International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM)
Volume 2, Issue 5, pp: 531-547 www.ijaem.net ISSN: 2395-5252

# A study of channels of purchase, reasons for the choice of channel and buying behaviour of consumers towards cosmetic products online during the 'COVID-19' pandemic

Dr. Deepak Joshi[1], Bharti Chhikara[2], Medha Gandotra[2], Rhytham Wadhwa[2]

[1]*Assistant Professor, Department of Fashion Management Studies, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Hauz Khas, New Delhi*

[2]*Student, Department of Fashion Management Studies, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Hauz Khas, New Delhi*

*Corresponding Author: Dr. Deepak Joshi*

---

Date of Submission: 25-08-2020 Date of Acceptance: 04-09-2020

---

**ABSTRACT**: Cosmetic products are a necessary part of routine life, which helps individuals to enhance their appearance, giving them self-esteem, and confidence. During COVID-19, the movement of individuals has been restricted and social contactsare being avoided. The impact this could have on the purchase of cosmetic products online is an interesting phenomenon to study since the need to which these products cater to seems to be largely declining. This study aimed to gather insights about how consumers have responded towards cosmetics with respect to buying and channels of purchase, during the 'COVID-19' pandemic. The study was conducted in the form of a survey in the Delhi NCR region using a structured questionnaire. The results of the study gave some important insights; there is a relationship between the channel of purchase and safety concern, preference of colour cosmetics has been decreasing while skincare has been increasing, whereas the respondents are making a significant shift to online channels of purchase influenced by the safety in buying, need of the product, andavailability of discounts.

**KEYWORDS:** Channels of Purchase, Cosmetic Products, COVID-19, Online Buying

## I. INTRODUCTION

Cosmetics are defined as "any article intended to be rubbed, poured, sprinkled or sprayed on, or introduced into, or otherwise applied to the human body or any part thereof for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering the appearance, and includes any article intended for use as a component of cosmetic". [1] Cosmetics are effective at improving social perceptions that the wearer may wish to modulate, with individuals appearing to be healthier and earning more, displaying greater competence, likeability, and trustworthiness, as well as appearing more prestigious and dominant. [2]

### A. Global Cosmetics Market

The global cosmetic products market is categorized as skincare products, haircare products, colour cosmetics (makeup products), fragrances, personal care products, and oral care products. In the global scenario, consumers have a greater level of awareness of the beauty products, treatments and ingredients used, enabling them to make choices based on their knowledge and preferences.

Consumers today are much more demanding in terms of quality and safety, product labelling, determination of producers to implement certain health standards, etc. As per Forbes as of September 2019, the global beauty and cosmetics industry was then a $532 billion business. While projections for growth vary, before the pandemic of 'COVID-19' hit, it was agreed that the industry would continue to advance at a 5%-to-7% compound-annual-growth-rate to reach or exceed $800 billion by 2025. Global cosmetics market was expected to garner $429.8 billion by 2022, registering a CAGR of 4.3% during the forecast period 2016-2022.

There is a considerable rise in disposable incomes over the past decade. The growth in global economies, changing lifestyles, rising demands of skin and sun care products due to varying climatic conditions encourages the growth of the market for cosmetics. A shift of preference towards natural and organic beauty products, particularly in U.S. and European countries, fosters the growth of the cosmetics market. Rising demand for natural, herbal and organic beauty products creates potential opportunities for manufacturers to innovate and develop new products in accordance to consumer preferences.[3]

**B. Indian E-commerce Industry**

E-commerce means electronic commerce. It means dealing in goods and services through the electronic media and internet. The main types of electronic commerce are: business-to-business (B2B); business to- consumer(B2C); business-to-government (B2G); consumer-to-consumer (C2C); and mobile commerce (m-commerce). [4]

The Indian E-commerce industry has been on an upward growth trajectory and is expected to surpass the US to become the second largest E-commerce market in the world by 2034. The E-commerce market is expected to reach Rs 13,97,800 crore (US$ 200 billion) by 2027 from Rs 2,69,076.5 crore (US$ 38.5 billion) in 2017, supported by rising income and surge in internet users. Online shoppers in India reached 120 million in 2018 and are expected to reach 220 million by 2025. Much of the growth in the industry has been triggered by increasing internet and smartphone penetration. A young demographic profile, rising internet penetration and relative better economic performance are the key drivers of this sector. [5]

**C. Indian Cosmetics Industry**

As per Business World as of July 2019, the beauty and cosmetics industry in India was flourishing at a rapid rate, with the future outlook seeming exceptionally bright at that time due to new product launches catering to the consumers' growing requirements. The awareness of beauty products and treatments in the country is also at an all-time high. Increasing demand from the youth population, adoption of western culture & lifestyle, and increasing number of beauty salons are aiding the growth of the Indian cosmetics market.[6]With concepts like beauty and grooming becoming gender-neutral, India's per capita spending on beauty and personal care items is growing significantly. [7]

Cosmetic products, such as skin care, hair care, and fragrances are the most-sold products online. Thus, companies are increasingly focusing on online marketing campaigns that can increase their revenues with low investments. The market is witnessing a trend of multinational companies setting up websites and brand-specific Facebook accounts and Twitter profiles, in order to address the local taste. This sector is gaining prominence with the different products being available 'only on online'.[8]

**D. COVID-19 and the Cosmetics Industry**

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) is an ongoing global health emergency. The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has created a global health crisis that has had a deep impact on the way we perceive our world and our everyday lives. [9] COVID-19 is a once in a lifetime threat to people across the planet. It will permanently impact how and what we buy, substantially accelerating the structural changes shaping our industry, and also changing the relative importance of those trends. [10]

Technavio has been monitoring the cosmetic skin care market and it is poised to grow by $ 38.03 bn during 2020-2024, progressing at a CAGR of almost 5% during the forecast period.[11]COVID-19 is changing the way Indians buy goods as the virus has influenced a shift in consumer behaviour with respect to the adoption of e-commerce and embracing digital buying. Out of the leading developing economies in the world including China, Brazil, Indonesia, Thailand and Philippines, the surge in preference for the online channel is sharper in India, according to a study by Facebook India and Boston Consulting Group. [12]

