

Demographic Determinants of Consumer Behaviour: An Empirical Study in Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract

The recent development in the cosmetics industry has been spectacular because of the demand for skincare and haircare products, changing lifestyles, and increasing awareness of grooming oneself. Consumer behaviour has become a vital issue to researchers and other marketers in this kill-or-be-killed marketplace, to determine factors that influence consumer decisions. The demographic aspects that affect the attitudes of Himachal Pradesh consumers towards cosmetics are analysed in this research. The research paper is based on the correlation between the usage of cosmetic products and demographic factors, such as age, gender, marital status, profession, dwelling place, suburbs, qualification, and monthly salary.

The main source of data utilised in the study comprised 450 respondents who were allocated a structured questionnaire in three districts of Himachal Pradesh: Kangra, Mandi and Shimla. The data, collected from places were analysed through the help of the SPSS software with the use of the descriptive statistical tools, such as frequency distribution and percentage analysis. The survey will provide a full demographic profile of the cosmetic customers in the area of the study.

The findings indicate that youths and more so those within the age group of 18-25 years constitute the largest proportion of the customers of cosmetic products and women form the largest proportion of cosmetic users. Most of the responders as per the findings, are rural-based and hold graduate or doctoral degrees. Moreover, a large proportion of consumers falls under the low- and middle-income groups, meaning that consumers with average purchasing power are the frequent consumers of cosmetics.

The research provides useful data about the demographics of the customers of cosmetics in Himachal Pradesh that may assist the marketers in designing more effective products and marketing strategies to several categories of consumers.

Keywords: Consumer Behaviour, Cosmetic Products, Demographic Factors, Cosmetic Consumers, Himachal Pradesh.

1. Introduction

The high demand and popularity of beauty and skincare products, changes in lifestyle, and awareness of personal grooming have all led to the tremendous rise enjoyed by the cosmetics industry worldwide. Cosmetic products include skincare, haircare, fragrances, and other personal care products that are used to preserve personal hygiene as well as enhance physical attractiveness. In the last few years, the cosmetics demand has been increasing at a great rate with the increased concern of customers about the way they look and their overall well-being. This increased interest has encouraged firms to introduce several cosmetic products to meet the different needs and preferences of consumers (Amberg & Fogarassy, 2019). Consumer behaviour is essential in understanding the way people make decisions and their purchasing tendencies. Consumer behaviour is defined as a generic concept in the marketing literature as: 'the study of processes through which individuals consider, purchase, consume, and evaluate goods and services to satisfy their needs and wants' (Schiffman and

Wisnblit, 2015). Customer behaviour is particularly significant in the cosmetics sector, as clients can be offered a range of competing brands, which, in most cases, may offer similar functional benefits. To be able to develop effective marketing strategies, marketers need to assess various issues that influence the choices of a consumer tastes and his/her purchasing preferences. Previous studies have come up with various issues that influence customer behaviour in the cosmetics business. Cosmetic purchasing behaviour has often been determined by product quality, price, packaging, brand image and advertising. Of these, brand-related factors such as brand image and brand trust have been found to significantly influence the attitude and loyalty of the customers to the cosmetics (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Overall, customers tend to select cosmetic firms that they consider reliable, safe and effective in satisfying their personal hygiene needs.

Demographic characteristics are also one of the factors that can greatly affect consumer behaviour, besides product and brand-related factors. Consumer awareness, tastes and purchase behaviours are shaped by

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demographic factors such as gender, residential places or areas, community, educational background, age, and economic status. Previous studies indicate that demographic characteristics may affect the attitudes of customers towards cosmetic products and their desire to purchase them (Kim and Chung, 2011). As an example, older consumers may be more preoccupied with the safety and reliability of the product, but younger consumers often pay much attention to beauty trends and experimenting on cosmetics.

Gender is also another important factor that influences the utilization of cosmetics. Back in the days women were the primary customers of cosmetics. Nevertheless, with changing social trends and heightened sensitivity to the way they look and feel, men have started using grooming and personal care products in large number too in the recent years. Women continue to dominate the cosmetics market despite the trend particularly in the skincare and haircare retail (Amberg and Fogarassy, 2019).

The income and the level of learning of the consumers also affect the buying habits of the consumers concerning cosmetics. The consumers with high income levels will be more willing to purchase high-end cosmetic brands as they are normally in a position to purchase. (Hsu Chang, and Yansritakul ,2017) state that the higher the education level, the better individuals are aware of the ingredients, quality, and safety of the product, which can impact its purchase. Consequently, demographic factors have a greater impact on the demand of cosmetics.

Digital marketing and social media have become important contributors to cosmetic purchase in recent years. The use of online influencers and social networking platforms has turned out to be a useful tool in changing the opinions and intentions of consumers to purchase cosmetics. It has been found that the purchasing behavior of young consumers can be highly affected by social media influencers and online celebrities particularly in the beauty and cosmetics sector (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017).

Although much research has been conducted on the consumer behavior that concerns cosmetics, much of this research has mostly been focused on the developed economies and large metropolitan markets, the customer behavior in smaller regional markets has been under relatively limited research particularly in developing countries where cultural and demographic factors may play a significant role in shaping customer preferences. The Indian environment might provide various shapes of cosmetic consumption because of the regional disparities of lifestyle, income, education, and access to products.

Himachal Pradesh is a regional market that is unique due to the broad spectrum of demographic characteristics and varying levels of urban and rural development. The customers within this region can differ with respect to age distribution, level of education, income levels and location among other factors that may influence their usage of cosmetics. Not many academic research works have examined the

influence of demographic factors on consumer behavior regarding cosmetic products in the Himachal Pradesh, although, there is an increased availability of cosmetic products in the region.

The aim of the present paper, therefore, is to study the demographic factors that tend to ascertain the attitude and behaviour of consumers' purchasing preferences in Himachal Pradesh regarding cosmetics. The research examines the correlation between consumer behaviour, brand awareness, and brand preference and demographic variables like gender, age, marital status, occupation, education level, income, and place of residence. It concentrates on haircare and skincare products. By examining these demographic factors, the study will enhance the level of knowledge regarding the actual trends in cosmetic consumption in the region and contribute to the literature on consumer behaviour.

2. Review of Literature

According to the study about cosmetic consumption, consumer behaviour is influenced by products related to the brand, psychological, sociological, demographical factors. Past studies have shown that individuals purchase cosmetics not only due to useful purposes but are also highly associated with social influence, trust, lifestyle, attractiveness and self-image. Recent academic emphasis on skincare and haircare products has highlighted the importance of variables such as perceived quality, product safety, natural ingredients, brand recognition, and the role of the internet. The past studies have established that consumer response to cosmetics varies across markets, ages and product lines. Therefore, it is essential to examine the way individuals buy cosmetics in some geographical locations, such as Himachal Pradesh.

