

## **Female Consumer Buying Behavior toward Cosmetic Products in Pokhara, Nepal**

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### **Abstract**

The pursuit of beauty and self-enhancement has been a central aspect of women's lives across cultures, with cosmetics playing a significant role in shaping consumer behavior. This study aimed to explore the

factors influencing female buying behavior toward cosmetic products in Pokhara, focusing on variables such as brand loyalty, perceived product quality, social media influence, brand reputation, and personal values. Employing a descriptive and causal comparative research design, data were collected from 225 female respondents using structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression techniques were utilized to analyze the data. The findings revealed that social media influence and personal values significantly impacted buying behavior, while brand loyalty, perceived product quality, and brand reputation showed positive correlations but lacked statistical significance. The study concludes that businesses can enhance female buying behavior by leveraging social media platforms and aligning marketing strategies with consumers' personal values. Further research could delve into cultural and trend-based factors to provide deeper insights into the dynamics of female consumer behavior in the cosmetics industry.

**Keywords:** *Consumer buying behavior, female, cosmetic products, personal value, Pokhara, social media influence*

## Introduction

Beauty has consistently been a central focus for women throughout history and across cultures. The quest for enhancing one's appearance has remained a timeless pursuit, with cosmetics playing a vital role in this endeavor. Makeup, much like clothing and accessories, is regarded as an essential means for women to express their desire to achieve and enhance their attractiveness. Women use makeup believing it will enhance their physical attractiveness and transform their appearance, thereby boosting their self-confidence (McCabe et al., 2020). Also, the cosmetics and beauty products market has seen significant growth as consumers become more conscious of their appearance, grooming, and personal care product choices.

The global cosmetic industry has experienced substantial growth over the past decade, driven by heightened consumer awareness, evolving beauty ideals, and changing lifestyles (Sviderska et al., 2023). Female consumers represent a critical demographic within this industry, significantly shaping market trends through their preferences and purchasing patterns.

Marketers have long been fascinated by consumer behavior, as it provides valuable insights into the complex factors influencing purchasing decisions. Among female consumers, this behavior becomes even more interesting, shaped by a shared desire to enhance beauty and confidence. Cosmetics emerge as powerful tools in this pursuit, enabling women to express themselves while elevating their natural appearance (McCabe et al., 2020). This dynamic interplay of cultural, social, personal, and psychological influences (Makwana & Prammar, 2019) defines consumer choices, guided by factors like cultural norms, individual attitudes, past experiences, and perceptions. By unraveling these complexities, marketers can craft strategies that resonate deeply with consumers, fostering brand loyalty and driving impactful engagement. In industries like cosmetics, where emotional and psychological connections are profound, understanding consumer motivations becomes a cornerstone for meaningful and successful market strategies (Mahalakshmi et al., 2023).

Pokhara, a vibrant urban hub known for its blend of cultural heritage and modern aspirations, provides a unique context to study the buying behavior of female consumers in the cosmetics market. The growing middle-class population, increased exposure to international beauty standards, and greater accessibility to cosmetic products (Kuipers, 2022) ranging from locally produced goods to globally renowned brands are reshaping consumer dynamics in the region. These changes have positioned cosmetics as an essential aspect of personal grooming and self-expression for many women.

Understanding female consumers' purchasing decisions requires an exploration of multi-dimensional factors, including cultural norms, social influences, brand perceptions, and personal preferences. Existing research underscores the significance of product quality, pricing, branding, and promotional strategies as key determinants of buying behavior (Latief & Murti, 2023; Zaman & Kusi-Sarpong, 2024). Additionally, intrinsic factors such as self-image, confidence, and social conformity further influence these decisions, underscoring the interplay of psychological and societal dimensions (Fu et al., 2020).

This study delves into various factors such as perceived product quality, brand reputation, social media influence, and personal values that influence female consumers' purchasing decisions. By examining these factors in depth, this paper seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing female consumer behavior toward cosmetic products in Pokhara, offering insights into their preferences, motivations, and decision-making processes.