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**A. Consumer Buying Behaviour**

Consumer buying behaviour is the sum total of a consumer's attitudes, preferences, intentions, and decisions regarding the consumer's behaviour in the market place when purchasing a product or service. [13]

The preference of Indian consumers regarding cosmetic products is changing. The main reasons for a greater ability to purchase personal grooming products among a larger base are financially independent women, frequent relevant product launches and growing beauty consciousness and awareness, especially among the younger population. However, the growth was affected by low product awareness or lack of inclination to spend on cosmetics, especially in rural areas. The aggressive price competition from local and regional players, which seized volumes with better trade margins and heavily discounted offerings, have also contributed to the same. [14]

International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM)
Volume 2, Issue 5, pp: 531-547 www.ijaem.net ISSN: 2395-5252

The decision-makingprocess differs for offline and online consumers. For online shoppers, it is mainly related to how different online decision-making processes used by consumers, influence the complexity of their online shopping behaviour etc. [15]

**B. Channels of Purchase**

There are two types of purchase channels (bricks-and-mortar stores and online stores) in the purchase process.[16]A brick-and-mortar store is any physical storefront that sells goods and services directly to customers, i.e. offline shopping. According to a study on “Comparative Study of Online and Offline Shopping: A Case Study of Rourkela in Odisha” by Puja Gupta,offline shopping gives different types of benefits to the customer. The factors affecting this channel of purchase are; availability of lesser number of choices, time consuming, authenticity, ability to bargain, manipulation of information provided etc. On the other hand, online or e-shopping is a kind of electronic shopping which allows the consumer to purchase goods over the internet directly from the seller using a web browser. The factors affecting online shopping are; risk of not being able to touch and feel the product, convenience and ease in ordering, anxiety of exploring and experimenting with different websites, previous experience, better pricing and offers, quality of the products, level of trust with sellers, delivery time, income of consumer, taste and preferences, inaccurate or falsified information online, wide variety, discreet shopping, instant gratification etc.

**C. Change in Channel of Purchase During COVID-19**

As per BusinessLine as ofApril 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we used to work, shop and communicate with people more than any other disruption (including technological ones) in the recent past. As more people have started working from home, they are sticking to basics, stepping outside only to buy essentials and are constantly worried about the risks of getting infected in crowded places like malls and supermarkets.

According to a survey by National Retail Federation (NRF) as of 2020, some of the key consumer behaviour changes are:-

- 9 in 10 consumers have changed their traditional shopping habits.
- More than 50% of consumers have ordered products online that they would normally purchase at the store
- Nearly 6 in 10 consumers say they are worried about going to the store due to fear of being infected

While some of these changes are no doubt temporary, others will be permanent. As the community moves beyond the survival mode, the digital-adoption momentum is likely to carry forward and become permanent. This inflection point will be primarily shaped by two major shifts in customer behaviour - the reluctance to mingle in crowded public places and higher propensity for digital adoption. In short, the COVID-19 outbreak and 2020 will mark a tipping point for the adoption of ecommerce and mobile commerce platforms.[17]

**D. Impact of COVID-19**

The coronavirus epidemic is reshaping consumer patterns in a major way. It will generate a protracted economic crisis during which consumers will be cutting back on non-essential purchases. They will be more deliberate in their shopping, and less motivated by impulse. Although drug stores stay open, many consumers are moving their cosmetics shopping to grocery stores or online due to safety concerns. Large-format grocery stores are positioned to benefit, in which customers can find a comprehensive range of cosmetic essentials. As people try to stay at home and out of public spaces as much as possible, many will prefer to buy their cosmetics in the store where they shop for food, rather than having to visit another store. [18]

There is unprecedented confusion on what, where and how to buy things—customers are concerned about who to buy from, if they’re paying a fair price or even if they’ll be able to find the essentials they need. [19]

The ecommerce space is experiencing a boon in social media management, supporting the customers around the clock with new content and heightened community engagement across all social platforms. [20]Beauty bloggers and fashion influencers are coming up with ways to improve skin through simple at-home skincare routines as well as makeup trends like #maskmakeup.

For some, the break from the normal makeup or hair-care routine has improved the quality of their skin or hair to the point that they don’t see themselves returning to their pre-pandemic regimen, hence leading to a change in usage patterns**.** [21]

Some trends that have been identified in the cosmetics industry during current times, are:

- **A new meaning of “Lipstick Effect” and growth in “Mask Makeup”:** Lipstick effect states that the lipstick sales go up when

International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM)
Volume 2, Issue 5, pp: 531-547 www.ijaem.net ISSN: 2395-5252

consumer sentiment weakens during economic recessions as people tend to treat themselves with lower-cost indulgences. However, with face masks becoming the new normal, experts say demand for lipsticks is likely to come down and the focus in the glam world is likely to shift to eye makeup. [22]

- **Skincare products are high in demand:** Azelis (distributor of polymers and chemicals) is predicting a shift towards products highlighting safety, transparency, and sustainability in India. Preventative categories such as soap, hand sanitizers and wet wipes are gaining demand from the WHO guidelines. As a ripple effect, skincare products such as hand creams and moisturizers are also expected to be affected. [23] This can be observed in Figure 1.
- **Beauty from home:** The closure of non-essential business has created a disruption in the beauty industry and the consumers are now looking for online beauty home treatment, virtual consultations etc. As per the survey report generated by Mckinsey, do-it-yourself (DIY) and self-care beauty segment is showing an upward trend in the U.S.A since beauty salons have closed, and even in places where they have not, consumers are forgoing services because of concerns about close physical contact. [24]
- **Digital continues to rise:** Pre-COVID-19 trends will likely accelerate, with direct-to-consumer e-commerce, such as brands' websites, shoppable social-media platforms, and marketplaces becoming more important. [24] Signifyd's Ecommerce Pulse data showed that e-commerce sales were up 104% in June 2020 over June 2019. The higher online spending is being driven by new shoppers — consumers who rarely or never shopped online. Signifyd's data shows the number of new online shoppers increased by as much as 140% during the pandemic and that the growth has remained robust. [25]