2.1 Factors that affect Consumer Behaviour on Cosmetic Products.

Some of the studies have indicated that product quality is one of the main determinants that affect consumer decision-making when purchasing cosmetic products. Consumers normally prefer products that they feel are safe, effective and appropriate to their skin or hair requirements. Perceived quality and trust are effective influences on the purchase intention and repeat purchasing behaviour as indicated by research on organic products and personal care products. Equally to this, brand trust, perceived benefits and system trust have been found to affect consumer intentions in personal care markets, particularly when consumers had been exposed to ambiguous or misleading product information.

Researchers have also indicated the importance of attitudes, perceived behavioural control, and product knowledge in making cosmetic buying decisions. The perceptions of environmental protection and natural cosmetics, and a perceived behavioural control, were found to have a strong impact on purchase intention and behaviour according to an Indian study on natural cosmetics. The same study revealed that product knowledge enhanced a positive attitude towards natural cosmetics, and this resulted in increased purchase intent.

This indicates that informed customers have high chances of attaining positive purchase intentions.

There is also the preference towards natural materials, environmental issues and health awareness all of which are a great influence on the customer behaviour in the cosmetics industry. The studies of natural and eco-friendly cosmetics demonstrate that more customers are connected with their cosmetic purchases with the notion of environmental responsibility and personal health. These researches however, also reveal that consumers do not select products as environmentally friendly products. Price, efficacy, and product performance remain crucial factors that are considered when purchasing a product. This leads to a buying decision of cosmetics often being a balance between pragmatism and morality.

2.2 Awareness of the Brands among the consumers of Skincare and Haircare products.

The issue of brand awareness is an important concept in the cosmetics industry since consumers usually have the opportunity to purchase various brands that sell similar products. Consumers tend to identify, recall and put into consideration a familiar brand when making a purchase. The studies in the branding literature also reveal that brand awareness affects the following consequences such as perceived quality, repurchase intention and brand loyalty. When customers understand a cosmetic brand and feel that it is reliable and of high quality, chances are high that they will test or remain loyal to this brand.

Brand awareness in the skincare and haircare fields has been elevated even further by the digital channels. Research indicates that online marketing content, influencers, social media, and online reviews have been playing an increasingly significant role in the discovery of cosmetic firms and evaluation by consumers. Web exposure offers consumers of beauty marketplaces the opportunity to compare goods, learn about ingredients, and form preliminary opinions about brands before making a purchase. This phenomenon is particularly relevant to younger customers who tend to be more active in online formats and more susceptible to content that is tied to beauty.

However, brand awareness may not necessarily lead to purchase. Some studies have indicated that for awareness to be effective, consumer trust, positive brand image and quality products are required. In other words, consumers will not purchase a brand despite their knowledge of the brand, unless they perceive that the product is safe and quality. In the case of skincare and haircare products in particular, this is essential since customers can feel more endangered using such products on their bodies directly.

2.3 Skincare and Haircare Products Brand Preference.

Brand preference is the willingness of consumers to choose one product as opposed to competition products. In the cosmetics industry, perceived quality, customer satisfaction, previous experience, trust, and emotion toward the brand, do affect brand choice. According to

previous studies, consumers prefer brands that can continuously produce positive results and promote positive usage experience. It is particularly important in the case of skincare products, where repurchase intention is often inextricably connected with prior contentment and product effectiveness.

Studies also indicate that consumers tend to adopt such brands which concur with their values and self-image. The brand preference in natural or green cosmetics markets is likely to increase once customers feel that a product is environmentally responsible, safe, and healthy. However, in such situations, preference is also determined by not only the values of ethics, but also on the performance of the products and price acceptability. Consequently, the preference of the brand in cosmetic marketplaces is affected by both practical and emotional features.

One more significant observation that can be made based on the literature is that the brand preference grows over time. It will start with awareness of the brand, trial, and favourable appraisal of the product, which can subsequently translate to brand loyalty or repurchases. This indicates that promotion does not actually create preference on a brand; instead, preference builds up when a consumer witnesses, on a continual basis, product quality and reliability. With skincare and haircare products where the consumer is usually worried about potential side effects or what the product would do, the brand preference would be more reliant on consumer satisfaction and trust.

2.4 Demographic Factor Effect on Consumer Behaviour on Cosmetic Products.

It is a well-known fact that demographic variables contribute greatly to the determination of cosmetic usage. Age, gender, education, income, and place of residence can all have an effect on the kinds of goods that customers purchase, the frequency at which they purchase goods and their preference in brands. As previous studies have shown, younger customers tend to be more willing to experiment with other cosmetics, they are more influenced by fashion and social media, and they are more susceptible to the emergence of new companies. Conversely, the senior consumers may be more concerned with product dependability, safety and proven efficacy.

Gender inequalities have also been discussed in the literature. In developing studies, it can be seen that men are increasingly engaging in the skincare and grooming sector in spite of the fact that females continue to comprise most consumers in a number of cosmetic categories. Other studies, however, indicate that the factors that influence the purchase behaviour of natural cosmetics will not vary to a great extent between male and female customers as one might expect. Although a good percentage of the market is still in female hands, this move shows that the cosmetics industry is increasingly becoming inclusive.

Income and education are also important variables since they influence brand assessment, product knowledge and purchasing power. Although the customers with higher income levels may be more

willing to purchase the premium or specialist products of the skincare and haircare category, higher education level consumers may be more interested in the product ingredients, product information, and brand promises. Similarly, the consumers in the cities and villages could possess varying exposure to media, availability of products and awareness of the cosmetic brands. These demographic differences contribute to the importance of market segmentation and justify the need to consider demographic aspects in a specific regional context, such as Himachal Pradesh.

2.5 Research Gap

The literature has some remaining gaps despite the fact that it provides valuable information on the manner in which consumers respond during the consumption of cosmetics. Although there is minimal research that has analysed the use of cosmetics in the smaller regional markets, there are numerous studies that have been conducted previously; however, most of these studies were focused on developed countries or major city markets. Moreover, instead of providing a comprehensive overview of consumer behaviour in diverse demographic segments, many studies have concentrated on a particular subject, e.g., organic cosmetics, green products, or digital marketing effects. Most of the research on cosmetic usage in India has been conducted in the major cities; relatively limited research has been conducted on consumer behaviour in smaller states or even in the rural and semi-urban regions. The regional markets can possess local cultural values, consumption patterns and demographics which influence the consumer behaviour. This meant that findings obtained from the studies done in the large cities could not actually be representative of consumer behaviour elsewhere.