## **Literature Review and Hypothesis Formulation**

Various factors affect consumer buying behavior toward cosmetic products. Brand loyalty, defined as a consumer's consistent preference for a specific brand due to trust, satisfaction, or emotional connection, plays a vital role in shaping purchasing behavior. According to Voorhees et al. (2015), brand loyalty is a cornerstone of brand equity, driving repeated purchases. Similarly, Javed et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of emotional and trust-based loyalty in fostering both attitudinal commitment and behavioral consistency, with customer satisfaction serving as a crucial foundation. Similarly, perceived product quality, a consumer's subjective assessment of a product's attributes, performance, and overall value, plays a pivotal role in influencing purchase decisions.

Parasuraman et al. (1988) defines perceived quality as the consumer's judgment about a product's excellence, highlighting its critical role in shaping preferences and satisfaction. High-quality perceptions not only elevate a brand's image but also increase the likelihood of purchase (Yoon et al., 2014). Supporting this view, Anggita and Ali (2017) found that consumers often prioritize quality over price, associating high-quality products with superior performance. This underscores the vital connection between quality perceptions and consumer decisions while purchasing the products.'

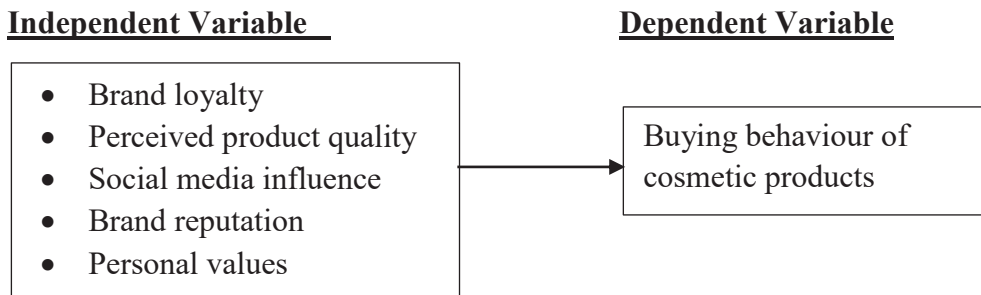
Likewise, Social media platforms have revolutionized consumer behavior, reshaping preferences, perceptions, and purchasing decisions through dynamic content sharing, reviews, and influencer marketing. Orfanidou (2024) emphasize the interactive nature of social media, allowing consumers to make well-informed choices based on user-generated content and peer recommendations. Weismueller et al. (2020) found that influencer endorsements are more trusted than traditional advertising, shaping consumer attitudes and driving purchase decisions. Together,

these insights underscore the powerful role of social media in connecting brands with consumers and shaping contemporary buying behavior. Brand reputation, reflecting a brand's credibility, trustworthiness, and value as perceived by consumers and society, plays a crucial role in shaping purchasing behavior. Sweeney and Swait (2008) found that strong brand reputations effectively reduce consumer uncertainty and make purchase decisions more confident and streamlined. Palmeira (2014) highlight that reputation significantly influences consumer preference for high-end products.

Personal values, encompassing beliefs, ethics, and preferences, play a fundamental role in shaping consumer decision-making, aligning purchasing behavior with individual identities and priorities. Leutner (2016) highlighted that values like health, sustainability, and self-expression drive consumers to select products that harmonize with their lifestyles. In the cosmetics sector, Varshini (2024) observed that environmentally-conscious consumers prioritize personal values such as sustainability and cruelty-free practices, significantly influencing their choice of beauty products. This highlights the profound impact of personal values in guiding consumer preferences.

The various literature shows that brand loyalty, perceived product quality, brand reputation, social media influence, and personal values are the major factor influencing female consumers' purchasing decisions on cosmetic products. Thus, the following conceptual framework has been developed for this study.

