



Factors Affecting Online Purchase Intentions of Consumers in the Cosmetic Industry

*Sahar Raees¹, Syed Muddasir Hussain², Zeeshan Malik³

¹Research Scholar, Salim Habib University, Karachi, Pakistan *(Corresponding Author)

²Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University Lyari Karachi, Pakistan

³M.Phil Scholar, Department of Public Administration, University of Karachi, Pakistan

Abstract

Studies regarding online buying intentions require a deeper investigation because the cosmetics industry continues to expand rapidly as online shopping popularity rises. This research examines the impact of three factors namely user interface design and ease of use and social media marketing on customers' purchasing intentions for online cosmetics products. Consumer behavior modification results primarily from two social media forces: influencer support and interactive content delivery specifically through Instagram and TikTok platforms. Simple navigation together with effortless transaction procedures in e-commerce systems create substantial influence on customer satisfaction and selection behavior. To keep online customers the user interface must achieve functional perfection without sacrificing visual attractiveness. The analysis provides critical details about improving online sales performance and digital marketing method at cosmetic companies through analyzing these variables. The results present specific steps companies can use to enhance website functionality as well as optimize social media promotion methods and design better interfaces that satisfy consumer needs.

Keywords: Ease of Use, User Interface Design, Social Media Marketing, Online Purchase Intention

Introduction

The global changes caused by Covid-19 transformed our world into a permanent virtual environment for completing regular tasks. Consumer purchasing habits toward online shopping have reached unprecedented heights thus reshaping the cosmetics market. A physical retailer cannot compete with online vendors when it comes to product selection as well as convenience and simple accessibility for customers. Producers who manufacture cosmetics need to study thoroughly all components which drive their customers to engage in online purchases.

Modern technological development together with changing customer preferences have caused significant changes across the cosmetics market. Online product purchases in this market continue to rise therefore researchers need to understand the major factors influencing purchasing intentions better. The study investigates three core elements including ease of use (EoU), user interface (UI) design and social media marketing (SMM) to determine which component plays the greatest role in influencing purchase intention of the participants. The essential tool that social media represents becomes vital for cosmetic business operations.

The attitudes and purchasing choices of people heavily depend on user-generated content along with intuitive marketing and celebrity endorsements on social media platforms including Instagram and Facebook and TikTok. Users will develop higher purchase intentions and trust customers more and expand brand awareness when companies employ effectiveness in their social media marketing (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Hwang & Zhang, 2022).

The simple online purchasing process offered by webstores modifies how customers behave. Easily navigable websites enhance cosmetic and other product sales because they enable users to find detailed essential information while displaying aesthetically pleasing designs. The fundamental ease of use elements for websites consist of simple checkout operations combined with effective product searches linked to user-friendly interfaces. The use of an easy-to-use online store increases the likelihood of users making purchases since research by Alalwan et al. (2018) and Jiang et al. (2022) demonstrates this. The user interface design plays an essential role in online shopping especially within the beauty industry since appearance holds high importance for that sector. A visually stunning user interface (UI) which remains both easy to use and attractive to the eye will attract and maintain users as customers. The user experience depends heavily on three essential components that consist of framework design and interactive elements and color palette selection because these factors determine perception and purchase behavior of consumers (Ashfaq et al., 2020; Park & Lee, 2023).

Cosmetic companies require full comprehension of these elements when they aim to develop their e-presence while attempting to increase their product sales. The present research explores the linkages between online buying choices and the impact of Social Media Marketing as well as User Interface design together with Easy Use features. This research will provide cosmetic brands with improved knowledge regarding what their target customers actually require and want.

Problem Statement

Businesses face significant barriers to build their online visibility and boost sales due to fast-paced developments in the makeup industry together with the digital business boom. Social media marketing serves as a worldwide marketing tool yet scientists have only explored partially the elements which drive buyers to create purchase intentions (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Hwang & Zhang, 2022). Numerous consumers struggle to browse through online stores and websites which results in frustration and abandoned shopping carts (Alalwan et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2022). Businesses struggle to strike a proper balance between ease of use and aesthetical appeal when designing user interfaces for attracting sustainable online customers (Ashfaq et al., 2020; Park & Lee, 2023). The research seeks to understand the complete relationship between user interface (UI) design, ease of use (EoU) and social media marketing (SMM) elements that influence online purchase intentions in the cosmetic market. The review examines these pieces to provide cosmetic manufacturers with crucial data which helps boost their electronic sales capability and supports their promotional activities.

Research Purpose

Businesses face significant barriers to build their online visibility and boost sales due to fast-paced developments in the makeup industry together with the digital business boom. Social media marketing serves as a worldwide marketing tool yet scientists have only explored partially the elements which drive buyers to create purchase intentions (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Hwang & Zhang, 2022). Numerous consumers struggle to browse through online stores and websites which results in frustration and abandoned shopping carts (Alalwan et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2022). Businesses struggle to strike a proper balance between ease of use and aesthetical appeal when designing user interfaces for attracting sustainable online customers

(Ashfaq et al., 2020; Park & Lee, 2023).

The research seeks to understand the complete relationship between user interface (UI) design, ease of use (EoU) and social media marketing (SMM) elements that influence online purchase intentions in the cosmetic market. The review examines these pieces to provide cosmetic manufacturers with crucial data which helps boost their electronic sales capability and supports their promotional activities.

