

DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK BASED ON THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR TO EXAMINE THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING FEATURES ON CONSUMERS PURCHASE INTENTIONS FOR COSMETIC PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

In today's digital era, social media platforms have transformed how cosmetic brands connect with consumers. Advertising is no longer a one-way message; it's interactive, emotional, and driven by trusted personalities. For beauty consumers, especially younger audiences, what they see on Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok plays a crucial role in shaping their buying decisions. Increasingly, consumers are also valuing brands that promote eco-friendly practices and sustainable beauty solutions, making sustainability an essential component of advertising strategies. This paper proposes a conceptual framework using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to explore how specific features of social media advertising such as informativeness, interactivity, emotional appeal, credibility, and sustainability cues impact consumer attitudes and perceived social influence, ultimately affecting purchase intention. By integrating these advertising attributes into a behavioural model, the study offers a fresh perspective on how digital content design can shape beauty-related buying decisions. The proposed framework aims to guide future empirical research and help marketers design content that not only grabs attention but genuinely influences consumer behaviour.

Keywords: Social media advertising, Cosmetic products, Purchase intention, Advertising features, TPB, Attitude, Interactivity, Emotional appeal, Sustainability

1. Introduction

In the digital-first world of 2025, social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become vital spaces for beauty brands to connect with consumers, particularly millennials and Gen Z, who are highly responsive to visual content, influencer recommendations, and interactive campaigns [1,2]. Unlike traditional advertising, social media advertising is personal, emotional, and participatory, allowing consumers to actively engage with content through likes, shares, comments, and even user-generated contributions [3,4]. This shift has made advertising features such as informativeness, interactivity, emotional appeal, and credibility central to how consumers form opinions and make purchasing decisions about cosmetic products [5–7]. Despite the growing popularity of these platforms, many studies still focus on general consumer behaviour or online buying trends, with limited attention to how these ad-specific features interact with psychological models like the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) [8,9]. TPB, developed by Ajzen, explains behavioural intention through three primary drivers: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control [10]. While the model has been successfully applied to various consumer contexts, including sustainable beauty and online shopping [2,11,12], there is still a gap in integrating digital ad characteristics into the TPB framework, especially in the context of cosmetics. Recent research has started to explore this overlap highlighting how features like influencer credibility and interactive content influence not just consumer attitude but also perceived social pressure and behavioural intent [9,13]. Building on these findings, this paper proposes a conceptual framework that embeds four key advertising features into the TPB model. It explores how informativeness, emotional appeal, interactivity, and credibility affect TPB components like attitude and subjective norms, which in turn shape the consumer's intention to purchase cosmetic products. The aim is to bridge the gap between content design and behavioural theory while offering practical insights for beauty brands navigating a competitive and emotionally driven digital marketplace.

2. Review of the Literature and Hypothesis Development

The ever-evolving landscape of beauty and cosmetics, especially in emerging markets like India, has seen a significant shift in how consumers form purchase intentions. Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have become dominant arenas for cosmetic brands to advertise, interact, and influence their audience. To understand how such advertising shapes buying decisions, the **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)** provides a well-established and adaptable framework. Proposed by Ajzen [1], TPB explains that behaviour is influenced by three core psychological constructs: an individual's attitude toward the behaviour, perceived social pressure (subjective norms), and the belief in one's ability to control the behaviour (perceived behavioural control). In beauty marketing particularly in regions like Uttar Pradesh where online beauty consumption is rising these constructs remain highly relevant.

Indian researchers have increasingly applied TPB to explore cosmetic purchase intentions. For example, Upadhyaya and Sijoria [2] studied green cosmetics and confirmed that consumer attitudes, peer influence, and perceived ease of buying are strong predictors of buying intention. Likewise, Khan *et al.* [3] highlighted the unique role of social media in shaping Indian women's online beauty product preferences, reinforcing that TPB remains robust in the digital advertising era. However, with social media evolving into more than just a communication tool, there is growing interest in understanding how specific **advertising features** such as **informativeness**, **interactivity**, **credibility**, and **emotional appeal** feed into the TPB model and influence consumer behaviour, especially in beauty-conscious demographics.

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *The informativeness of social media advertising has a positive effect on consumer attitude toward cosmetic products.*

One of the most consistently cited features in ad effectiveness is **informativeness**. Consumers today expect more than promotional slogans they want educational and detailed content that supports informed decisions. In the context of cosmetics, informative content often includes ingredient transparency, benefits, skin compatibility, and how-to tutorials. Studies confirm that such content builds positive attitudes toward both the product and the brand [4,5]. When applied to consumers in places like Lucknow or Kanpur, where online beauty shopping is booming, informativeness can reduce uncertainty and enhance trust.