Figure 1  
*Conceptual Framework*



## Research Methodology

The study examined female consumer buying behavior towards cosmetic products in Pokhara, Nepal, using a descriptive and causal comparative research design. A sample size of 225 respondents were selected using purposive sampling method, focusing on female individuals who purchase and use makeup products. Data was collected through structured questionnaires divided into two sections: demographic information and variables influencing buying behavior. The questionnaire included five-point Likert scale statements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) focusing on independent variables such as brand loyalty, reputation, product quality, personal values, and social media influence and dependent variable i.e. buying behavior. Data analysis was conducted using tools such as mean analysis, correlation, and regression analysis to explore relationships between variables.

## Results and Discussion

### Demographic Profile of Respondents

This first section covers the frequency distribution of age groups, income, and education level of the respondent employees.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Characteristics*

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Age Group	Below 22	60	26.7
	23-29	110	48.9
	30-39	39	17.3
	40-49	16	7.1
	No income	132	58.7
Monthly Income (Rs)	Below 15000	17	7.6
	15000-25000	27	12
	25000-50000	40	17.8
	Above 50000	8	3.6
	School/High School	84	37.3
Qualification	Bachelors	115	51.1
	Masters and above	26	11.6

Marital Status	Married	73	32.4
	Unmarried	152	67.6
Occupation	Student	133	59.1
	Employee	17	7.6
	Business	27	12
	Housewife	40	17.8
	Unemployed	8	3.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>225</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 reveals insights into age, income, education, marital status, and occupation of the respondents. A significant portion (48.9%) of respondents belong to the 23-29 age group, while 26.7 percent are below 22. Over half (58.7%) of the respondents reported no income, and 17.8% earn between Rs. 25,000 and Rs. 50,000 monthly. Regarding education, 51.1% hold a bachelor's degree, while 37.3% have completed school or high school. Most respondents (67.6%) are unmarried. Occupation-wise, the majority (59.1%) are students, with smaller proportions engaged as housewives (17.8%), in business (12%), or as employees (7.6%).

### Descriptive Analysis

This section presents a descriptive analysis based on the primary data collected through questionnaires during the research process. The analysis includes the computation of key statistical measures such as mean and standard deviation of perception toward brand loyalty, product quality, social media influence, brand reputation, personal values, and buying behavior.

**Table 2**

*Perception towards Brand Loyalty*

<b>Attributes / questions</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
I intend to maintain an ongoing relationship with the brand.	3.396	0.773
I am likely to recommend the brand to my friends and others.	3.782	0.568
The brand of this product would be my first choice over another.	3.484	0.835
I have a strong intention to purchase the same brand again.	3.680	0.716
I frequently speak positively about the brand to others.	3.782	0.614

Table 2 reveals the respondents' attitudes towards brand loyalty. The distribution of brand loyalty among female consumers of cosmetic products

indicates generally positive attitudes, with means ranging from 3.396 to 3.782 on a scale of 1 to 5, suggesting a favorable inclination towards brand loyalty and recommendation. These statistics indicate generally positive attitudes towards the brand, with respondents expressing moderate to high intentions to maintain relationships, recommend, choose, repurchase, and speak positively about the brand.

**Table 3**

*Perception towards Perceived Product Quality*

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
The cosmetic products I purchased are visually attractive.	3.533	0.762
I am confident in the quality of the cosmetic products I purchased.	3.698	0.73
This cosmetic brand consistently offers very good products.	3.653	0.63
I believe this cosmetic brand represents quality products.	3.796	0.592
The cosmetic products within this brand are of high quality.	3.627	0.696

Table 3 presents the perceptions of product quality among female consumers consistently show positive evaluations across attributes. The mean ratings ranging from 3.533 to 3.796 on a scale of 1 to 5 reflect strong beliefs in visual attractiveness, product confidence, brand consistency, and overall quality. These statistics collectively reflect positive attitudes towards the perceived quality of the cosmetic products, highlighting a consistent perception of attractiveness, confidence, and overall quality associated with the brand and its offerings.