Research Objective

The main goal of this research is:

1. To identify the most dominant factor among three selected independent variables (i-e: Social Media Marketing, User Interface (UI) design and ease of Use) that highly affects the online purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs.
2. To investigate the correlation between social media marketing (SMM), user interface (UI) design, ease of use (EoU), and purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs.

Research Questions

1. What is the most dominant factor among three selected independent variables (i-e: Social Media Marketing, User Interface (UI) design and ease of Use) that highly affects the online purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs?
2. What is the correlation between social media marketing (SMM), user interface (UI) design, ease of use (EoU), and purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs?

Significance of the Study

This study is very important to different businesses that are associated with the cosmetic sector. First of all, it will give manufacturers of cosmetic products the useful information on what drives consumers' intention to make a virtual purchase. With this information, businesses can create marketing campaigns and tactics that effectively draw in and retain online consumers. Second, it will assist e-commerce platforms and online retailers in recognizing the primary drivers of internet-based purchase impulses in the makeup industry, allowing them to optimize the user experience and improve their online visibility.

Scope of the study

The factors influencing the intention to buy beauty products over the internet will be the primary concern of the study. To get a complete picture, information will be obtained from the participants who make online purchases frequently via questionnaire surveys. But it's crucial to be aware of some limitations, like the possibility of bias in the information provided by the participants and the applicability of the conclusions to a larger population.

Literature Review

The cosmetic industry observed a significant movement toward online product purchases through the past few years because both technological progress and changing consumer preferences. Gaining deep comprehension about consumer purchase intent elements for internet beauty products enables businesses to launch marketing efforts and better develop their online platforms. The research explores the effects of social media marketing (SMM) together with user interface (UI) design features on the ease of use (EoU) which determines online purchase intention for female business administration postgraduate students at three selected private sector HEIs.

Social Media Marketing

Social site platforms serve cosmetic products' firms as a vital marketing tool that helps them build customer engagement and generate awareness while expanding sales through promotional social media efforts. According to Chen et al. (2019) social media tools including Facebook and Instagram and YouTube demonstrate positive results for customer online buying intentions regarding cosmetic products. Firms within the cosmetic industry create personalized buying experiences through content made by users and social influencers along with specific marketing strategies. Through social media marketing businesses increase website traffic numbers selling products online and at the same time attract customer word-of-mouth endorsements and brand trust which drives cosmetic product online purchases.

Lina and Ahluwalia, (2021) in their study about impulse buying via social platforms explained the role of flow theory in customized social site promotions in the setting of Indonesia. The quantitative study was conducted by gathering data by online questionnaires as measuring tools from 157 respondents and revealed that impulse buying is triggered by personalized advertising when the user is fully involved and happy while using social media and gets an ad that matches their preferences. The study concluded that there is a positive effect of personalized advertising to encourage impulse to make online purchases.

Dabbous and Barkat, (2020) furnished their work about the gaps in online and traditional offline context when to figure out the content quality of brands in social networks. The quantitative approach of study was conducted in Lebanon by obtaining data through online questionnaires to get data from 392 participants. The study observed that the quality contents of brands on social media and user interaction with company are most important factors for Millennial. Hedonic motives of social media users are increased by these factors and lead to Intensify their brand awareness.

User Interface (UI) Design

For any online platform the user interface layout has a significant impact on the way consumers shop and buy goods online. Wang and Zhang (2018) found that visual appeal, useful options and intuitive user interface play an important role in shaping intentions to purchase cosmetic products online. An attractive and user-friendly interface on the webstore will draw attention by providing easy product searches while building trust among users. To compete in the challenging online beauty market companies should focus on developing simple menu systems and high-quality visuals and enhancing user interface interactions to drive better online sales.

The study by Ahmed et al. (2020) provides essential knowledge about UI design and consumer purchase intentions using mixed methodology and research on flow theory and factor analysis in online systems. The research traces its origins to the United States where it employed both TAM technology acceptance model and flow theory for its foundation. The research findings proved that UI design plays a critical role in designing online stores which provide pleasurable shopping experiences. Rita et al. (2019) performed their exploratory study regarding the quality of e-service and satisfaction level of customers while shopping through the web in the settings of Portugal. Results of the study indicated the high impact of e-service quality on consumer buying behaviour. Kasilingam (2020) in his quantitative approach about shopping chatbots in smartphone applications followed technology acceptance model (TAM) and diffusion of innovation theory (DIT). The study originated in India by conducting online questionnaire surveys as a measuring tool to collect data from 350 respondents. The study revealed that customers use chatbots for mobile shopping as risk takers and to perceive themselves as innovative. Shia et al, (2020) in their study about customer experience via omnichannel and its effects on intention in online shopping. The study followed Innovation diffusion theory in the setting of China. The study adopted a

pragmatic approach and collected data via surveys and Focus groups. Study found out that omnichannel experiences have a major impact on customers' intention to purchase and buying behaviour.

Due to the rise of internet users, most businesses now interact largely through their websites. Consequently, one of the most crucial business strategies for many companies, including websites for cosmetics, is providing services online. Because it compels users to spend more time browsing a website, its visual appeal plays a key role in capturing in and retaining viewers. On the other hand, a website's ability to survive is dependent upon the overall quality of its layout. Haghghinasab et al. (2008) state that users will abandon a website if it is difficult to use, illegible, neglects to answer their questions, or lacks sufficient visual appeal.