**Figure 1. Change in beauty products categories**

Do-it-yourself and self-care products

| Beauty-product category | Estimated year-to-date sales, $ million | Average price, $ | Year-over-year change, 2019–20, 4 weeks ending April 11: Retail sales, % | Average price, % | Retail sales, $ million |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Body wash, soap, and lotion | 321 | 14.10 | 65 | −11 | 44 |
| Nail care | 123 | 15.02 | 218 | 16 | 37 |
| Hair care | 540 | 18.43 | 27 | −12 | 33 |
| Men's grooming | 240 | 25.44 | 56 | 6 | 28 |
| Skin care | 540 | 18.17 | 20 | −14 | 27 |
| Hair coloring | 58 | 13.64 | 172 | −3 | 17 |
| Women's hair removal | 74 | 16.16 | 53 | −14 | 9 |
| Eye makeup | 82 | 12.30 | 5 | −12 | 1 |
| Face makeup | 77 | 13.87 | −3 | −21 | −1 |
| Lip care and color | 55 | 8.97 | −15 | −28 | −2 |
| Beauty tools, devices, and accessories | 316 | 16.60 | −7 | −15 | −6 |
| Total beauty products[1] | 2,632 | N/A | 28 | N/A | 172 |

(Mckinsey& Company,2020) [24]

Most consumers expect their routines and personal/household finances to be impacted over the next two–six months. The exception is Japan, where a significant proportion expect the impact to last for more than seven months. [26] Figure 2. reports the financial impacts in such manner.

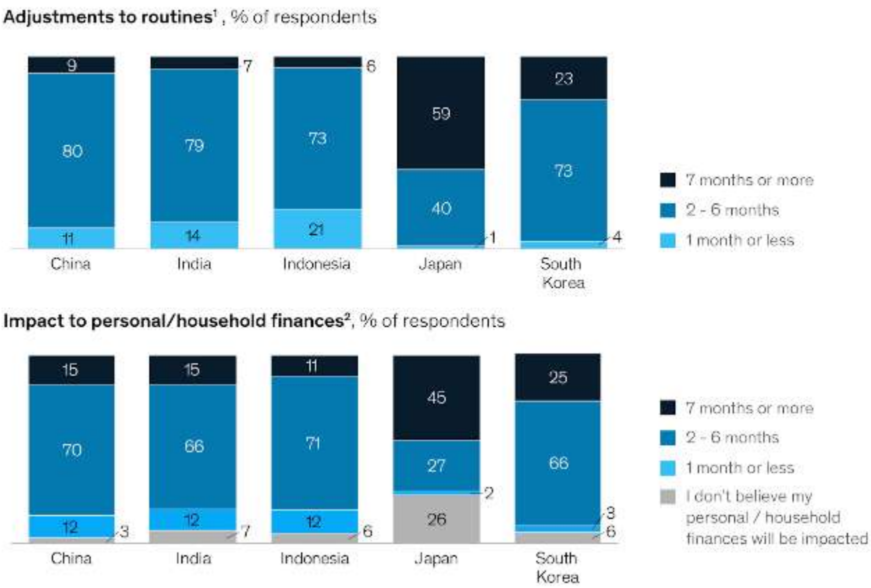
Consumers are starting to pay more attention to marketing messages, including email, SMS, social ads, and more (35.65%). They're also browsing online more (32.05%), and buying online more (25.35%). [27] The Facebook India – BCG report also said that around 50 per cent consumers expect to increase their e-commerce spend in the coming one month even for traditionally offline categories like vitamins, supplements, personal care products, cosmetics, non-prescription medicines. [28]

International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM)
Volume 2, Issue 5, pp: 531-547 www.ijaem.net ISSN: 2395-5252

In China, the industry's February sales fell up to 80 percent compared with 2019. In March, the year-on-year decline was 20 percent—a rapid rebound under the circumstances. In a variety of markets, consumers report they intend to spend less on beauty products in the near term (largely driven by declines in spending on colour cosmetics) butmore than they will in other discretionary categories, such as footwear and clothing. [24]

There are contradicting opinions whether consumers will be less likely to try new cosmetic products or not, and even which channel they will prefer to repurchase products that they already like from.

**Figure 2.Financial impacts of COVID-19**




(McKinsey & Company, 2020) [26]

## III. RESEARCH PROBLEM

After studying the existing data about the cosmetics industry concerning the 'COVID-19' pandemic, a major gap was identified. During this pandemic, there is confusion between the wants of buyers and their interpretations by the sellers. It was found that the secondary research available for the Indian Cosmetics industry was mostly from the seller's perspective. Therefore, theconsumers' perspective of the effect of COVID-19 on their e-commerce buying habits related to cosmetics was found to be that gap.This led to the formulation of the following research problem: -

'A study of channels of purchase, reasons for the choice of channel and buying behaviour of Indian consumers towards cosmetic products, online during the 'COVID-19' pandemic.'

## IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To track the shift from offline to online channels of purchase, during the pandemic 'COVID-19'.
- To ascertain the reasons for buying cosmetic products through e-commerce during the pandemic 'COVID-19'.
- To assess the buying behaviour and track the purchase patterns online of consumers in the cosmetics industry during the pandemic of COVID-19.