Specifically, little empirical research has been conducted to investigate the impacts of demographics on the attitude of the Himachal Pradesh consumers towards cosmetics. The customers in the state belong to diverse age groups, socioeconomic statuses, educational levels, and dwelling environments (rural and urban). These demographic differences may have a significant influence on brand awareness, brand choice, and purchasing behaviour of skincare and haircare products.

Thus, the present research is going to bridge this gap in research by analysing the demographic variables affecting consumer behaviour towards cosmetic products in Himachal Pradesh. The research aims to contribute to the existing literature body on consumer behaviour in the cosmetics industry as well as provide more insights into the consumption behaviour of cosmetics by focusing on a local market.

2.6. Research Questions

1. What are the key demographic characteristics of Himachal Pradesh consumers who purchase cosmetics?
2. What influence do demographic factors such as gender, age, marital status, occupation, income, education level, and place of residence have on consumer behaviour in relation to cosmetics?

3. What are the key customer segments found in the cosmetics market of Himachal Pradesh?
4. Is it possible to use demographic characteristics to understand the buying behaviour of local consumers of cosmetics?

2.7. Objectives of the Study

The present research aims to focus on the demographics of consumers and to find out how they will impact the attitude of customers toward cosmetics in Himachal Pradesh. The specific objectives of the study are the following:

1. To examine the demographics of the cosmetics customers in the state of Himachal Pradesh.
2. To investigate the distribution of consumers in the demographic variables based on gender, age, marital status, occupation, income, education level, and place of residence.
3. According to the demographic characteristics, identify the customer segments that prevail in the Himachal Pradesh cosmetics market.
4. To determine how the demographic characteristics relate to understanding consumer behaviour in relation to cosmetic products in the study area.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

To examine the demographic factors affecting the consumer behaviour of cosmetic items in Himachal Pradesh, this study uses a quantitative research method. A descriptive research method was applied to investigate the consumer demographics and gain an understanding of the distribution of responses to the different demographic categories used. Descriptive research is appropriate in studies that aim to define and explain the characteristics of a population based on survey data. The descriptive design will help to identify the demographics of the cosmetic customers and understand their allocation among the various groups sharing the same demographics in the scope of the present research.

3.2 Data Collection Method

The main data collected in the research were obtained through a standardised questionnaire. The questionnaire aimed to gather information about the demographics of the users of cosmetic products. Some of the issues that were addressed were gender, age, marital status, occupation, place of living, district of residence, education level, and monthly income. To examine cosmetic consumers' profiles and identify the primary groups of consumers in the research field, these demographic features were incorporated.

3.3 Sample and Participants

The study sample will be a sample of 450 people who purchase cosmetics in Himachal Pradesh. The respondents were selected in three districts in the state: Kangra, Mandi, and Shimla.

Among the selected respondents, the demographic background is very diverse, with differences in gender, age group, marital status, occupation, education level,

income, and place of residence being represented. Such diversity helps to achieve a complete understanding of the demographic characteristics of local cosmetic consumers.

3.4 Demographic Variables of Study.

The overall purpose of the present study is to examine the demographics of people who use cosmetic products in Himachal Pradesh. A significant number of demographic factors were considered in the study in an attempt to understand the cosmetic customer distribution and the profile. Some of these variables include gender, age, marital status, occupation, location of residence, district of residence, educational level and monthly income.

The factors included in these contribute to the establishment of the demographic composition of the respondents and provide data regarding the characteristics of the customers who purchase and use cosmetics within the area of the research. These characteristics also help identify the most significant consumer groups in the cosmetics market of Himachal Pradesh.

The demographic data was analysed with the help of descriptive statistical methods such as frequency distribution and percentage analysis, with the help of SPSS software. The demographic information of the respondents is provided in a way that is easily comprehensible and well structured.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analysed with the help of the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. Descriptive statistics were used to compile and present the demographic features of the respondents.

The distribution of frequencies and analysis of percentages were the following statistical tools used in the analysis.

These statistical tools clearly understand the distribution of cosmetic customers by each demographic category as well as the demographic profile of the respondents. They included gender, age, marital status, occupation, place of living, district of residence, educational level and monthly income, which were demographic parameters that were analysed using the analysis.

4. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.

This section will display the demographic information of the respondents of the study. Some of the demographic characteristics considered in this study are gender, age, marital status, occupation, place of residence, district of residence, level of education, and monthly earnings. These variables can help us understand how the cosmetics consumer market of Himachal Pradesh is distributed and its background. The analysis is based on frequency and percentage distribution.

Table: Tabular Representation of Demographic Characteristics of the Consumers (Gender)

Sr. No.	Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.1	Male	162	36.0
1.2	Female	288	64.0
1.3	Total	450	100.0

Results and Interpretation

The table presents the distribution of the consumers included in the study with respect to gender. Out of the 450 respondents, 162 (36.0) were men and 288 (64.0) were women. As per the table, the sample consisted of female respondents who represented most of the sample and male respondents who only represented a lesser percentage.

This distribution demonstrates that the female consumers were overrepresented in the survey. It means that most respondents of the present study were female customers. Consequently, the conclusions of the study may be more precise indicators of the beliefs, orientations, and behaviours of male consumers than female consumers in particular.

