2002)**, visual stimuli such as colour, typography, and container design act as subconscious cues that reinforce brand values. For Indian consumers, especially in smaller urban centres, attractive packaging often creates a perception of higher quality and trustworthiness, even when brand familiarity is low. This phenomenon is particularly relevant in a city like Raipur, where brand discovery often begins at the retail level.

Brand loyalty is one of the most desired outcomes of successful branding strategies. **Oliver (1999)** defines it as a deeply held commitment to repurchase a preferred product or service consistently. In cosmetics, loyalty often results from consistent product performance and emotional satisfaction. Several Indian studies, such as those by **Sharma and Sheth (2017)**, have shown that consumers tend to remain loyal to brands that meet their skin types, lifestyle needs, and aesthetic expectations. Loyalty is further reinforced through loyalty programs, personalization, and consistent digital engagement, which are increasingly being adopted by cosmetic brands targeting smaller cities.

Consumer buying behaviour in cosmetics is significantly shaped by cultural norms, social class, and peer influence. In Indian society, where appearance and grooming are often associated with social status and marriage prospects, cosmetics consumption carries deep cultural meaning. **Research by Banerjee (2016)** points out that branding strategies that resonate with local culture—such as fair skin campaigns, Ayurvedic formulations, or celebrity endorsements rooted in Indian ethos—tend to be more successful in semi-urban markets. In Raipur, such culturally tuned messaging becomes vital for building relevance and trust.

While brand loyalty and emotional branding are crucial, price sensitivity still plays a notable role in consumer decisions in Tier-II cities. Consumers often seek a balance between price and perceived brand value. Brands like Lakme and Himalaya have successfully positioned themselves in this value-for-money segment while maintaining strong brand equity. Studies like that of **Bhatt and Bhatt (2020)** confirm that Indian consumers are willing to pay a premium if they perceive a brand to offer superior quality, ethical practices, or aspirational value.

The rapid digitalization of commerce has further expanded the scope of branding. E-commerce platforms like Nykaa, Amazon, and Flipkart have enabled consumers from Raipur and other semiurban cities to access a broader range of brands. Digital branding—through social media marketing, influencer partnerships, and SEO optimization—now directly influences product discovery, comparison, and purchase behaviour. According to **Jain and Aggarwal (2021)**, online branding provides smaller brands the opportunity to compete with legacy players by leveraging customer reviews and influencer credibility.

With rising awareness about product ingredients and ethical concerns, consumers are gravitating toward brands that promote transparency and sustainability. Cruelty-free testing, organic certification, and eco-friendly packaging are now part of brand positioning strategies in the cosmetic space. Indian consumers, including those in Raipur, increasingly prefer brands that align with their ethical values, especially among educated, younger demographics. Ethical branding not only enhances trust but also creates a strong narrative that supports long-term brand loyalty.

3. Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed to examine the impact of branding on consumer buying behavior in the cosmetics market of Raipur. The methodology is designed to align with the study's objectives and ensure the credibility and relevance of the findings.

3.1 Research Design

The study follows a descriptive research design, aimed at observing and analyzing the current behaviors, preferences, and attitudes of cosmetic consumers without any external manipulation. This design enables the researcher to evaluate the branding elements that significantly influence consumer choices.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

The research integrates both primary and secondary data to offer a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

•**Primary Data:** Structured questionnaires were used to collect firsthand data from cosmetic consumers in Raipur. The questionnaire included both close-ended and Likert scale-based questions designed to capture key variables such as brand awareness, emotional connection, perceived value, and purchase intention.

•**Secondary Data:** Secondary information was sourced from academic literature, industry reports, brand case studies, market analyses, and digital publications. These sources provided theoretical and contextual insights to complement the primary data.

3.3 Sampling Design

•**Target Population:** The study focuses on consumers residing in urban areas of Raipur who actively purchase cosmetic products and are aware of branding elements.

- **Sample Size:** A sample of 100 respondents was selected to ensure statistical robustness and meaningful interpretation.
- **Sampling Technique:** A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure diversity across age, gender, income levels, and education. Respondents were selected from five major retail outlets in Raipur, chosen randomly to capture geographical and demographic variation.