Amid 'COVID-19', as indicated in the review of the literature above, there has been a shift towards online buying as it is presumed to be safer. Considering the same, the question of whether there is an association between safety concern and online buying of cosmetics, arose. Hence, the following null hypothesis was proposed: -

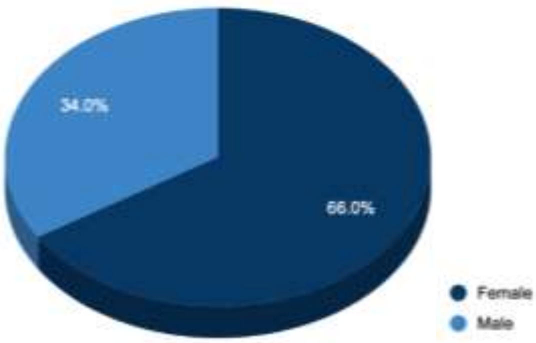
**H0=There is No Relationship between Buying Mode (Online Vs Offline) and Safety Concern**

## V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

| | |
|---|---|
| **Nature of Research/Research Design** | The nature of this research is descriptive because the study aims to describe the change in channels preferred and consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetics due to COVID-19. |
| **Population** | The target population for this research was men and women who are users of cosmetic products in the Delhi NCR region and are 18 years and above. |
| **Sample Size** | Out of the total population, the sample size chosen was 150 respondents. |
| **Sampling Technique** | The sampling method used was **convenience** (non-probability sampling method). |
| **Data Collection** | 1. **Primary Data Collection -** For the study, primary data was collected by the medium of a structured questionnaire that had been framed to understand the shift from offline to online channels, reasons for the shift, and the online buying behaviour of consumers towards cosmetic products available in India. It was answered by men & women in the Delhi NCR region. 2. **Secondary Data Collection -** Secondary data sources such as research papers, journals, publications, reports published by market research companies, and fashion blogs have been used in formulating a theoretical basis. Close-ended questions were incorporated in the questionnaire with the help of the secondary data collected. |
| **Data Collection Instrument** | A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions. Checklist questions, multiple-choice questions & Likert scale were used in close-ended questions to achieve the objective of the research. |
| **Data Analysis** | 'SPSS 21' has been used to perform the test.Percentage and frequency analysis were carried out wherever necessary and results were depicted with the help of tables and pie-charts. |

## VI. DATA ANALYSIS

**Figure 3. Sex wise distribution of the sample**

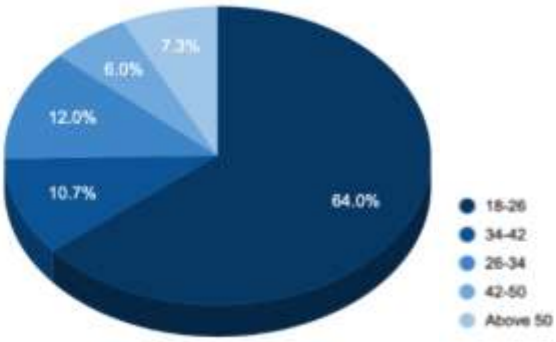



(Source: Primary Data)

Figure 3. represents the sex-wise distribution of the sample respondents. Females have a higher dominance with 66% whereas men constitute 34% of the total respondents.

International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM)
Volume 2, Issue 5, pp: 531-547 www.ijaem.net ISSN: 2395-5252

**Figure 4. Percentage distribution of respondents by age**

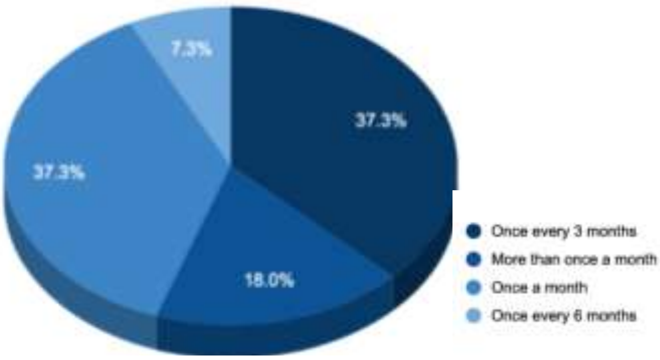


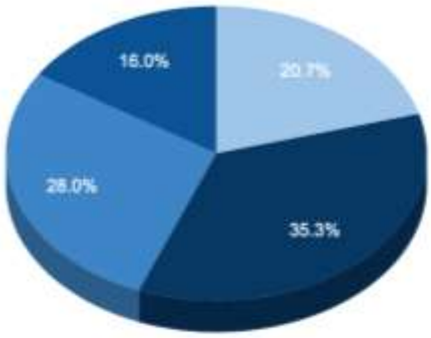

(Source: Primary Data)

Figure 4. indicates that the majority of the respondents lie between the age brackets of 18-26 years i.e. 64%, followed by 12% from 26 – 34 years,10.7% from 34-42 years, 6% from 42-50 years, and 7.3% from above 50 years.

**Figure 5. Purchasing frequency**

**Pre-COVID** **During COVID**




(Source: Primary Data)

Figure 5. shows the purchasing frequency of the respondents. The purchasing frequency has been analysed based on the variables such as: - once a month, more than once a month, once every 3 months, and once every 6 months. It can be seen in the 'Pre-COVID' segment that 74.6% of respondents preferred purchasing cosmetics once every 3 months (37.3%) and once a month (37.3%), followed by 18% of respondents who preferred more than once a month, and the least preference was given to once every 6 months by 7.3% respondents. On the other hand, in the 'During COVID' segment, 35.3% of respondents preferred purchasing cosmetics once every 3 months, followed by 28% of respondents who preferred once a month, and the least preference was given to more than once a month by 16% respondents.

**Figure 6. Average spending**

**Pre-COVID** **During COVID**


(Source: Primary Data)

Figure 6. shows the average spending of consumers on cosmetic products before the COVID-19 pandemic and during. In the 'Pre-COVID' segment, the highest spending lies in the □500-□1500 bracket with 39.3% of respondents. Approximately half of the respondents' (47.3%) spending bracket is now seen to be between □500-□1500, while the bracket of 'Below □500' has increased from 6% to 11.3%. On the other hand, the pricier spending brackets' share has decreased, with the bracket of □1500-□2500 decreasing from 24.7% to 17.3%, the bracket of □2500-□3500 from 17.3% to 11.3% and the bracket of Above □ 8000 decreasing from 5.3% to a negligible 2%.