Ease of Use

Ease of use relates to how simple and convenient it is to navigate a web page or online shopping website. According to Venkatesh & Davis (2000) , an easy-to-use website platform and quick transaction procedure have a beneficial impact on buying intentions for cosmetic products online. Individuals are more inclined to buy products over the web where they are able to search for items, evaluate rates, and easily process checkout without having to deal with technological glitches. As a result, organizations that emphasize improving the easy use of their web pages can greatly impact the purchasing habits of customers and enhance rates of conversion. Li et al. (2020) in their study about easy usage of mobile apps in online retailing and buying patterns, following the distance of information state transition (DIT) theory, proposed critical implications for online consumers as well as for application designers in the setting of China. The quantitative research was conducted using an experimental approach among 417 females and 1197 males. Results indicated the significant positive relationship of ease of use and consumers online shopping behaviour patterns.

Rahadian and Hendrayati (2020) completed their study on the idea of easy accessibility of online retail application and purchase intentions, in the setting of Indonesia. Quota Sampling method was used to select samples and an explanatory survey was adopted as a measuring tool. Regression analysis results of this study specify that the consumer prefers to use a system that provides convenience and there is a significant importance of ease of use for using shopping platforms online.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study comprises several important ideas from online purchase intentions theories to help understand the relationship between Independent variables with dependent variable mentioned in this study.

Together with the **Technology acceptance model (TAM)**, Taylor and Todd employed the **Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)** to show trends of usage of information technology. Mathieson (1991) also made use of the TPB and the technology acceptance model, specifically with regard to spreadsheet usage, to predict the intentions of users. The interpersonal impact model, which originated from human psychology and developed in the marketing sector, is another helpful approach to understanding human behaviour, especially that of consumers (Beardon et al., 1989).

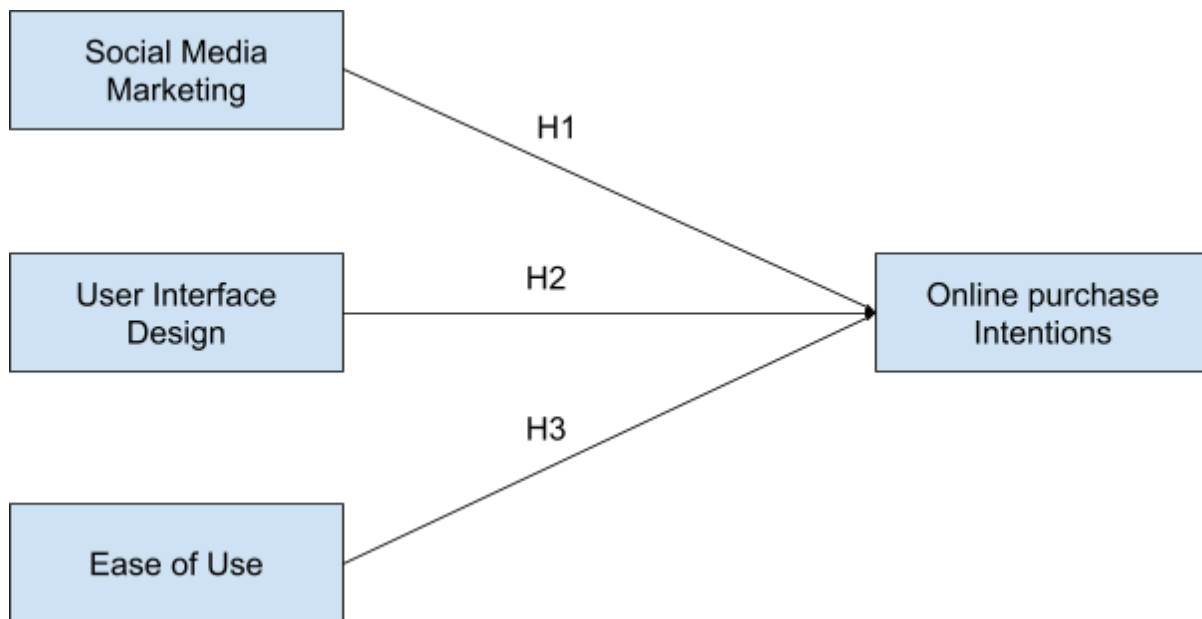
When people have accessibility to new technologies which makes them feel content, at ease, and happy to use, they are more likely to buy goods on the web. (Davis 1980) in **Technology acceptance model (TAM)** displays responses of the users as projected by, perceived convenience, observable ease of use, and behavioural intent. Perceived convenience and observable ease of use reflect efficacious behavioural endresults; Hypothesis 2 and 3 are more aligned with this theory. The hypotheses discuss how User Interface design and Ease of use affect the online purchase intention of consumers in the cosmetic industry.

TAM addresses the variables that affect consumers' acceptance of new technology, according to Davis et al. (1989), Customers' understanding of new technology's usefulness and convenience to use, may have a great impact on how and when they make use of the technology. In the fast evolving new technological era, people are far more inclined to use technology as long as they are having fun while using it. TAM combines the perceived enjoyment element into their study on the increasing trend of purchasing products online (Liao et al., 2008; Cheema et al., 2013).

According to Ajzen's (1991) **theory of planned behaviour (TPB)**, a person's intent to act is influenced by their strengths and weaknesses as well as external challenges in addition to their mindset and subjective norm. Harrison et al. (2021) imitated the small business adoption of multiple emerging solutions by using the TPB.