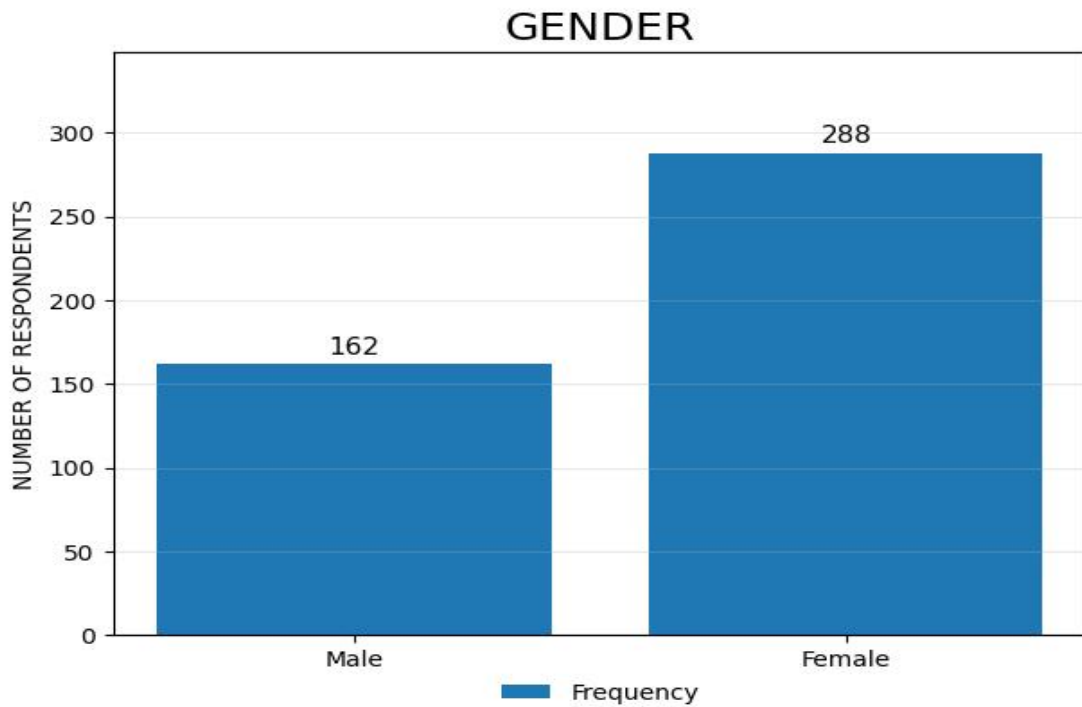


Table: Tabular Representation of Demographic Characteristics of the Consumers (Age)

Sr. No.	Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
2.1	18–25 Years	222	49.3
2.2	25–35 Years	171	38.0
2.3	35–50 Years	42	9.3
2.4	50 and above	15	3.3
2.5	Total	450	100.0

Results and Interpretation

The table presents the age distribution of the participants of the study. Among the total number of 450 respondents, most of the respondents are within the age group of 18-25 years, and there are 222 respondents (49.3%). The second age group, comprising between 25 and 35 years of age, is 171 responders (38.0%). The respondents between 35 and 50 years of age are 42 (9.3 per cent), with only 15 (3.3 per cent) respondents being 50 and above.

Results show that a majority of the respondents are young consumers, especially those falling within the age group of 18- 25 years. This indicates that the young people form a large proportion of the sample in the current study, as compared to relatively fewer respondents who are of the older age groups. Consequently, the conclusions of the study can be valid in the view of the younger consumers and their purchasing behaviour.

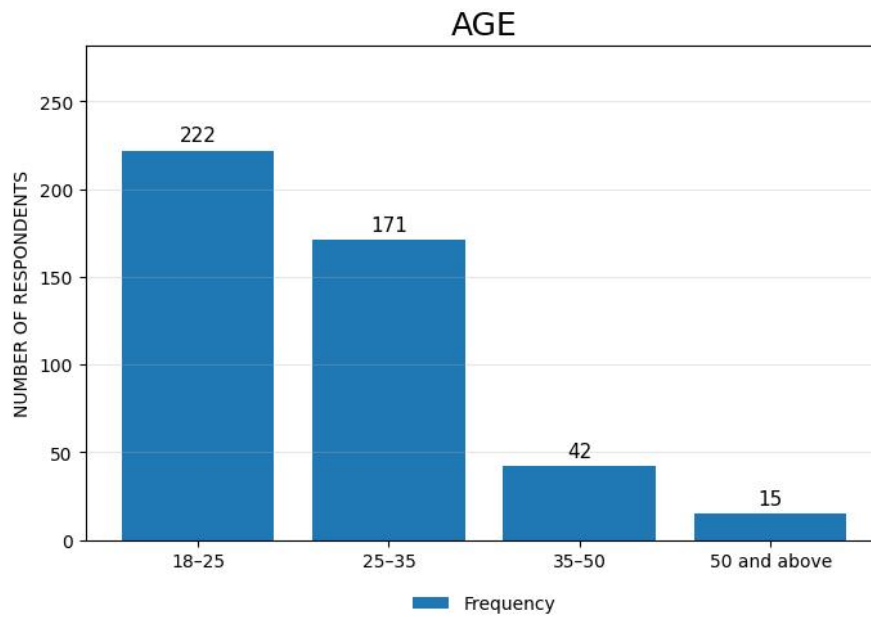


Table: Tabular Representation of Demographic Characteristics of the Consumers (Marital Status)

Sr. No.	Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
3.1	Married	111	24.7
3.2	Unmarried	329	73.1
3.3	Divorce	5	1.1
3.4	Widow	5	1.1
3.5	Total	450	100.0

Results and Interpretation

The customers, according to marital status, are presented in the table. 329 (73.1) out of 450 respondents are single, and they comprise a majority of the respondents. Next come married respondents (24.7 of the total respondents), who constitute 111 respondents. The percentage of divorce and widows is relatively low, as there are 5 respondents (1.1) in each of the groups.

The results indicate that the proportion of married respondents is comparatively smaller than that of single consumers, as the majority of the sample consists of single consumers. The number of respondents widowed or divorced is very low in the survey. Because of this fact, conclusions of the study reflect the views and preferences of the majority of the respondents who are mostly represented by single customers.

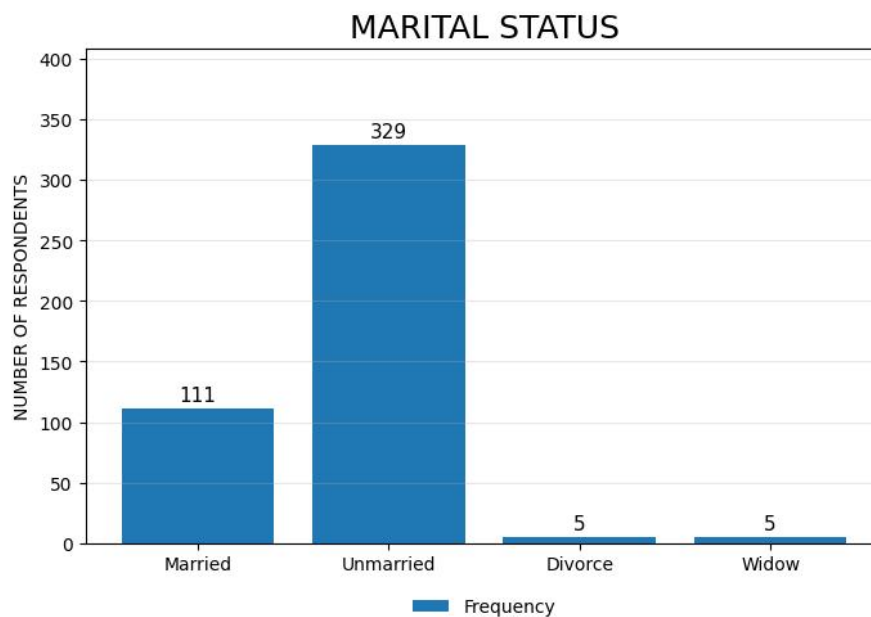


Table: Tabular Representation of Demographic Characteristics of the Consumers (Occupation)

Sr. No.	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
4.1	Govt. Employee	42	9.3
4.2	Private Employee	112	24.9
4.3	Businessman	47	10.4
4.4	Others	247	54.9
4.5	Total	450	100.0

Results and Interpretation

The occupational distribution of the consumers of the study is presented in the table. Out of the 450 respondents, 247 (54.9) are under the other category, and they form the majority. Second are the private employees who constitute 112 respondents (24.9%). Out of the entire sample, 42 (9.3) and 47 respondents (10.4) are government employees and businessmen, respectively.