**Table 1. Category wise purchase of cosmetics**

| **Category** | **Pre-COVID** | | **During COVID** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| Makeup/Colour Cosmetics | 58 | 38.67 | 21 | 14.00 |
| Skincare | 115 | 76.67 | 103 | 68.67 |
| Haircare | 100 | 66.67 | 95 | 63.33 |
| Fragrances | 74 | 49.33 | 31 | 20.67 |
| Personal Care | 89 | 59.33 | 88 | 58.67 |
| Oral Care | 46 | 30.67 | 38 | 25.33 |

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 1. indicates the category wise purchase of cosmetics which was a multiple-choice question. It is seen that in the 'Pre- COVID' segment, the majority of respondents, 76.67% bought skincare products, followed by haircare at 66.67% & personal care at 59.33%. The least bought category is oral care at 30.67% & makeup/colour cosmetics which wasbought by 38.67% of the respondents. In the 'During COVID' segment, skincare, bought by 68.67% of respondents, remains the most bought category followed by haircare, 63.33%, and personal care, 58.67%. However, only 14% of the respondents bought makeup during the current situation of the pandemic.

International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM)
Volume 2, Issue 5, pp: 531-547 www.ijaem.net ISSN: 2395-5252

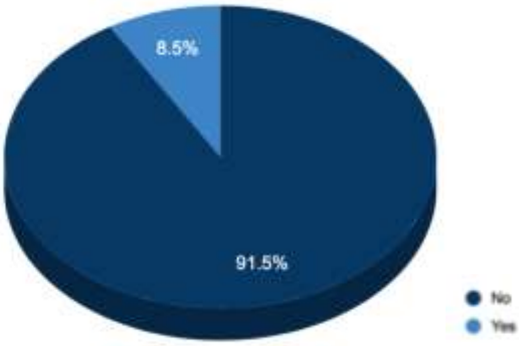
**Figure 7. Preferred channel of buying**

**Pre-COVID** **During COVID**


(Source: Primary Data)

Figure 7. represents the channels preferred by the respondents to purchase cosmetics in the 'Pre-COVID' and 'During COVID' segment analysis of the questionnaire. In the 'Pre-COVID' segment, the majority of respondents (61.3%) chose offline channels and 38.7% choosing the online channels. Whereas, in the 'During COVID' segment analysis, the majority of respondents shifted to the online channels with 78% choosing it, and only 22% choosing offline channels of buying.

**Figure 8. Addition of new online purchasers**




(Source: Primary Data)

Figure 8. indicates the addition of new online purchasers of cosmetic products since the start of COVID-19. Though most of the respondents i.e. 91.5% (107) were already buying cosmetics through online channels, out of the respondents who chose online channels in Figure 7 i.e. 117, a small percentage i.e. 8.5% (10) are new online purchasers.

**Table 2. Frequency of factors influencing consumers to switch to online channels right now**

| Statements | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I shop when I need the product | 54 | 66 | 14 | 5 | 11 |
| It's safer to shop online right now | 51 | 43 | 37 | 7 | 12 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Television and social media advertisements influence my purchase | 6 | 40 | 46 | 39 | 19 |
| I look for discounts and offers before purchasing the product | 39 | 61 | 23 | 18 | 9 |
| Latest trends impact my purchase | 11 | 43 | 35 | 39 | 22 |
| I'm inclined to purchase a product endorsed by a Fashion Influencer / Makeup Bloggers | 8 | 28 | 40 | 31 | 43 |

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 2. shows six statements representing various factors influencing consumers to purchase a specific product or brand through online channels during this pandemic. The respondents were supposed to mark their level of agreement or disagreement on a 5-point Likert scale.

**Table 3. Statistical analysis of Table 2**

| Statements | N | Mean |
|---|---|---|
| I shop when I need the product | 150 | 3.98 |
| It's safer to shop online right now | 150 | 3.76 |
| Television and social media advertisements influence my purchase | 150 | 2.83 |
| I look for discounts and offers before purchasing the product | 150 | 3.69 |
| Latest trends impact my purchase | 150 | 2.88 |
| I'm inclined to purchase a product endorsed by a Fashion Influencer/ Makeup Bloggers | 150 | 2.51 |

(Source: Primary Data)

The statements in Table 2. have been analysed statistically in Table 3. For this purpose, scores have been assigned to various options which are as follows: -
5 to 'strongly agree'
4 to 'agree'
3 to 'neither agree nor disagree'
2 to 'disagree'
1 to 'strongly disagree'

Based on these scores, the mean value has been calculated as shown in the third column of Table 3. A high magnitude of mean indicates a high level of agreement and vice versa. The highest magnitude of mean is found to be 3.98 for the statement 'I shop when I need the product' followed by 3.76 for the statement 'It's safer to shop online right now'.

The following Hypothesis was tested in SPSS on the basis of primary data:

**H0=There is No Relationship between Buying Mode (Online Vs Offline) and Safety Concern**

**Table 4. Crosstabulation of Mode of Buying vs Safety Concern**

| | | | Safety Concern | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Agree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Disagree | Total |
| Channel of Buying | Offline Channel | Count | 10 | 4 | 16 | 5 | 1 | 36 |
| | | % within Safety Concern | 23.3% | 57.1% | 43.2% | 9.8% | 8.3% | 24.0% |
| | Online Channel | Count | 33 | 3 | 21 | 46 | 11 | 114 |
| | | % within Safety Concern | 76.7% | 42.9% | 56.8% | 90.2% | 91.7% | 76.0% |
| Total | | Count | 43 | 7 | 37 | 51 | 12 | 150 |
| | | % within Safety Concern | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.% | 100.0% |

(Source: Primary Data)

**Table 5. Chi-Square Test**

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pearson Chi-Square** | 18.990[a] | 4 | .001 |
| **Likelihood Ratio** | 18.905 | 4 | .001 |
| **N of Valid Cases** | 150 | | |

2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.68.
(Source: Primary Data)

As the above is a Chi-Square table(Table 5.) of 2x5, and not more than 20% of all the cells have an expected count of less than 5 (Yates, Moore & McCabe, 19999, p.734) and x2 (4) = 18.99, p=.001, hence considering the above result we reject the null hypothesis and can conclude that the relationshipbetween mode of buying and safety concern is statistically significant.