Consumer behaviour is affected by interpersonal influence, which has been identified as a significant factor (Bearden et al., 1989; Bearden & Rose, 1990). Based on the **TPB**, the researchers think that in order for website layout features to influence consumers on the internet, the basic perceptions of consumers need to be changed about online commerce. Hypotheses 1 and 2 of the current study can be more related with **TPB** as they address the social media marketing and User interface design effects on online purchase intentions of consumers in the cosmetic industry.

2.2 Framework



Research Hypothesis

H₁: Social Media Marketing (SMM) positively affects the online purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs.

H₂: User Interface Design positively affects the online purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs.

H₃: Ease of Use (EoU) positively affects the online purchase intention of female

postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs.

Methodology

According to Bryman (2012) research philosophy means the set of beliefs concerning the nature of reality is known as research philosophy. Also, philosophies of research can fluctuate on the goals of investigation and on the means that might be employed to attain these goals (Goddard & Melville, 2004). In the guidance of the research questions and objectives, framed to carry out this study, the researcher adopted Positivism and quantitative approach. Emphasizing scientific rigor and the testing of phenomena. In this study, the deductive research technique is used. It entails putting ideas and models that already exist to the test in an effort to validate or disprove the correlations between important variables (Silverman, 2013). The study follows a deductive approach, beginning with the improvement of a particular hypothesis build on the investigator's observations from the literature analysis, then designing the research approach to test the hypothesis in an effort to validate or disprove the correlations between social media marketing (SMM), user interface (UI) design, ease of use (EoU) and online purchase intention. This study follows explanatory research design where the researcher intends to find out the degree of relationship of three independent variables i-social media marketing (SMM), user interface (UI) design and ease of use (EoU) with dependent variable (i-e online purchase intention). This study was primarily focused on data interpretation, analysis, and explanation. Given the fact, the study has adopted a cross-sectional, small-scale research design. A questionnaire based on five point likert scale was adapted from (Cervellon & Carey, 2011; Lee and Kozer, 2012; Logan et al., 2012; Venkatesh et al., 2012; Smith, 2014; Duffett, 2015; Zhu and Chang, 2016; Zeng, 2020) as the tool for data collection. The data was collected via survey method from the female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs. Findings are reported using statistical data analysis and interpretation to identify the factors affecting online purchase intentions of consumers in the cosmetic industry and draw meaningful research conclusions.

The population of this study was composed of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs. The sample of this study was female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs who have experienced purchasing cosmetic products once in their lifetime. A simple random sampling will be employed to collect data from female postgraduate students of business administration departments of three selected private sector HEIs. Homogeneous sampling was employed to collect data from participants. The sample of 196 will be selected from 382 female postgraduate students of business administration departments of three selected private sector HEIs as per the Morgan table of sample size.

The quantitative data was collected from the female postgraduate students of business administration departments of three selected private sector HEIs. Data was collected through an adapted survey questionnaire via visiting campuses physically to reach maximum potential respondents. For this purpose, the researcher got approval from the Head of the Department and obtained the schedule of classes held weekly. Afterward, with mutual agreement between the researcher and supervisor, permission was taken from respective faculty members to distribute and recollect the data collection instrument (questionnaire).

However, even though the instrument was borrowed from previous studies, it was thoroughly evaluated to ensure its suitability in the current context. The content validity was first assessed by conducting an extensive literature review. To validate the instrument, each item was reviewed by two field experts and two language specialists from the selected HEIs.

Based on their feedback, necessary revisions were made to the items. Subsequently, a pilot study involving 40 participants was conducted to assess the reliability of the data specifically within the study's context. The reliability of the instrument used in this research was determined by calculating Cronbach's alpha value, with a threshold of 0.70 or higher for each item.

Pilot Study

Table 3.2: Overall Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items
.968	.968

The Cumulative reliability results based on the pilot study indicated that the overall Cronbach alpha value of the quantitative tool is 0.968 which is under the accepted range of Cronbach alpha level of reliability as shown in Table 3.2. Given this fact, the data is considered reliable in the context of the study.

Table 3.3: Item-Total Statistics

Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
EoU 82.2093	249.598	.910	.867	.960
UI 82.5349	239.112	.935	.907	.953
SMM 81.5349	254.017	.904	.852	.962
PI 81.4884	242.589	.931	.898	.955

To further validate the tool, a construct-wise reliability check had also been run which is depicted in Table 3.3. Findings yielded from the test indicated that for the independent constructs i) Ease of Use the Cronbach alpha value is 0.960, ii) User Interface the Cronbach alpha value 0.953, iii) Social Media Marketing the Cronbach alpha value is 0.962. Whereas, for the dependent variable Online Purchase Intention the Cronbach alpha value is 0.955. Conclusively, findings yielded from both tables (3.2 and 3.3) depict that the data in its cumulative and construct-wise value is reliable. Hence, the instrument can be utilized in the context of the study.

Data Analysis

This chapter provides an overview of the research objectives, questions, and analyzes and discusses the research findings. The main goal of this study is to identify the most dominant factors affecting online purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs. The research objective and corresponding question is presented in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Research Objectives and Questions

S. No.	Research Objectives	Research Questions
1.	To identify the most dominant factor among three selected independent variables (i-e: Social Media Marketing, User Interface (UI) design and ease of Use) that highly affects the online purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs.	What is the most dominant factor among three selected independent variables (i-e: Social Media Marketing, User Interface (UI) design and ease of Use) that highly affects the online purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs?
2.	To investigate the correlation between social media marketing (SMM), user interface (UI) design, ease of use (EoU), and purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs.	What is the correlation between social media marketing (SMM), user interface (UI) design, ease of use (EoU), and purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs?