As the results show, most of the respondents are in the generic category of occupations (Others), and this can include homemakers, students, and other unspecified occupations. A smaller percentage of the respondents are business people and government workers. Most of the respondents in the study belonged to the category of others; hence, this distribution signifies that the study will have participants of diverse occupational backgrounds.

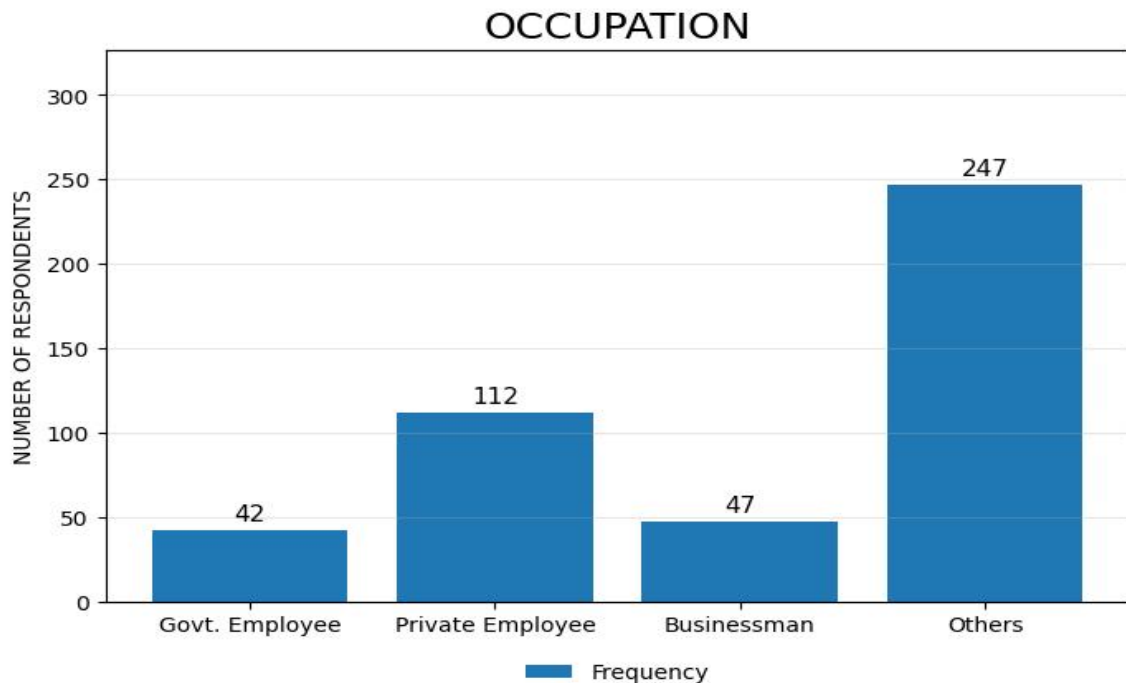


Table: Tabular Representation of Demographic Characteristics of the Consumers (District)

Sr. No.	District	Frequency	Percentage (%)
5.1	Kangra	203	45.1
5.2	Mandi	135	30.0
5.3	Shimla	112	24.9
5.4	Total	450	100.0

Results and Interpretation

The table depicts the distribution of consumers that will be incorporated in the study by district. The greatest portion of the sample is comprised of the Kangra district with 203 respondents (45.1) out of the 450 respondents. Mandi district is second with 135 replies (30.0%). Only 112 (24.9) of all responders are in the Shimla district.

The results indicate that although the Mandi and the Shimla districts are also contributors of a significant proportion of the surveyed population, the Kangra district provides the majority of the respondents. The percentage of responders in the Shimla district is relatively smaller than in the other two districts. Based on this distribution, the customers of the Kangra district constitute the largest sample, and Mandi and Shimla are also included.

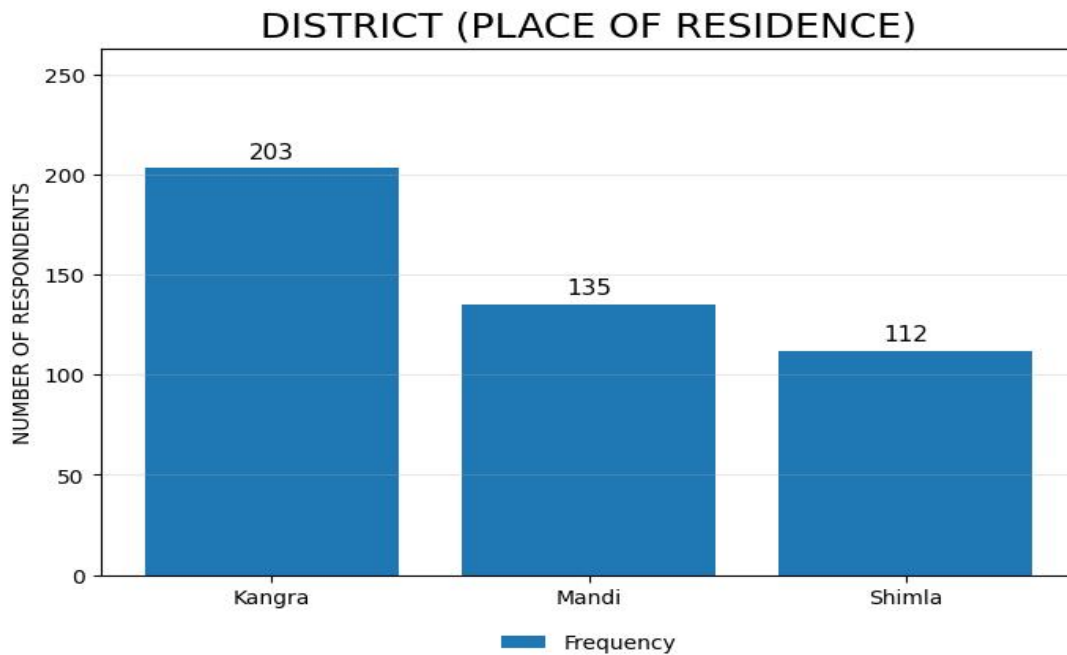


Table: Tabular Representation of Demographic Characteristics of the Consumers (Place of Residence)

Sr. No.	Place of Residence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
6.1	Rural	406	90.2
6.2	Urban	44	9.8
6.3	Total	450	100.0

Results and Interpretation

The table indicates the distribution of the customers according to the place of residence. Out of the 450 responders, 406 (90.2) are rural, and they form the majority. Conversely, 44 (9.8) per cent of the respondents reside in urban areas. The results indicate that while the number of urban customers is a relatively small proportion of the respondents, the greater number of the sample is rural customers. Since the majority of the sample consists of rural customers, this distribution means that the study findings are strongly influenced by their views, tastes, and shopping behaviours.