Thus, based on the above hypothesis and Table 2, it is established that people are preferring to buy cosmetics online as they consider it safer than the offline mode.

**Table 6. Purchase of makeup products category-wise during COVID-19**

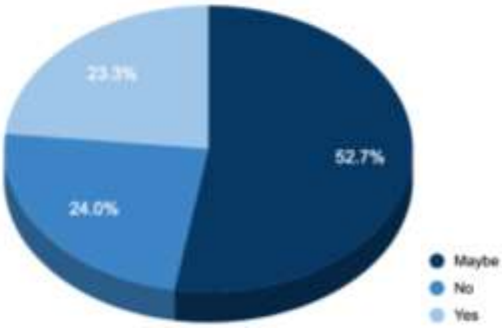
| Category | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Face Products (Foundation, Concealer, Primer, Compact, Loose Powder, Blush, Bronzer, Contour, Highlighter, Setting Spray) | 43 |
| Eye Products (Eye liner, Mascara, Kajal, Brows, Eyeshadow) | 42 |
| Lip Products (Liquid Lipstick, Lipstick, Lip Crayons, Lip Gloss, Lip Liner) | 35 |

International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM)
Volume 2, Issue 5, pp: 531-547 www.ijaem.net ISSN: 2395-5252

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 6. makes the category-wise purchase of makeup products during COVID-19 evident. The respondents of this question were users of colour cosmetics, i.e. makeup products and it was a multiple-choice question. Among the 52 respondents of this question, it is clear from the table that the respondents purchasing face products (43) and eye products (42) are more than the respondents purchasing lip products (35).This indicates the difference in the product categories.

**Figure 9. Willingness of respondents to buy new products launches during the lockdown**




(Source: Primary Data)

Figure 9. represents that out of the total respondents, the majority of the consumers i.e. 52.7% would maybe buy the new launches. Whereas 23.3% were sure that they would buy and 24% refused to buy the new product launches during the lockdown.

## VII. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

### A. Findings

- People are shopping less frequently during COVID-19, as 7.3% to 20.7% of respondents have now shifted to once every six months.
- Average spending of the respondents on cosmetic products has reduced to the lower spending brackets, i.e. below  500 (11.3%) and between  500- 1,500 (47.3%) during the pandemic.
- Majority of the respondents showed a constant demand for skincare and haircare products inboth the 'Pre-COVID' and 'During COVID' segments. However, the demand has decreased drastically during COVID-19 for colour cosmetics (from 38.67% to 14 %) and fragrances (from 49.33% to 20.7%).
- Most of the respondents are preferring to buy cosmetics through online channels (78%) during COVID-19.
- Many people have even bought cosmetic products online for the first time (8.5%) during COVID-19.
- The channel of buying and safety concern has an association.
- Majority of the respondents using colour cosmetics were purchasing more face and haircare products in comparison to the lip products during COVID- 19.
- More than half of the respondents (52.7%) would maybe buy the new cosmetic product launches during Covid-19.

### B. Suggestions

There is a rise in demand for skincare products, therefore product manufacturers have the opportunity to create products that can fulfil various skincare and personal care needs of the consumer such as antibacterial moisturizers, sprays, hand creams, etc. Due to the significant shift in channels of purchase of consumers, cosmetic industry players can start shifting their business and prioritizing their digital channels to capture and convert the attention of existing and new customers. Sale of face products and eye products is more than lip products, which can be the focus of brands that are mainly producing color cosmetics. Also, due to the current scenario, consumers are unsure about buying newly launched products, and hence, brands can cater to this and influence them with innovative products and strategies.

## VIII. LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE OF FURTHER STUDY

- The research of the study is limited to the Delhi NCR region and focuses on the urban region and not on the rural region.
- Other Tier I, Tier II and Tier III cities of the country have not been considered for this research.
- Considering the vastness of the topic, any research undertaken would have been extensive and would have required a lot of time. However, due to time constraints, a longitudinal study could not be conducted.
- There is a possibility of bias.

For further studies, researchers can focus on other Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III cities both in urban and rural regions. Future studies would benefit from a longitudinal design of research that will provide a better understanding of the shift in channels and buying behaviour of the consumers.

## IX. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to figure out the impact of COVID-19 on the buying habits of the consumers. Through this study, it was identified that in the Delhi NCR region there has been a shift in the channel of buying from offline to online and the buying behaviour of consumers living in the region has also changed during the pandemic. Given the seriousness of the situation caused by COVID-19, consumers buying cosmetic products have shifted to or continue to buy from online channels. Need for a product, the safety of buying, and availability of discounts have been identified as the major factors influencing the consumers to purchase through an online channel. Consumers' preference towards colour cosmetics and fragrances has witnessed a major decline. On the other hand, consumers are inclined towards purchasing personal care, skincare, and hair care products. This shift provides scope for the enhancement of online shopping channels to provide a convenient and lucrative platform for consumers to shop for cosmetic products online.