**Table 4**

*Perception towards Social Media Influence*

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
The social media accounts of cosmetic brands in Pokhara are enjoyable for me.	3.204	0.734
I find it easy to gather information about cosmetic products from social media.	3.658	0.804
The information shared on social media about cosmetic products is current and up to date.	3.320	0.815
I enjoy viewing advertisements for cosmetic products on social media platforms.	3.470	0.845
I can find the information I need about cosmetic products easily on the social media accounts of cosmetic brands in Pokhara.	3.400	0.813

Table 4 provides insights into respondents' perceptions of social media influence on cosmetic brands in Pokhara across several dimensions. Social media significantly influences female consumers' perceptions of cosmetic products in Pokhara, with mean ratings ranging from 3.204 to 3.658 on a scale of 1 to 5 across attributes like enjoyment of brand accounts, information gathering ease, and advertisement appeal. These findings collectively illustrate a positive perception of social media's role in delivering enjoyable content and facilitating information access about cosmetic products, though there are nuanced views regarding content timeliness and relevance.

**Table 5**

*Perception towards Brand Reputation*

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
This brand of cosmetic products is trustworthy.	3.707	0.643
This brand of cosmetic products is reputable.	3.649	0.624
This brand of cosmetic products makes honest claims about its sustainable image.	3.493	0.642
This brand of cosmetic products has a long-lasting nature.	3.604	0.713
In the past, today, and in the future, the values behind this brand of cosmetic products will not change.	3.236	0.852

Table 5 provides an insight into respondents' perceptions of brand reputation regarding cosmetic products across several dimensions. Perceptions of brand reputation among female consumers of cosmetic products reveal positive evaluations, with mean ratings ranging from 3.236 to 3.707 on a scale of 1 to 5 across attributes assessing trustworthiness, reputation, honesty in sustainable claims, longevity, and consistency of brand values. These findings collectively depict a positive overall perception of brand reputation for cosmetic products, though with varied levels of confidence in sustainability claims and consistency of brand values over time.

**Table 6***Perception Towards Personal Values*

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
I buy cosmetics that reflect my personal values and beliefs.	3.671	0.700
I prefer cosmetic products that are known to be healthy for my skin.	4.120	0.681
I buy cosmetic products to enhance my self-confidence.	3.716	0.834
I buy cosmetics to keep up with the latest trends.	2.724	1.00
Celebrity endorsements impact my choice of cosmetic products.	2.660	0.964

Table 6 provides a comprehensive view of how respondents' personal values influence their choices of cosmetic products across several dimensions. It shows that respondents generally prioritize cosmetics that align with their personal values and beliefs, as indicated. Consumer preferences/ personal values among female consumers of cosmetic products show a strong inclination towards purchasing products that reflect personal values and beliefs (mean = 3.671), prioritizing skincare healthiness (mean = 4.12), and enhancing self-confidence (mean = 3.716), with varying influence from trend-following (mean = 2.724,) and celebrity endorsements (mean = 2.66). These findings collectively illustrate that while personal values and skin health considerations strongly guide consumer choices in cosmetics.

**Table 7***Perception towards Buying Behavior*

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
I look for reviews or ratings online before deciding to purchase a cosmetic product.	3.747	0.937
The price of cosmetic products affects my purchase decision.	3.524	0.856
I am likely to buy cosmetic products that offer promotions or discounts.	3.262	0.949
After evaluation, I decide to buy the cosmetic product.	3.890	0.562
I recommend the cosmetic products I've purchased to others.	3.800	0.61

Table 7 provides insights into respondents' buying behavior related to cosmetic products across several attributes. Buying behavior among female consumers of cosmetic products demonstrates a tendency to consider online reviews (mean = 3.747), price sensitivity (mean = 3.524), promotion influence (mean = 3.262), decision-making after evaluation (mean = 3.89), and likelihood of recommending

purchased products (mean = 3.80). These findings collectively reflect consumers as informed, price-conscious, and deliberate in their decisions, with a strong tendency to share their experiences.