Table: Tabular Representation of Demographic Characteristics of the Consumers (Educational Level)

Sr. No.	Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
7.1	Under Graduate	31	6.9
7.2	Graduate	125	27.8
7.3	Post Graduate	216	48.0
7.4	Professional	78	17.3
7.5	Total	450	100.0

Results and Interpretation

The table demonstrates the level of education of people who are the consumers of the study. The majority (216/450) of the 450 respondents are postgraduates. Then there are graduates who represent 125 (27.8) respondents. There are thirty-one respondents (6.9) undergraduates and 78 respondents (17.3) with professional degrees. The results indicate that the highest percentage of the respondents is represented by postgraduates, which means that a relatively large part of the consumers of the study possess a relatively high level of education. However, the proportion of undergraduate respondents is less by a big margin. This distribution depicts that the study population is comprised of well-educated consumers, and this would affect their awareness, preferences, and purchase behaviour, as far as their awareness of cosmetic products is concerned.

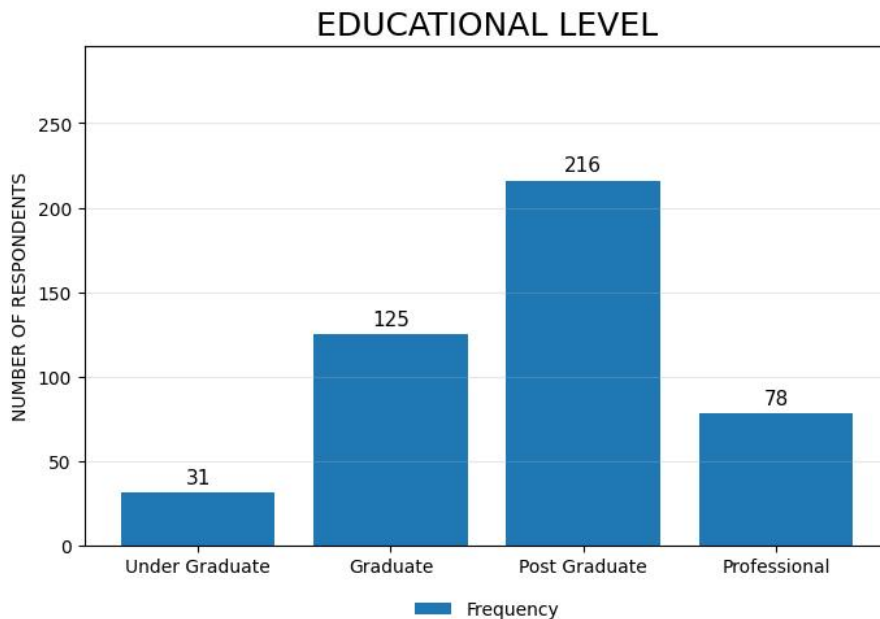


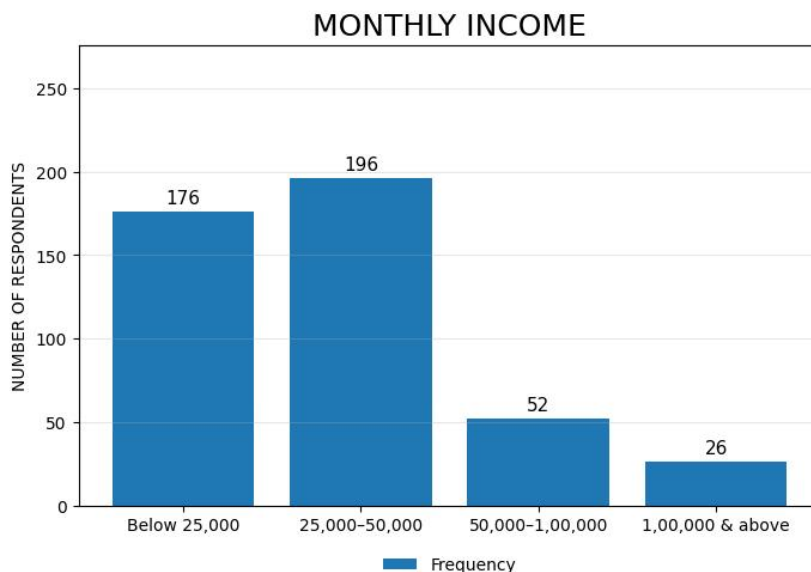
Table: Tabular Representation of Demographic Characteristics of the Consumers (Monthly Income)

Sr. No.	Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage (%)
8.1	Below 25,000	176	39.1
8.2	25,000–50,000	196	43.6
8.3	50,000–1,00,000	52	11.6
8.4	1,00,000 & above	26	5.8
8.5	Total	450	100.0

Results and Interpretation

The table indicates the income of consumers per month. Out of 450 respondents, 196 (43.6) have between 0 and 50,000 as their income per month. 176 (39.1) who earn less than 25,000 per month follow. Only 26 respondents (5.8%) have earnings below 1,00,000 and above 1,00,000, and 52 of the respondents were in the 50,000-1,00,000 category.

The results indicate that most of the respondents are middle-income, and particularly those earning between 25,000 and 50,000 per month. Alternatively, the percentage of the upper-income groups is relatively lower among the respondents. This means that the distribution of the customers will include those with low- and middle-income brackets as the largest part of the participants of the study, which could affect their preferences and purchase decisions when it comes to cosmetics.



5. Discussion

The present research aimed to investigate the demographic characteristics of the customers of cosmetic products in Himachal Pradesh, as well as to analyse how different demographic factors can play a role in the characterisation of the cosmetic consumer profile in the study area. Findings of the descriptive statistical analysis will provide useful information about the demographic composition of the respondents and will be helpful in determining the most important customer segments in the local cosmetics market. These findings indicate that demographics are significant to understand cosmetic consumption patterns and consumer characteristics within the Himachal Pradesh districts which were selected.