## REFERENCES

[1]. Singh, B.M., Jain, A., Mishra, A. (2018), Cosmetic Regulations in India vs. Globally and Challenges in Harmonization, International Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Drug Research, p. 152

[2]. Jones AL, Kramer RSS (2016), Facial Cosmetics and Attractiveness: Comparing the Effect Sizes of Professionally-Applied Cosmetics and Identity,PLoS ONE 11(10):e0164218,viewedfrom https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0164218, viewed on 27.07.2020

[3]. Allied Market Research(July 2016), Cosmetics Market, Rajput, N.,viewed from https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/cosmetics-market, viewed on 27.07.2020

[4]. Dr. Bhat, S., Kansana, K. and Majid, J. (2016), A Review Paper of E-Commerce, p.1

[5]. India Brand Equity Foundation(June 2020), Indian Ecommerce Industry Analysis, viewed from https://www.ibef.org/industry/ecommerce-presentation#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20it%20was%20estimated,1%2C200%20per%20cent%20by%202026.,viewedon 27.07.2020

[6]. Entrepreneur India, Production and Formulation of Cosmetics, Cleaners, Drugs, Soaps, and Detergents. Personal Care, Household Cleaners and Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Industry, viewed from https://www.entrepreneurindia.co/Document/Download/Production%20and%20Formulation%20of%20Cosmetics,%20Cleaners,%20Drugs,%20Soaps%20and%20Detergents.-945599-.pdf, viewed on 27.07.2020

[7]. FRANCHISE India (April 2019), This Is Why The Cosmetic Market Is Witnessing A Skyrocketing Demand In India, Nikita Arya, viewed from https://www.franchiseindia.com/wellness/this-is-why-the-cosmetic-market-is-witnessing-a-skyrocketing-demand-in-india.13246, viewed on 27.07.2020

[8]. MarketWatch (June 2020), Cosmetics Products Market 2020 Industry Research, Share, Trend, Industry Size, Price, Future Analysis, Regional Outlook to Research Report By 360 Market Updates, viewed from https://www.marketwatch.com/press-release/cosmetics-products-market-2020-industry-research-share-trend-industry-size-price-future-analysis-regional-outlook-to-research-report-by-360-market-updates-2020-06-04, viewed on 27.07.2020

[9]. PubMed Central (March 2020), SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: The most important research questions,Kit-San Yuen, Zi -Wei Ye, Sin-Yee Fung,Chi-Ping Chan,and Dong-Yan Jin, viewed from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7074995/, viewed on 27.07.2020

[10]. Accenture (April 2020), How COVID-19 will permanently change consumer behaviour, viewed from

https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-123/Accenture-COVID19-Pulse-Survey-Research-PoV.pdf, viewed on 28.07.2020, p. 3,10
[11]. BusinessWire(June 2020), COVID-19 Impact and Recovery Analysis- Cosmetic Skin Care Market 2020-2024, Technavio, viewed from https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200622005510/en/COVID-19-Impact-Recovery-Analysis--Cosmetic-Skin-Care, viewed on 26.07.2020
[12]. Financial Express(May 2020), Thanks to COVID, India shows highest surge in preference for e-commerce among these top nations, FE Online, viewed from https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/increased-adoption-of-ecommerce-for-shopping-online-consumer-shopping-growth-of-ecommerce-post-COVID/1972723/, viewed on 26.07.2020
[13]. N, Ramya, Ali, Dr SA.M., (2017), A study on consumer buying behaviour towards Amul products with special reference to Coimbatore city, International Journal of Applied Research, 4(7), p.1
[14]. Anute, Prof. N., Deshmukh, Dr. A., and Khandagale, Prof. A. (2015), Consumer Buying behaviour towards Cosmetic Products, International Journal in Management and Social Science, Vol.03 Issue-07, p.25-26
[15]. Bharti.P&Sehgal.A (2014), An analysis of brand value and other factors on the personality of Indian Online Consumer, p.12-13
[16]. Nakano, S. and Kondo, F.N. (2018), Customer segmentation with purchase channels and media touchpoints using single source panel data, Vol. 41, p.145)]
[17]. BusinessLine (2020, April 14), COVID-19 impact: Consumers move more towards digital, Reddy, A., viewed from https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/COVID-19-impact-consumers-move-more-towards-digital/article31337127.ece, viewed on 26.07.2020
[18]. Retail Market Experts(April 2020), COVID-19: impact on cosmetics market, viewed from https://retailmarketexperts.com/en/news/COVID-19-impact-on-cosmetics-market/, viewed on 22.07.2020
[19]. Accenture ( 2020, March 31), Channel shift: Prioritizing digital commerce, viewed from https://www.accenture.com/in-en/about/company/coronavirus-digital-commerce-impact , viewed on 26.07.2020
[20]. Socialbakers (2020, March 26), How the Top Names in Beauty Connect With Audiences in Uncertain Times, Raszyk, M., viewed from https://www.socialbakers.com/blog/how-the-top-names-in-beauty-connectwithaudiences-in-uncertain-times, viewed on 27.07.2020
[21]. The New York Times(May 2020), Why Get All Made Up With Nowhere to Go?, Creswell, J., viewed from https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/08/business/coronavirus-makeup-hair-skin-care.html, viewed on 22.07.2020
[22]. Times of India(May 2020), Face Masks may Kill Demand For Lipstick, Sanjiv, D., viewed from https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mangaluru/face-masks-may-kill-demand-for-lipstick/articleshow/75804030.cms, viewed on 22.07.2020
[23]. Cosmetic Design - Asia (July 2020),Clean and sustainable: Azelis highlights India's pandemic-driven demand for 'clean' skin care products, Lim, A., viewed from https://www.cosmeticsdesign-asia.com/Article/2020/07/21/Azelis-highlights-India-s-pandemic-driven-demand-forcleanskincareproducts?utm_source=copyright&utm_medium=OnSite&utm_campaign=copyright, viewed on 22.07.2020
[24]. McKinsey & Company (2020, May 5) , How COVID-19 is changing the world of beauty, Gerstell, E., Marchessou, S., Schmidt, J., and Spagnuolo, E., viewed from https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/how-COVID-19-is-changing-the-world-of-beauty, viewed on 22.07.2020
[25]. Signifyd (2020, July 8), Ecommerce sales in June were twice what they were a year ago, Cassidy, M., viewed from https://www.signifyd.com/ecommerce-business-data-COVID-19crisispulse/,viewed on 23.07.2020
[26]. McKinsey & Company (2020,April 13), Survey: Asian consumer sentiment during the COVID-19 crisis, Johnny Ho, Aimee Kim, and Naomi Yamakawa, viewed from https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/asia-pacific/survey-asian-consumer-sentiment-during-the-COVID-19-crisis, viewed on 23.07.2020
[27]. YOTPO. (2020, March 24), Survey: How is COVID-19 Changing Consumer &

eCommerce Trends?, Cristina Dinozo, viewedfromhttps://www.yotpo.com/blog/survey-how-is-COVID-19-changing-consumer-ecommerce-trends/, viewed on 28.07.2020