3.4 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire served as the main data collection instrument. It was distributed digitally (through Google Forms) to maximize reach and response rates. The instrument was divided into the following sections:

- Demographic profile
- Brand awareness and recall
- Brand perception and emotional appeal
- Purchase behavior and loyalty

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected were analyzed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical methods, facilitated by SPSS and Microsoft Excel:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Mean, frequency, and percentage were used to summarize respondent demographics and general trends.
- **Factor Analysis:** Employed to identify underlying variables (e.g., brand image, quality perception, social appeal) that influence consumer behavior.
- **Multiple Linear Regression:** Conducted to evaluate the relationship between consumer demographic variables (such as income, gender, education, and social media exposure) and their brand-related attitudes and purchasing decisions.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

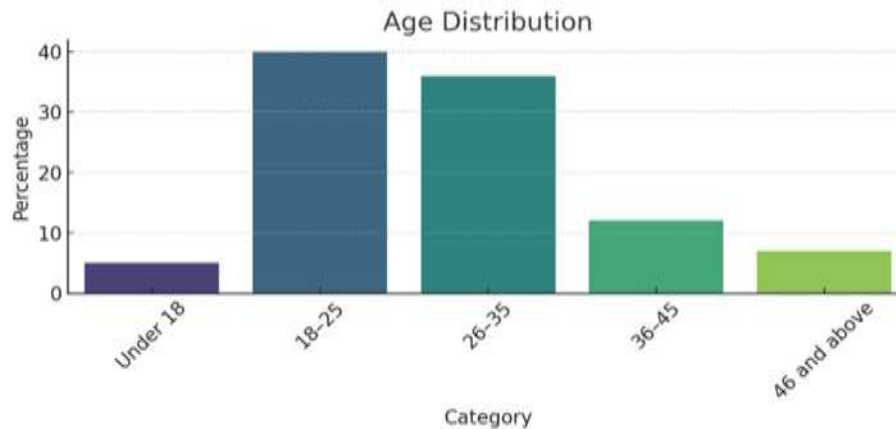
- **Reliability:** To ensure consistency, the questionnaire was pre-tested on 15 participants. Revisions were made to improve clarity and relevance of questions.
- **Validity:** Content validity was established through a thorough review of academic literature and expert consultation during questionnaire design, ensuring alignment with the study's conceptual framework.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

This section presents an in-depth analysis of the responses collected through a structured questionnaire filled by 100 respondents in Raipur. The analysis is divided into thematic segments to understand demographic patterns, consumer buying behavior, the impact of branding, and loyalty toward cosmetic brands.

Section A: Demographic Profile of Respondents Age Distribution:

A significant majority (76%) of cosmetic consumers fall between the ages of 18–35, with 40% in the 18–25 range and 36% in the 26–35 range. This highlights a young, brand-conscious consumer base. Only 5% were below 18, and 19% were over 35, suggesting a clear generational trend in cosmetic usage.



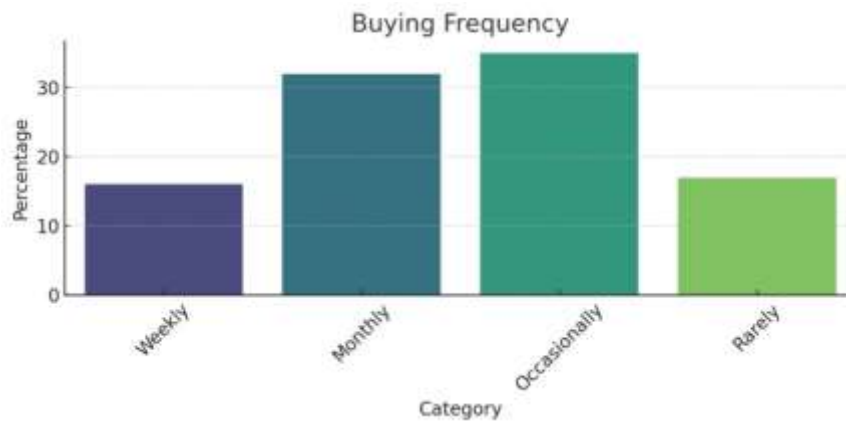
Gender Distribution:

Female respondents dominated the survey (65%), followed by males (32%) and a small percentage (3%) identifying as other. This reinforces the traditional female-centric market in cosmetics, although male and gender-diverse consumers also form a growing niche.