### Correlation Analysis

The correlation shows how two variables move together and shows the degree of association between them. Table 8 shows the result of correlation analysis among the independent variables and dependent variable.

**Table 8**

*Correlation between Dependent and Independent Variable*

	BL	PPQ	SMI	BR	PV	BB
BL	1					
PPQ	.400**	1				
SMI	.233**	.204**	1			
BR	.363**	.449**	.465**	1		
PV	.276**	.332**	.326**	.518**	1	
BB	.195**	.115	.342**	.228**	.331**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(BL = Brand Loyalty, PPQ = Perceived Product Quality, SMI = Social Media Influence, BR = Brand Reputation, PV = Personal Value, BB = Buying Behavior)

The correlation Table 8 provides a clear picture of how various factors interrelate within the study. Buying Behavior correlates positively with Brand Loyalty ( $r = 0.195$ ), perceived product quality ( $r = 0.115$ ), social media influence ( $r = 0.342$ ), brand reputation ( $r = 0.228$ ), and personal value ( $r = 0.331$ ). This suggests that a favorable perception of a brand's loyalty, product quality, social media influence, brand's reputation, and personal value encourage cosmetic products purchases.

### Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a major statistical tool for causal comparative research design because it helps identify significant independent variables that affect dependent variables within a research framework. This study conducted multiple linear regression on buying behavior as the dependent variables in connection to the independent variables like brand loyalty, perceived product

quality, social media influence, brand reputation, and personal value. The following results are obtained after the regression test.

**Table 9**  
*Regression Coefficients*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.199	0.274		8.034	<.001
Brand Loyalty	0.090	0.067	0.096	1.392	0.165
Perceived Product Quality	-0.037	0.063	-0.043	-0.593	0.554
Social Media Influence	0.195	0.051	0.265	3.801	<0.001
Brand Reputation	-0.033	0.063	-0.043	-0.521	0.603
Personal Value	0.216	0.062	0.254	3.484	<0.001

*R-square = 0.179*

Table 9 presents the regression coefficients which shows the relationship between the dependent variable (buying behavior) and five independent variables: Brand Loyalty, Perceived Product Quality, Social Media Influence, Brand Reputation, and Personal Value. Among the variables, Social Media Influence ( $B = 0.195$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and Personal Value ( $B = 0.216$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) have positive and statistically significant coefficients, indicating that increases in these factors are associated with increases in the buying behavior of cosmetic products among females. Brand Loyalty ( $B = 0.090$ ,  $p = 0.165$ ), Perceived Product Quality ( $B = -0.037$ ,  $p = 0.554$ ), and Brand Reputation ( $B = -0.033$ ,  $p = 0.603$ ) are not statistically significant, suggesting they do not have a meaningful impact. Similarly, the R Square value is 0.179, which means that approximately 17.9% of the variability in buying behavior is explained by these independent variables.

## Conclusion

The primary aim of this research was to explore female buying behavior towards cosmetic products in Pokhara, Nepal. Analysis of consumer behavior revealed strong brand loyalty and positive perceptions of product quality, brand reputation, and customer satisfaction among respondents. Social media emerged as a significant influencer in their purchasing decisions, alongside considerations of personal values. These insights underscore the multifaceted nature of consumer decision-making in the cosmetic industry.

In conclusion, understanding the complexities of female consumer behavior in Pokhara's cosmetic market is crucial for businesses aiming to effectively engage this demographic. Tailored marketing approaches that leverage social media and align with personal values can enhance the female consumer buying behavior toward cosmetic products in Pokhara. Further research could explore evolving consumer trends and the impact of cultural factors on buying decisions to refine marketing strategies and meet consumer expectations more effectively.

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