Results

To seek the answers to the research questions, the researcher opted for quantitative data collection via a survey questionnaire tool. The data was then inserted into SPSS 27.0 for statistical analysis. To yield the results from the raw data, initially a descriptive test was run whose findings are reported in the subsequent paragraphs. Initially, item-wise descriptive results are reported for each construct to address the subsequent research questions. While reporting the descriptive results only the mean is reported as per Hassam's mean specification range, 2015 to determine the highest or lowest items affecting online purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs as per the constructs of the tool. Alongside this, the standard deviation of the items is also reported. Afterwards, cumulative descriptive results are reported to determine the dominating factors affecting online purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs.

1. What is the most dominant factor among three selected independent variables (i-e: Social Media Marketing, User Interface (UI) design and ease of Use) that highly affects the online purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs?

The question aimed at identifying the most dominating factor among three selected independent variables (i-e: Social Media Marketing, User Interface (UI) design and ease of Use) that highly affects the online purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs.

Here, the researcher has reported the descriptive statistics for each variable separately before reporting the cumulative descriptive statistics.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Social Media Marketing (SMM)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SMM1	196	1.00	5.00	3.5255	.87376
SMM2	196	1.00	5.00	3.5459	.91311
SMM3	196	1.00	5.00	3.2296	.99400
SMM4	196	1.00	5.00	3.2551	1.03092
SMM5	196	1.00	5.00	3.2398	1.07114
SMM6	196	1.00	5.00	3.4235	.98150
SMM7	196	1.00	5.00	3.4490	1.05852
SMM8	196	1.00	5.00	3.2500	1.06879
Valid N (listwise)	196				

Descriptive Statistics for Social Media Marketing (SMM)

Table 4.2 above represents the findings for the construct Social Media Marketing (SMM). The construct in total has eight items out of which the first two reported lie under the strongly agreed range of mean as per Hassam, 2015. As per the findings yielded via statistical analysis the highest-ranking mean item in the construct is “I often see relevant offers on the walls of my social media sites that trigger my purchase intention” with the mean score of 3.5459, SD= .91311. Whereas, “Social media marketing deeply influences my interests and preferences to buy beauty products via online stores” has the second highest mean with a score of 3.5255, SD= .87376. However, the fifth item “A review or feedback space is the first thing that I check for before purchasing a makeup item” ranks least in the construct and lies under the satisfied range with the mean score of 3.2398, SD= 1.07114.

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics for User Interface (UI) design

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
UI1	196	1.00	5.00	3.4184	.96528
UI2	196	1.00	5.00	3.2194	.99116
UI3	196	1.00	5.00	3.1990	.95874
UI4	196	1.00	5.00	3.41969	.98809
UI5	196	1.00	5.00	3.3980	.97391
UI6	196	1.00	5.00	3.3367	.99170
UI7	196	1.00	5.00	3.3265	.98995
UI8	196	1.00	5.00	3.19688	.88366
Valid N (listwise)	196				

Descriptive Statistics for User Interface (UI) design

Above is Table 4.3, which represents the findings for the construct user interface (UI) design. The construct in total has eight items out of which the first and fourth reported lie under the strongly agree range of mean as per Hassam, 2015. As per the findings yielded via statistical analysis the highest-ranking mean item in the construct is “A clear and well organized user

interface of the website strongly shapes the intention to make purchase of cosmetic products.” with the mean score of 3.41969, SD= .98809. Whereas, “The interface of the website I use for purchasing makeup and skincare products is very user friendly”, has the second highest mean with a score of 3.4184, SD= .96528. However, the third item “The website has options that allow users to ask for support whenever needed” ranks least in the construct and lies under the satisfied range with the mean score of 3.19688, SD= .88366.

Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics for Ease of Use (EoU)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EoU1	196	1.00	5.00	3.3827	.88376
EoU2	196	1.00	5.00	3.2959	.91941
EoU3	196	1.00	5.00	3.3010	1.14855
EoU4	196	1.00	5.00	3.3214	.97336
EoU5	196	1.00	5.00	3.2602	.97067
EoU6	196	1.00	5.00	3.3204	.93026
EoU7	196	1.00	5.00	3.2500	1.08309
EoU8	196	1.00	5.00	3.2398	1.08540
Valid N (listwise)	196				

Descriptive Statistics for Ease of Use (EoU)

Above is Table 4.4, which represents the findings for the construct Ease of Use (EoU). The construct in total has eight items out of which the first and fourth reported lie under the strongly agree range of mean as per Hassam, 2015. As per the findings yielded via statistical analysis the highest-ranking mean item in the construct is “The transaction mode of the website is secure and user friendly” with the mean score of 3.3827, SD= .88376. Whereas, “The website provides customization to the user to find the right product”, has the second highest mean with a score of 3.3214, SD= .97336. However, the eighth item “Ease of use increases my productivity in the search and purchase of cosmetic products” ranks least in the construct and lies under the satisfied range with the mean score of 3.2398, SD= 1.08540.