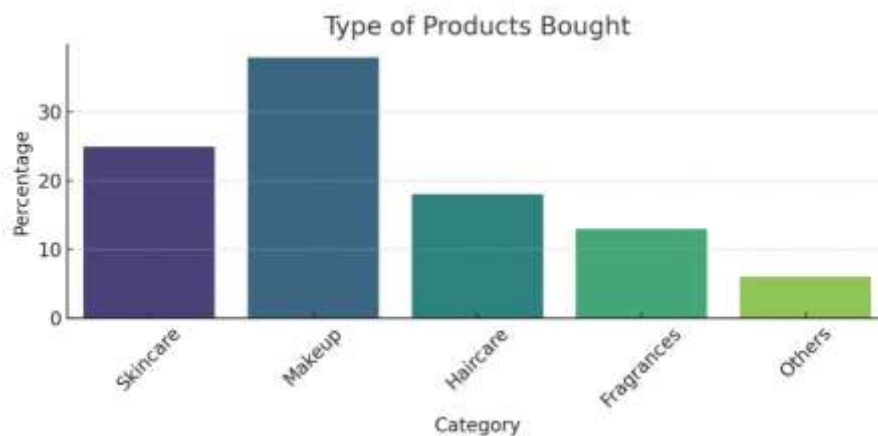
Section B: Buying Behaviour Analysis Frequency of Purchase:

Monthly purchases were most common (32%), followed by occasional buyers (35%). Weekly buyers formed 16%, indicating regular but not necessarily impulsive buying habits.



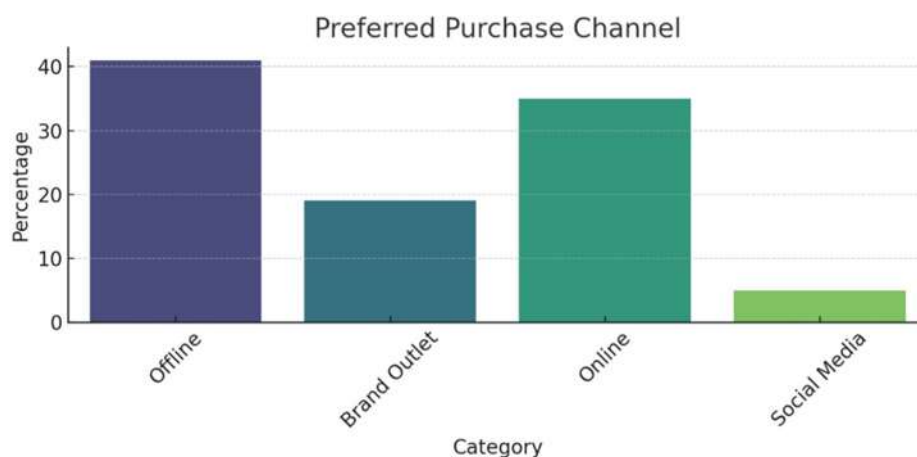
Product Preferences:

Makeup products were most favored (38%), followed by skincare (25%), haircare (18%), and fragrances (13%). This indicates a primary interest in aesthetic enhancement alongside basic selfcare.



Shopping Channels:

Offline retail stores remain dominant (41%) but are closely followed by online platforms (35%). Brand outlets (19%) and purchases influenced by social media (5%) reflect a blended buying experience, with digital influence still emerging.



Section C: Branding Influence

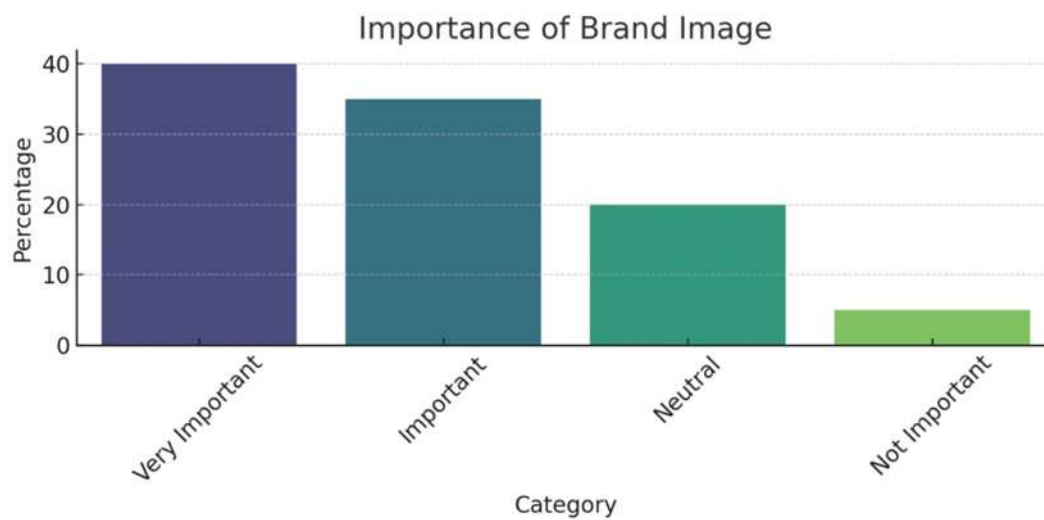
Impact of Brand Name:

A substantial 45% affirmed that brand names influence their purchase decisions, and 40% said it sometimes affects them. Only 15% denied any influence, proving that branding plays a major role in product selection.