5.1 General consumer demographics of cosmetic consumers.

According to the overall demographic analysis, the respondents of the study are mostly young, female, educated and have intermediate incomes and are rural residents. Such findings suggest that the cosmetic use in the research area is not restricted to the urban community but is also very prevalent among customers living in rural settings. The results also indicate that there is a large proportion of younger cosmetic consumers. This result is consistent with other studies indicating that age, gender, income, and education are key demographic factors that determine the behaviour of customers and their purchasing decisions in the cosmetics market (Amberg and Fogarassy, 2019).

5.2 Gender and Consumption of Cosmetics.

The gender study shows that most of the cosmetic consumers in the sample are female respondents. Out of all responders, 64 per cent are women and 36 per cent are men. The majority of consumers of cosmetics, according to this study, are still women. The same findings have been found in previous studies, which indicate that women are more inclined to be interested in personal care and cosmetic products compared to men (Amberg and Fogarassy, 2019). The cosmetics business, particularly the skincare and haircare product lines, has remained a women's domain, although males have been increasingly using grooming and personal care products in recent years.

5.3 Age and Cosmetic Consumption.

Based on the age distribution study, most of the respondents are between the 18- 25 age group with the 25- 35 age group coming in the second position. It means that the youthful customers are the most active group of people who consume cosmetic products. The youth might be more concerned with cosmetics as they are often more affected by fashion-related decisions, exposure on social media, and by beauty trends. In previous research, it was found that consumers in the younger age groups tend to test new brands and products of cosmetics more than the older age groups (Kim and Chung, 2011). Consequently, age appears to be an important demographic variable in influencing the cosmetic consumption pattern.

5.4 Marital status and consumer make-up.

Most of the respondents are single, as the analysis of marital status shows. This finding appears to be directly linked to the age distribution of the sample that indicates that younger respondents represent the biggest group. Single and younger people are often more worried about appearance, grooming and presentation of self, and this may result in increased usage of cosmetics. The results can therefore suggest that demographic factors such as age and marital status can affect consumer behaviour towards cosmetics.

5.5 Occupation and Cosmetic Consumption.

The respondents' occupational distribution has shown that people of various occupational backgrounds are represented in the sample. The largest proportion of responders is in the other category, which includes the largest number of people in business, government, and private sectors. This implies that the application of cosmetics is observed within diverse social and work settings and that cosmetics is not confined to a certain profession. The occupation status might also influence the habits of consumption, lifestyle preferences and purchasing capacity, which can influence the cosmetic purchasing behaviour.

5.6 District and Cosmetic Consumption.

The responses by the district indicate that Kangra district has the maximum percentage of the participants, followed by Mandi and Shimla. This distribution confirms that there are cosmetic consumers in some of the districts of Himachal Pradesh and the geographical area of the study. It is also possible that population size, accessibility of respondents at the time of data collection, and geographical variations of consumption patterns are all causes of variation in the representation of different districts.

5.7 Place of residence and Cosmetic consumption.

Most of the respondents are rural inhabitants, and that is one of the interesting results of the research. The percentage of the respondents in the sample who are rural is more than 90 percent whereas the minority are the urban respondents. This observation implies that the use of cosmetics is not only prevalent in the rural regions, but also among urban market bases. The increase in the consumption of cosmetics by rural consumers could have been due to the availability of cosmetics at the rural market, increased media exposure, and lifestyle changes.

5.8 Education and Cosmetic Consumption.

The education profile of the respondents indicated that a high percentage of consumers were highly educated, as most of them had graduate and postgraduate degrees. Higher education levels can enhance consumer knowledge on cosmetic products, brand information and ingredients contained in the products. Moreover, the educated customers would be more willing to evaluate the quality of products, compare options and make informed purchases. Research carried out by different scholars has also demonstrated that education

plays a key role in consumer awareness and attitude towards personal care goods (Kim and Chung, 2011).

5.9 Income and Cosmetic Consumption.

According to the income distribution of the respondents, the majority of consumers lie under the low- and middle-income brackets. The majority of the respondents earn between 25,000 and 50,000 a month, with those with earnings below 25,000 being number two. This finding suggests that consumers who have an average income often use cosmetic products. It further indicates the possibility that the market in the research area is quite large in terms of the number of people who could afford reasonably priced and mid-range cosmetics. Customers in these income groups may favour products with a moderate price-quality relationship.

In general, the conclusions of the study underline the importance of demographic characteristics to understand the customer profile of the cosmetic products in Himachal Pradesh. These results indicate that the bulk of the cosmetic industry in the region consists of young and female educated consumers with middle-income, and a significant number of whom stay in rural regions. These data could be of interest to marketers and scholars who seek to know about the demographics of cosmetic consumers, and it could also help in understanding the trends of cosmetic use in the region better.

6. Conclusion

To find out the dominant consumer groups in the local cosmetic market, the present study examined the demographics of the customers of cosmetic products in Himachal Pradesh. The major data utilised in the analysis were those of 450 respondents who responded to a standardised questionnaire. The frequency and percentage analysis were used as descriptive statistical methods to determine the distribution of respondents according to the various demographic categories. The study reveals that the largest proportion of cosmetic consumers in the area are young females. The age groups between 18- 25 and 25-35 represent a considerable proportion of the responses. The majority of the sample indicates that women are still the primary purchasers of cosmetics, particularly those of skincare and haircare products.

With a higher percentage of the younger population in the sample, the findings further indicate that most of the respondents are single and are from diverse backgrounds in terms of vocation. The majority in the other category, followed by the businesspeople and the private employees. This distribution demonstrates that cosmetic products are used by customers representing different work groups. It is observed that a large number of rural customers are represented in the sample. The fact that most of the respondents are rural people implies that cosmetic consumption has increased significantly in rural markets besides the urban masses. The availability of cosmetics may have increased, and the growing exposure of the media and

changing lifestyle might have contributed to the rising demand for cosmetics among rural consumers.

Based on the educational profiles of the respondents, a large proportion of customers are graduates and doctorates. Higher education would potentially lead to increased knowledge of cosmetic products, brand information, and product quality. Moreover, the distribution of income indicates that most of the respondents belong to the low- and middle-income group. This means that affordable cosmetics play an important role in the local cosmetics industry. Thus, the study stresses the power of demographic characteristics to understand the customer profile and their preferences in Himachal Pradesh. The drivers of the cosmetics industry in the region appear to be young, female, educated rural consumers with moderate income who make up a higher percentage of consumers in the region. The data can be useful to cosmetic producers and marketers to develop products, prices, supply-chain and marketing approaches that can appeal to the demographics of the local consumers. Further, the study contributes to the existing knowledge by providing real information about the demographics of cosmetic customers within the regional market environment.