Table 4.5 Cumulative Descriptive Statistics

N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistics	Skewness		Kurtosis		
					Statistics	Std. Error	Statistics	Std. Error	
EoU	196	1.50	4.88	3.2966	0.67021	-.069	.174	-.561	.346
UI	196	1.50	4.50	3.3116	0.65770	-.346	.174	-.625	.346
SMM	196	1.75	4.75	3.3648	0.68047	-.093	.174	-.979	.346
Valid (list wise)	196								

Cumulative Descriptive Statistics

As per the results in table 4.5, ease of use with the mean score of 3.2966 and SD= 0.67021 that is just above the neutral midway (3 on a 5-point scale) per Hassam mean specification table, 2015. This figure suggests that respondents generally view the web pages for the

cosmetic brand as being relatively easy to use. Although consumers find the websites very easy to use, there is still potential for development to raise satisfaction or perceived ease of use. As per the results in table 4.5, user interface with mean score of 3.3116 and SD= 0.65770 that is less above than ease of use to the neutral midway (3 on a 5-point scale) as per Hassam mean specification table, 2015. This suggests that respondents' opinions of the online sites' user interface design are just somewhat favorable. Although it again points to possible areas for improvement, the slight variation in the user interface and ease of use suggest a consistent user experience but need a focus on improvement.

According to the derived figures in table 4.5, as per Hassam mean specification table, 2015, the category with the greatest mean value of 3.3648 and SD= 0.68047 is social media marketing, meaning that participants' opinions of the brand's social media marketing initiatives range from moderately positive to favorable. In comparison to the Ease of Use and User Interface, this higher score indicates that respondents may believe the cosmetic brand's social media footprint to be more compelling or successful in shaping their buy intentions. The mean scores for all three categories are somewhat over the midpoint, indicating that respondents typically have a fairly favorable perception of these variables. With the highest average score out of the three independent variables, social media marketing appears to be the most useful and preferred tool to create online purchase intentions of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs.

Tests of Normality

Table 4.6 Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
EoU	.098	196	.000	.975	196	.001
UI	.132	196	.000	.957	196	.000
SMM	.107	196	.000	.964	196	.000
PI	.134	196	.000	.952	196	.000

Table 4.6 depicts the normality analysis of all the constructs of the research tool. The Shapiro-Wilk test, which is especially useful for small sample sizes, was used to assess the data's normality. The following is a summary of each variable's results:

Ease of Use: The data for this measure considerably depart from a normal distribution ($p < 0.05$), as indicated by the Shapiro-Wilk test's significance value of 0.001.

User Interface Design: A substantial deviation from normal distribution ($p < 0.05$) was shown by the Shapiro-Wilk test's significance value of 0.000.

Social Media Marketing: The data for this variable is not normally distributed, as indicated by the Shapiro-Wilk test's significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$).

Purchase Intention (Dependent Variable): A substantial departure from normalcy ($p < 0.05$) was indicated by the Shapiro-Wilk test result of 0.000 for the dependent variable.

These findings indicate that none of the variable's data have a normal distribution. As a result, depending on the study design and goals, it was crucial to take into account non-parametric statistical techniques.

Correlation Analysis

Table 4.7 Correlations

			EoU	UI	SMM	PI
Spearman's Rho	EoU	Correlation	1.000	.818**	.759**	.704**
		Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	196	196	196	196
	UI	Correlation	.818**	1.000	.673**	.634**
		Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
		N	196	196	196	196
	SMM	Correlation	.759**	.673**	1.000	.852**
		Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	196	196	196	196
	PI	Correlation	.704**	.634**	.852**	1.000
		Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	196	196	196	196

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

Research Question 2

What is the correlation between social media marketing (SMM), user interface (UI) design, ease of use (EoU), and purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs?

The question aimed at identifying the relationship among three selected independent variables (i-e: Social Media Marketing, User Interface (UI) design and ease of Use) with the online purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs.

Below are the findings from the data obtained from the respondents.

Ease of use

The statistical data analysis from Table 4.7 yielded that the coefficient of correlation of Ease of use for the construct Purchase intention is 0.704, which indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between ease of use and online purchase intentions of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs. Sig value of 0.000 indicates that observed correlation between ease of use and purchase intention of female postgraduate students of business administration department at three selected HEIs is significant, statistically.

User interface design

The statistical data analysis from Table 4.7 yielded that the coefficient of correlation of user interface design for the construct Purchase intention is 0.634, which indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between user interface design and online purchase intentions of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs. Suggesting that the more good and appealing the user interface would be the

more purchase intention it would develop. Sig value of 0.000 indicates that observed correlation between user interface design and online purchase intentions of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs is significant, statistically.

Social Media marketing

The statistical data analysis from Table 4.7 yielded that the coefficient of correlation of social media marketing for the construct Purchase intention is 0.852, which indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between social media marketing and online purchase intentions of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs. Suggesting that the more strategic social media marketing would be the more purchase intention it would generate.

Sig value of 0.000 indicates that observed correlation between social media marketing and online purchase intentions of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs, is significant statistically.

Regression Analysis

Table 4.7 Regression

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error				Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.254	.144		1.767	.079					
EoU	.065	.075	.063	.873	.384	.692	.063	.032	.262	3.821
UI	.107	.068	.102	1.571	.118	.642	.113	.058	.325	3.077
SMM	.752	.057	.738	13.278	.000	.852	.692	.491	.442	2.260

a. Dependent Variable: PI

Regression Equation:

Dependent variable = constant + B(independent variable) + B(Independent variable).....

According to the table 4.7 above, in the scenario when all independent variables are zero, the model forecasts the starting Purchase Intention value of 0.254. This constant serves as the foundation for purchasing intent irrespective of social media marketing, user interface design, or ease of use.