Importance of Brand Image:

75% of respondents consider brand image either "Very Important" (40%) or "Important" (35%) when choosing cosmetic products. This shows that intangible brand attributes significantly sway consumer choices.



Attractive Branding Elements:

Respondents were especially drawn to **logo and packaging**, **brand values** (like cruelty-free or organic), and **advertisements**. Celebrity endorsements ranked lower, indicating a shift towards ethical and visually impactful branding.

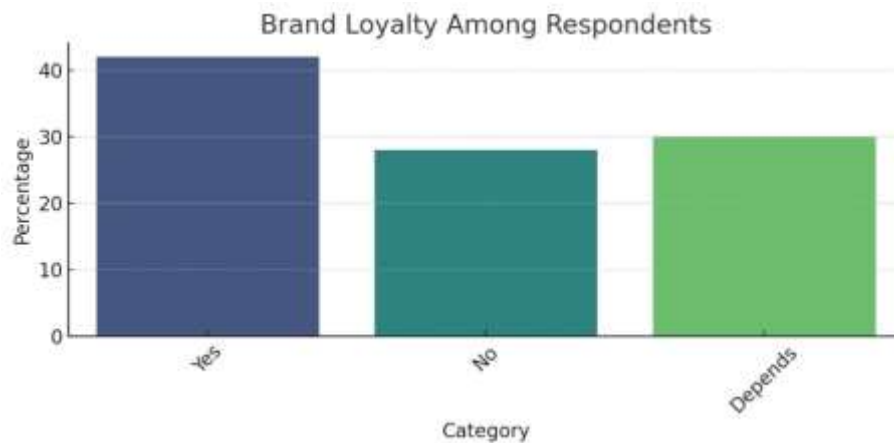
Willingness to Try Branded Products:

Many respondents are open to trying new products from reputed brands, showcasing how strong brand equity can lower the resistance to product experimentation.

Section D: Brand Loyalty and Perception

Brand Loyalty:

42% of consumers consistently use a specific brand, while 30% reported loyalty depending on context. Only 28% regularly switch brands, revealing a fairly loyal customer base.

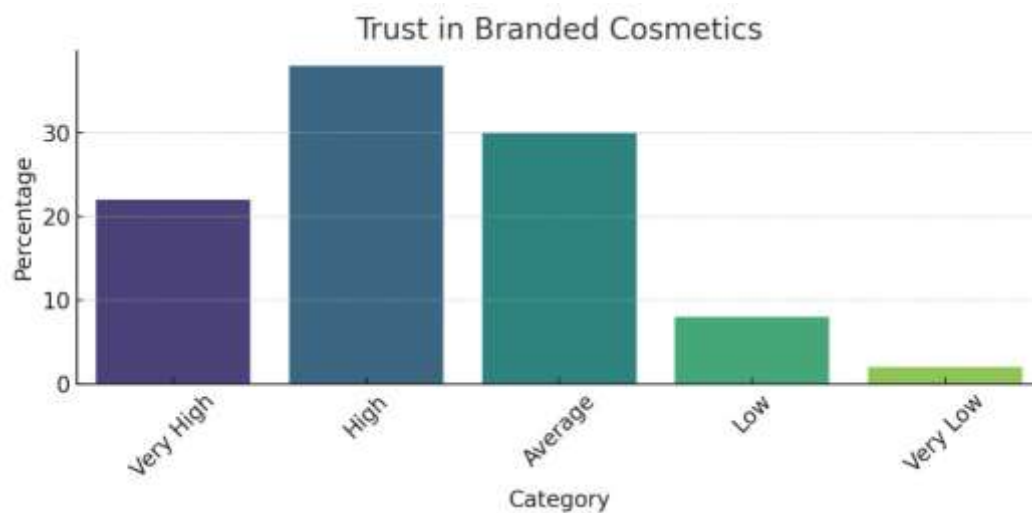


Factors Contributing to Loyalty:

Key drivers of loyalty included **product quality**, **consistent results**, and **ethical values** like sustainability. Price was also a factor but secondary to performance and ethics.