[28]. Financial Express (2020, May 27), Thanks to COVID, India shows highest surge in preference for e-commerce among these top nations, viewed from https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/increased-adoption-of-ecommerce-for-shopping-online-consumer-shopping-growth-of-ecommerce-post-COVID/1972723/, viewed on 28.07.2020

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

[1]. https://www.thebalancesmb.com/a-definition-of-bricks-and-mortar-2947959

[2]. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/cfd6/41d9f12129e33f23ff1f7c64798a300c57e0.pdf

[3]. https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/covid-19-impact-consumers-move-more-towards-digital/article31337127.ece

[4]. https://www.forbes.com/sites/pamdanziger/2019/09/01/6-trends-shaping-the-future-of-the-532b-beauty-business/#13991c93588

[5]. http://www.businessworld.in/article/Booming-Indian-Beauty-Industry/14-07-2019-173114

[6]. https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/asia-pacific/survey-asian-consumer-sentiment-during-the-COVID-19-crisis

[7]. https://news.abplive.com/lifestyle/beauty-bloggers-to-help-perfect-make-up-skills-during-quarantine-1193047

[8]. https://www.beautypackaging.com/contents/view_breaking-news/2020-06-24/watch-the-webinar-prestige-beauty-trends-after-COVID-beyond/

[9]. https://www.cosmeticsdesignasia.com/Article/2020/07/14/Testers-are-over-but-can-the-touch-and-try-cosmetics-business-rely-on-virtual-testing-post-pandemic?utm_source=copyright&utm_medium=OnSite&utm_campaign=copyright

## ANNEXURE

### Appendix: Cosmetics Questionnaire

Consumer behaviour is one of the most crucial elements for the marketing of goods and services. This study is being conducted for a Research Methodology project by students of ‘Masters of Fashion Management (MFM)’ from ‘National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Delhi’.

The survey will take 3-4 minutes to complete. The purpose is to study the channels of purchase, reasons for the choice of channel, and buying behaviour of Indian consumers towards cosmetic products, online during the 'COVID-19' pandemic.

We are committed to protecting your privacy. All your responses will remain anonymous and kept in the strictest confidentiality. Your feedback is appreciated.

---

**Personal Information**

**1. Email** : ______________________________

**2. Sex**

☐ Male
☐ Female

**3. Age**

☐ 18-26
☐ 26-34

International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM)
Volume 2, Issue 5, pp: 531-547 www.ijaem.net ISSN: 2395-5252

□ 34-42
□ 42-50
□ Above 50

---

**Pre-COVID**

The following questions are based on your purchases before the COVID-19 pandemic. Cosmetic products include makeup, skincare, hair care, fragrances, personal care and oral care products.

**4. How often did you buy cosmetic products before the start of lockdown in March?**

□ Once a month
□ More than once a month
□ Once every 3 months
□ Once every 6 months
□ Once a year

**5. On average, how much did you spend on cosmetics per purchase before lockdown in March?**

□ Below □ 500
□ Between □ 500- □ 2000
□ Between □ 2000- □ 5000
□ Between □ 5000- □ 8000
□ Above 8000

**6. Which of the following products did you buy often before the lockdown?**

□ Makeup (Colour Cosmetics)
□ Skin Care
□ Hair care
□ Fragrances
□ Personal Care
□ Oral Care

**7. Which was your preferred channel of buying cosmetics before the lockdown?**

□ Online channels (Online stores, Website of the brand, App of the brand, Instagram shop)
□ Offline channels (Exclusive stores, Departmental stores, Supermarkets, Multiple Brand Outlets)

---

**During COVID**

The following questions are based on your purchases during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown starting March, 2020. Cosmetic products include makeup, skincare, hair care, fragrances, personal care and oral care products.

**8. How often have you bought cosmetic products since the commencement of lockdown?**

□ Once a month
□ More than once a month
□ Once every 3 months
□ Once every 6 months
□ Once a year

**9. On average, how much have you spent on cosmetics per purchase during lockdown?**

□ Below □ 500
□ Between □ 500- □ 2000
□ Between □ 2000- □ 5000
□ Between □ 5000- □ 8000
□ Above 8000

**10. Which of the following products have you bought often during the lockdown?**

□ Makeup (Colour Cosmetics)
□ Skincare
□ Haircare

- Fragrances
- Personal Care
- Oral Care

**11. Which is your preferred channel of buying cosmetics now?**
- Online channels (Online stores, Website of the brand, App of the brand, Instagram shop)
- Offline channels (Exclusive stores, Departmental stores, Supermarkets, Multiple Brand Outlets)

**12. If the answer to the above question is 'Online channels', is it your first experience of buying online?**
- Yes
- No

**13. The following factors influence you to purchase a specific product or brand through online channels right now.**

| Factors | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I shop when I need the product | | | | | |
| It's safer to shop online right now | | | | | |
| Television and social media advertisements influence my purchase | | | | | |
| I look for discounts and offers before purchasing the product | | | | | |
| Latest trends impact my purchase | | | | | |
| I'm inclined to purchase a product endorsed by a Fashion Influencers/ Makeup Bloggers | | | | | |

**14. What products are you currently purchasing?**
- Face products (Foundation, Concealer, Primer, Compact, Loose Powder, Blush, Bronzer, Contour, Highlighter, Setting Spray)
- Eye products (Eye liner, Mascara, Kajal, Brows, Eyeshadow)
- Lip Products (Liquid Lipstick, Lipstick, Lip Crayons, Lip Gloss, Lip Liner)

**15. Are you willing to buy new products that are being launched during lockdown?**
- Yes
- No
- Maybe