Ease of Use: The model indicates Ease of Use as an inconsequential factor with a significance (p-value) of 0.384 which is greater than threshold of 0.05. Although it shows a positive association with a standardized beta (Beta) value of 0.063, its influence on the intention to purchase is statistically insignificant.

User Interface Design: In a similar manner User Interface Design is not a significant predictor, with a sig-value of 0.118. The p-value is greater than 0.05, which means that even though the effect has a greater standardized Beta value of 0.102 than Ease of Use, it is also not statistically significant.

Social Media Marketing: Conversely, with a sig-value of 0.000 and its greatest standardized Beta value of 0.738, Social Media Marketing comes out as the most dominant and prominent

factor among the independent variables. This suggests that Social Media Marketing is the model's most important and powerful predictor, significantly boosting Purchase Intention. Ultimately, online purchase intentions of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs, is positively impacted by both user interface design and ease of use, but these effects are statistically not significant, implying that, although significant, user interface of website and ease of use might not be the main variables influencing online purchase intentions of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs.

On the other hand, social media marketing is clearly the primary factor that influences online purchase intentions of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs, having a considerable and favorable effect. This emphasizes how crucial it is to create strong social media campaigns and sustain a significant level of digital interaction in order to successfully attract and shape customer behavior in this cutthroat industry.

Discussion

This study looked at the elements that affect consumers' intents to make online purchases in the cosmetics sector, with a particular emphasis on social media marketing, user interface design, and ease of use. The research used Regression and normality tests and Spearman correlation to establish comprehensive knowledge about these relationships. Research findings indicated that interface design does not affect the online buying tendency of female business administration postgraduates from selected private universities based on regression analysis of the data in table 4.8. Results contradict literature findings which demonstrate that visual appeal together with useful options and an intuitive user interface influence online buying intentions for cosmetic products (Wang and Zhang, 2018). The online purchase intention of female students who are postgraduate business administration learners from three private sector HEIs remained unchanged based on regression analysis results displayed in table 4.8 regardless of ease of use.

The rejection of hypothesis 3 is contrary to the finding in the previous studies quoted in literature review that suggested that an easy-to-use website platform and quick transaction procedure have a beneficial impact on buying intentions for cosmetic products online (Davis, 1980).

Although favorably correlated with purchase intention, ease of use and user interface design were found insignificant predictors statistically, according to the regression study. This suggests that although users may value user-friendly platforms with eye-catching designs, these attributes have no major effect on their decision to buy makeup online.

The insignificant influence of these variables might be attributed to the overloading of standard assumptions among consumers; most users could assume a certain degree of usability and aesthetic appeal as usual and are thus not persuaded by these aspects until they go below expectations.

Conversely, for hypothesis 1 social media marketing was shown to be emerging as the most important and powerful element influencing online purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs. The regression findings demonstrate the significant positive association between Social Media Marketing and purchase intention of female postgraduate students in business administration departments at three selected private sector HEIs, highlighting the essential role that social media plays in influencing customer behavior. This went parallel to the earlier findings in the literature review that suggested that the application of social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and YouTube resonates positively along with

intentions of customers to make online purchases for the cosmetic products (Chen et al., 2019).

Also, the distribution of the variables was found to be relatively normal by the normality tests performed on the data, so verifying the correctness of the regression analysis.

While there appears to be a positive association between these factors and, it may be complex and influenced by other additional variables that were not included in the model, as indicated by the significant findings via the Spearman correlation analysis for each of the independent variables, including those identified as non-significant by the analysis of regression model.

Implications

The following are some ramifications of the study's results for academics and cosmetic industry professionals:

Regarding Marketers: The necessity of investing in complete social media strategy is underscored by the noteworthy influence of Social Media Marketing. The primary goal of marketers should be to provide genuine and stimulating material that appeals to their target market. This entails utilizing content created by users, interactive marketing, and influencers to increase brand loyalty and encourage intentions to purchase.

For designers of e-commerce platforms: Although not shown to be significant predictors, ease of use and user interface design are still important factors to consider. The user experience is built around these components. It is crucial to make sure that these features live up to industry standards since any deviance from what customers anticipate might discourage them from making a purchase.

For Scholars: The differences between Spearman correlation and regression analysis results indicate that more investigation is required to fully understand the root causes influencing online purchasing intentions. To learn more about these correlations, future research should look into possible mediating or moderating variables like perceived value, brand loyalty, or customer trust.

Recommendations

The following suggestions for further study and application are made in light of the study's conclusions and ramifications:

Investigate Moderating Factors: Subsequent research endeavors have to contemplate scrutinizing the ways in which factors such as customer trust, perceived worth or brand reputation neutralize the correlation among User Interface Design, ease of use and Purchase Intention. This may shed light on the reasons behind the present study's conclusion that these variables were not significant.

Examine business-Specific variables: Although the cosmetic business was the study's primary emphasis, it would be helpful to see whether the results apply to other industries as well. By comparing different sectors, one may identify distinct elements that impact buy intentions and adjust marketing techniques appropriately.

Longitudinal Studies: Over time, tracking shifts in buying habits may be aided by conducting longitudinal research. Understanding how these factors affect the efficacy of User Interface Design, Social Media Marketing, and Ease of Use might be crucial for maintaining competitiveness in the market as technological advances and changes in consumer preferences

Upgraded Social Media Metrics: Businesses ought to make investments in upgraded social media metrics to gain a deeper understanding of customer sentiment and engagement, especially in light of the vital role that social media marketing plays. By using this data, strategies may be improved and new clients can be targeted more successfully.