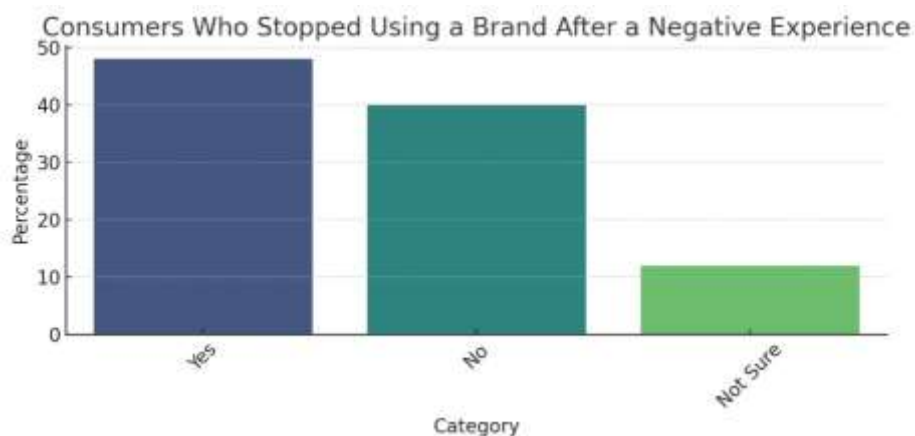
Trust in Branded Products:

The trust in branded cosmetics is notably high, with 22% rating it "Very High" and 38% "High." Only 10% had a low level of trust, validating the credibility established by leading cosmetic brands



Negative Brand Experiences:

Nearly half (48%) had discontinued a brand due to negative experiences, underlining the importance of consistent quality and responsive customer service in retaining customers.



5. Findings

- **Availability and Visibility Impact Brand Recognition**

The easier it is for consumers to find a brand in stores or online, the higher the likelihood they will recognize and purchase it.

- **Higher Profitability Correlates with Strong Consumer Preference**

Brands that consistently lead in consumer preference tend to see increased profitability due to loyal customer bases and repeated purchases.

- **Psychological Factors Shape Cosmetic Buying Decisions**

Emotional connections, such as a brand's ability to make consumers feel confident, heavily influence their purchasing behaviour.

- **Sociocultural Influences Drive Preference for Local Brands**

Consumers are often drawn to local cosmetic brands due to cultural relevance and community alignment, increasing their purchase likelihood.

- **Brand Visibility Boosts Consumer Trust and Loyalty**

Increased exposure through advertisements or social media makes consumers more likely to trust and remain loyal to a brand.

6. Recommendations & Strategies

➤ Enhance Digital Presence and E-Commerce Integration

- Since 43% of respondents purchase cosmetics online, brands must invest heavily in digital marketing, SEO-optimized product listings, influencer collaborations, and engaging social media content.
- Utilize Instagram Reels, YouTube shorts, and TikTok-style content to showcase tutorials, behind-the-scenes product creation, and brand stories that emotionally resonate with Gen Z and millennials.

➤ Value-Driven Branding

- Consumers increasingly prefer brands with ethical stances—55% are drawn to cruelty-free and organic products.
- Introduce or emphasize eco-friendly initiatives, such as biodegradable packaging, vegan formulations, and zero-waste policies.
- Partner with local NGOs or women empowerment groups to strengthen brand purpose and corporate social responsibility.

➤ Improve In-Store Experience and Visual Merchandising

- For 33% who still shop in physical outlets, brands should:
 - Optimize shelf placement and lighting.
 - Offer sample trials, testers, and mini kits.
 - Use interactive kiosks with virtual try-on tools to enhance engagement.

➤ Strengthen Brand Loyalty Programs

- With 59% of consumers loyal to one brand, this loyalty can be amplified through:
 - Rewards points on repeat purchases.
 - Personalized product suggestions based on buying history.
 - Birthday or festival-based offers to build emotional rapport.

➤ Focus on Consistent Product Quality

- Since 66% of loyalty is driven by consistent product quality, continuous R&D investment and quality control are essential.
- Launch periodic consumer feedback surveys to track satisfaction and adjust product lines accordingly.

➤ Targeted Advertising Based on Demographics

- Use insights like:
 - Age: Majority are 18–35 years old.
 - Occupation: High percentage of students and employed consumers.
 - Income: Over 52% earn ₹25,000+ monthly.