7. Implications of the Study

The conclusions made in the present research have many important implications to academic researchers, marketers, and cosmetic corporations. An insight into the demographics of consumers will help these businesses develop more effective marketing plans and products that will be more likely to meet the needs and interests of different consumer groups. The results are also significant contributions to the academic understanding of the trend in the use of cosmetics among the regional marketplaces.

7.1 Implications for Management

The results of the study indicate that most of the sample of individuals who use cosmetics are women. This means that marketing campaigns conducted by cosmetic companies to target women should be maintained. Thus, product development, packaging design, and marketing campaigns, in particular, in the skincare and haircare products domains, should be tailored to the preferences and expectations of female consumers.

The report also indicates that a large proportion of the consumers of cosmetics are younger customers. Younger customers are often more susceptible to social media, online content, and the trends popular in the beauty industry. To attract and retain younger consumers, cosmetics firms ought to support their online marketing efforts with influencer marketing, social media advertising, and online brand engagement. These online platforms can have a huge influence on the purchase decision and recognition of the brand of young customers.

Another important finding of the study is the large proportion of rural customers represented in the sample. This outcome implies that cosmetic firms enjoy

considerable opportunities in the rural areas. Companies ought to ensure that cosmetics are easily accessible in the form of close retail stores and expand their distribution channels in distant places. Small product selections, smaller packaging, and branding products produced in the country can attract the rural customers who have low purchasing power.

In addition, the income distribution of the respondents shows that many customers are in the low and middle-income brackets. This implies that cosmetic firms ought to offer their products at various prices in order to serve customers with varied budgets. The development of value-for-money products can help companies expand their customer base and enhance their positions in the local markets.

7.2 Implications for Academics

The present study will expand the range of information on consumer behaviour in the cosmetic business by providing real figures on consumer behaviour in Himachal Pradesh. This paper is an analysis of cosmetic consumption in a regional setting; thus, it expands our knowledge on consumer behaviour in small and semi-rural markets, as a lot of the literature that has been done so far had primarily focused on urban markets or those economies that are industrialised.

The findings also highlight the importance of demographic variables such as gender, age, wealth, education, and place of residence in a better understanding of trends in cosmetic use. These elements are very critical to defining the demographic composition of cosmetic shoppers and understanding the distribution of consumer groups in the local markets. Future academic research can further develop the conclusions of this investigation by considering other factors which influence the purchasing decision of cosmetics, including brand recognition, product value, the impact of advertisements, social media, and psychological motivation. Such a study would lead to a better comprehension of the customer behaviour in the cosmetics industry.

On the whole, the research is of good use to researchers and practitioners by shedding light on the demographics of cosmetic consumers and the set-up of the Himachal Pradesh cosmetic market.

8. Future Research and Limitations.

There are some limitations that can be identified, although the present research can provide valuable data about the demographics of the cosmetic customers in Himachal Pradesh. To begin with, only three states of the state, Kangra, Mandi, and Shimla, supplied data to the research. It was due to this that the findings were not able to reasonably represent the demographics and consumption patterns of cosmetic consumers across all the districts of Himachal Pradesh or any other section of India. Further wisdom of the cosmetic consumer behaviour could be derived by expanding the geographical scope of the study.

Second, the use of such tools as frequency and percentage analysis as the primary means of descriptive

statistics is employed in the study. These methods are useful to project the demographic distribution of the respondents; however, they do not allow deep analysis of the relationship between demographic factors and consumer buying behaviour. In order to further explore these connections, it can be said that more advanced statistical tools, such as regression analysis, correlation analysis, or structural equation modelling can be applied in the future.

Another disadvantage is that the major concentration of the study is on the demographic characteristics and neglecting other crucial factors that can influence the use of cosmetic products. Other characteristics such as the perception of the brand, quality of the product, the influence of the advertising, the exposure to the social media, and psychological reasons can also have a great impact on the consumer behaviour.

The limitations of these studies can be addressed in future by examining more behavioural and psychological factors and other marketing factors that influence a cosmetic purchase decision and also by increasing the sample size and diversifying it with people in different geographical regions.

9. Recommendations

The findings of the study can be used to make several suggestions to cosmetic producers, marketers, and researchers to better understand and meet the needs of the customers in Himachal Pradesh.

9.1 Pay Attention to Female Customers

The findings of the study indicate that most of the cosmetic customers sampled by the researcher are female respondents. This means the number of women who are consumers in the cosmetics industry is still the highest in the cosmetic industry, particularly in skin and hair care products. Consequently, cosmetic firms ought to develop marketing strategies, advertising initiatives and new products which are responsive to the preferences and requirements of the female customers.

9.2 Focus on Younger Consumer Groups

The findings indicate that the younger age groups, particularly those between 18-25 and 25-35 of age, form a large proportion of the cosmetic customers. Overall, younger customers are more open to online media content, advertising communication, and cosmetic trends. To effectively attract this group of consumers, the cosmetic companies must strengthen their digital marketing efforts through the use of social media, online marketing, and influencer marketing.

9.3 Growth in Rural Marketplaces

The company plans to expand its operations into rural areas and marketplaces, which are not highly saturated with companies offering comparable services. The company intends to tap into the rural market and marketplaces that are not very saturated with competitors providing similar services.

Another important study conclusion is related to the fact that a large proportion of interviewees are rural

residents. This indicates that there is a lot of potential in cosmetic companies in rural areas. The companies are advised to make their products more accessible in the rural regions and expand the distribution channels. The businesses can potentially attract rural clients by creating awareness of cosmetic products in the region via regional promotions.

9.4 Creation of Inexpensive Cosmetics

The income distribution of the respondents has many consumers who are classified under the low- and middle-income groups. This means that the prices of cosmetics are a big consideration. Hence cosmetic manufacturers ought to focus on designing commodities that are cost-effective and fit customers who have a moderate buying power. This can help businesses connect with more customers as they will be able to sell products at multiple prices.

9.5 Research Ideas for the Future

The study of the cosmetic consumer behaviour could be conducted with bigger and more diverse samples found in different regions of Himachal Pradesh or in other states of India in the future. Other factors like brand perception, product quality, influence of advertisement, social media engagement, and consumer attitudes are some of the additional variables that can be explored in future research. The analysis of these variables might result in the enhanced comprehension of consumer behaviour and assist the cosmetics industry in developing more effective marketing strategies.

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