Incorporate feedback of consumers: Businesses ought to constantly search for and incorporate feedback from customers into the layouts of their websites and marketing campaigns. Frequent updates that take customer preferences into account lead to delivering an improved experience for users and bring the company closer to what customers anticipate.

Conclusion

The result of the research emphasizes the importance of social media marketing in the cosmetics business on consumers' intents to make online purchases, while also recognizing the key elements of user interface design and ease of use. The results imply that although these later elements are significant, purchasing behavior may not be primarily influenced by them. Companies in the cosmetics sector can more effectively attract and transform customer attention into sales by concentrating on the creation of strong social media campaigns and adhering to standard practices in functionality and aesthetics.

References

- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1972). Attitudes and normative beliefs as factors influencing behavioral intentions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 21(1), 1.
- Bearden, W. O., & Rose, R. L. (1990). Attention to social comparison information: An individual difference factor affecting consumer conformity. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16(4), 461-471.
- Choi, B., Kwon, O., & Shin, B. (2017). Location-based system: Comparative effects of personalization vs ease of use. *Telematics and Informatics*, 34(1), 91-102.
- Clark, T., Foster, L., Bryman, A., & Sloan, L. (2021). *Bryman's social research methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Conner, M., & Sparks, P. (2005). Theory of planned behaviour and health behaviour. In M. Conner & P. Norman (Eds.), *Predicting health behaviour* (2nd ed., pp. 121-162). Open University Press.
- Dabbous, A., & Barakat, K. A. (2020). Bridging the online offline gap: Assessing the impact of brands' social network content quality on brand awareness and purchase intention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 53, 101966.
- Fachrulamry, D. M. R., & Hendrayati, H. (2021, September). Perceived ease of use on purchase intention of mobile commerce application. In *5th Global Conference on Business, Management and Entrepreneurship (GCBME 2020)* (pp. 512-516). Atlantis Press.
- Goddard, W., & Melville, S. (2004). *Research methodology: An introduction*. Juta and Company Ltd.
- Kasilingam, D. L. (2020). Understanding the attitude and intention to use smartphone chatbots for shopping. *Technology in Society*, 62, 101280.
- Kasinphila, P., Dowpiset, K., & Nuangjamnong, C. (2023). Influence of web design, usefulness, ease of use, and enjoyment on beauty and cosmetics online purchase intention towards a popular brand in Thailand. *Research Gate*.
- Legris, P., Ingham, J., & Collerette, P. (2003). Why do people use information technology? A critical review of the technology acceptance model. *Information & Management*, 40(3), 191-204.

- Li, X., Zhao, X., & Pu, W. (2020). Measuring ease of use of mobile applications in e-commerce retailing from the perspective of consumer online shopping behaviour patterns. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 55, 102093.
- Lina, L. F., & Ahluwalia, L. (2021). Customers' impulse buying in social commerce: The role of flow experience in personalized advertising. *Jurnal Manajemen Maranatha*, 21(1), 1-8.
- Mathieson, K. (1991). Predicting user intentions: Comparing the technology acceptance model with the theory of planned behavior. *Information Systems Research*, 2(3), 173-191.
- Meskaran, F., Ismail, Z., & Shanmugam, B. (2013). Online purchase intention: Effects of trust and security perception. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, 7(6), 307-315.
- Pavlou, P. A. (2003). Consumer acceptance of electronic commerce: Integrating trust and risk with the technology acceptance model. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 7(3), 101-134.
- Rita, P., Oliveira, T., & Farisa, A. (2019). The impact of e-service quality and customer satisfaction on customer behavior in online shopping. *Heliyon*, 5(10).
- Salisbury, W. D., Pearson, R. A., Pearson, A. W., & Miller, D. W. (2001). Perceived security and World Wide Web purchase intention. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 101(4), 165-177.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. H., & Thornhill, A. (2007). *Research methods for business students* (4th ed.). Pearson Education Limited.
- Sahney, S., Ghosh, K., & Shrivastava, A. (2013). Conceptualizing consumer "trust" in online buying behaviour: An empirical inquiry and model development in Indian context. *Journal of Asia Business Studies*, 7(3), 278-298.
- Shi, S., Wang, Y., Chen, X., & Zhang, Q. (2020). Conceptualization of omnichannel customer experience and its impact on shopping intention: A mixed-method approach. *International Journal of Information Management*, 50, 325-336.
- Silverman, D. (2013). What counts as qualitative research? Some cautionary comments. *Qualitative Sociology Review*, 9(2), 48-55.
- Stephen, A. T., & Galak, J. (2012). The effects of traditional and social earned media on sales: A study of a microlending marketplace. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 49(5), 624-639.
- Taylor, S., & Todd, P. (1997). Understanding the determinants of consumer composting behavior. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 27(7), 602-628.
- Ur Rehman, U., Rizwan, M., Ud Din Ahmed, A., Ali, N., & Khan, M. H. (2013). E-TAM model: A comprehensive approach to understand the adoption of electronic shopping. *Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research*, 3(11), 178-188.
- Venkatesh, V., & Davis, F. D. (2000). A theoretical extension of the technology acceptance model: Four longitudinal field studies. *Management Science*, 46(2), 186-204.
- Wu, L., Chiu, M. L., & Chen, K. W. (2020). Defining the determinants of online impulse buying through a shopping process of integrating perceived risk, expectation-confirmation model, and flow theory issues. *International Journal of Information Management*, 52, 102099.