- Create tiered product lines for different income segments (e.g., premium, mid-range, affordable).
- Tailor advertising messages to lifestyle aspirations, especially for students and working professionals.

➤ Address Negative Brand Experiences Proactively

- With 38% having stopped using a brand due to a bad experience, proactive customer service is vital:
 - Offer 24/7 customer support on social platforms.
 - Implement a 'return and refund without question' policy for first-time buyers.
 - Resolve complaints publicly with empathy to restore trust.

7. Conclusion

The study comprehensively explored how branding influences consumer buying behavior in the fast-evolving cosmetics market of Raipur, a growing urban hub in central India. As the cosmetic industry experiences rapid transformation—driven by increased consumer awareness, exposure to global beauty trends, and the digitization of retail—branding has emerged as a critical factor in shaping purchasing decisions.

Through primary data collected from 100 diverse respondents and supported by relevant secondary sources, the research identified that branding elements such as **brand image, perceived quality, packaging, and ethical positioning** significantly influence customer perceptions and loyalty. A notable portion of consumers in Raipur associate branded cosmetics with trust, identity, and aspirational value, rather than just functionality or price.

Key findings revealed that **social media exposure, product quality, and brand reputation** are dominant forces behind repeat purchases and positive brand perception. The data also emphasized the growing preference for **online platforms** as primary buying channels and the influence of **values-based branding** (e.g., cruelty-free, eco-conscious) in shaping attitudes, especially among young adults.

Despite the encouraging market potential, several challenges persist—such as limited in-store differentiation, gaps in digital branding strategies, and poor customer retention efforts following negative experiences. Addressing these areas will be crucial for brands seeking sustained growth.

Ultimately, the report concludes that **branding is no longer just a tool for product identification—it is a strategic asset** that can drive emotional engagement, differentiate offerings in a saturated market, and build long-term customer loyalty. Brands that effectively integrate consumer expectations, ethical practices, and experiential marketing are best positioned to thrive in Raipur's dynamic cosmetic landscape.

8. Recommendations

Based on the insights drawn from the data analysis and interpretation of consumer behavior patterns in Raipur's cosmetic market, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance branding strategies and improve consumer engagement:

➤ Enhance In-Store Brand Visibility

Retail environments still play a vital role in consumer purchases. Many respondents shop at offline retail stores or brand outlets. Therefore, cosmetic brands should:

- Invest in attractive point-of-sale displays, shelf signage, and branded counters.
- Provide product testers and demo stations, especially for skincare and makeup categories.
- Train retail staff to communicate brand USPs effectively.

➤ Leverage social media and Influencer Marketing

With a significant portion of the younger demographic influenced by online platforms and trends:

- Collaborate with local influencers to promote products and build trust.
- Develop short, engaging content (e.g., Instagram reels, YouTube shorts) to highlight product benefits and usage.
- Focus on branding campaigns that showcase authenticity, inclusivity, and sustainability.

➤ Focus on Brand Ethics and Values

A considerable number of participants valued ethical elements like cruelty-free products and organic ingredients:

- Highlight brand values prominently in packaging and advertising.
- Certify products with relevant eco or organic labels (e.g., PETA-certified, paraben-free).
- Engage in cause marketing (e.g., supporting women's self-care or sustainability initiatives).

➤ Develop Tiered Product Lines

The survey revealed varied income levels and purchase patterns:

- Offer premium, mid-range, and economy lines under the same brand umbrella to cater to diverse customer segments.
- Use value packs or subscription models for regular buyers.

➤ Build Loyalty Programs

Brand loyalty was shown to be linked with consistent results and quality:

- Create loyalty rewards systems (e.g., points per purchase, early access to sales).
- Use mobile apps or SMS/email marketing to retain engagement.

➤ Educate Consumers

A portion of respondents wanted more information before making purchasing decisions:

- Launch campaigns to educate consumers on ingredients, usage, and benefits.
- Provide interactive content like quizzes, how-to videos, and FAQs on websites or mobile apps.

➤ Improve Packaging Design

Packaging and logo were among the most attractive branding elements:

- Invest in eye-catching, eco-friendly packaging that reflects brand identity.
- Ensure packaging communicates key product attributes clearly.

These recommendations aim to help cosmetic brands operating in Raipur (and similar Tier-2 cities) strengthen their market position by aligning more closely with evolving consumer preferences. Strategic branding, coupled with emotional and ethical engagement, will be critical for sustainable growth in this competitive sector.

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