Hypothesis (H2). *Interactivity in social media advertising has a positive effect on subjective norms regarding the purchase of cosmetic products.*

In parallel, **interactivity** the degree to which consumers can engage with ads has also emerged as a key driver of consumer response. On platforms like Instagram and TikTok, beauty brands use interactive tools like polls, filters, reels, or Q&As to increase engagement. These features allow users not just to consume content passively, but to participate in conversations and even co-create brand narratives. Research shows that such experiences foster a sense of community and make consumers more aware of what others are thinking or doing—thus shaping their **subjective norms** [6]. This is particularly relevant in a socially influenced market like India, where buying decisions are often shaped by peer behaviour and online social proof.

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *Credibility of social media advertising has a positive effect on subjective norms regarding the purchase of cosmetic products.*

Another essential factor is **credibility**, especially when ads are delivered by influencers or trusted public figures. Consumers are more likely to believe in a product when the message comes from a credible source someone perceived as authentic, knowledgeable, and relatable [7]. In the beauty space, influencer marketing dominates, with many buyers making decisions based on skincare or makeup advice from content creators they follow. In a cultural context like Uttar Pradesh, where word-of-

mouth and social validation matter, credible advertising can amplify perceived social expectations, which again links directly to subjective norms within TPB [8].

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *Emotional appeal in social media advertising has a positive effect on consumer attitude toward cosmetic products.*

Emotional appeal the ability of an ad to connect with the consumer's feelings has also proven vital in beauty marketing. Emotional content in ads may evoke confidence, aspiration, empowerment, or belonging. A lipstick ad that promotes self-expression or a skincare video showing a transformation story can resonate deeply with young buyers. Studies suggest that when ads strike an emotional chord, they not only capture attention but also create favourable attitudes toward the brand [9,10]. For consumers in urban and semi-urban UP, emotional storytelling in local language or culturally aligned messaging makes products more desirable and memorable.

Hypothesis 5 (H5). *Consumer attitude toward cosmetic products has a positive effect on purchase intention.*

Hypothesis 6 (H6) *Subjective norms regarding cosmetic products have a positive effect on purchase intention.*

Lastly, the TPB model asserts that **attitude** and **subjective norms** together shape a consumer's **intention to purchase**. If the consumer has a favourable view of the cosmetic product and perceives that important others (friends, family, influencers) support the purchase, the likelihood of buying increases. Numerous studies confirm this relationship in India's online beauty market [2,3,6]. As such, understanding these relationships helps bridge the gap between social media content and actual buying behaviour.

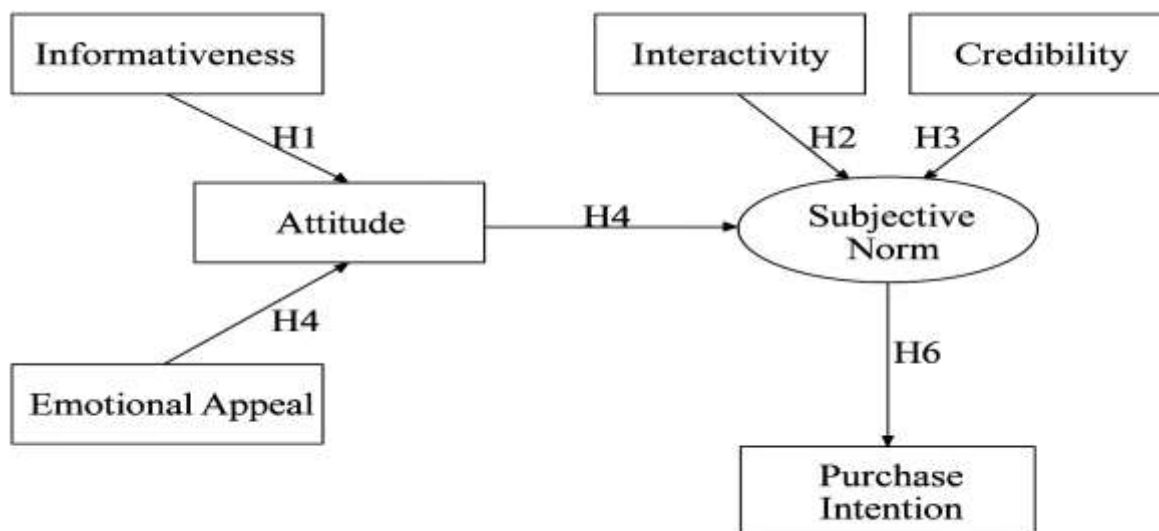


Figure 1 Conceptual model

3. Materials and Methods

This study follows a conceptual research design that aims to develop a theoretical model explaining how different features of social media advertising influence consumers' intention to purchase cosmetic products. The foundation of this framework is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which has been widely applied in understanding consumer decision-making across various contexts, including digital and cosmetic marketing. Instead of collecting new (primary) data, this research draws insights from a broad base of secondary data specifically, academic studies published in Scopus and Web of Science-indexed journals.

To build a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding, the literature review focused on publications from 2015 to 2025, using search terms such as “*social media advertising*,” “*cosmetic purchase intention*,” “*digital consumer behaviour*,” “*TPB in beauty industry*,” “*influencer credibility*,” and “*interactive marketing*.” The selection prioritized peer-reviewed research conducted in India or similar developing markets to ensure contextual relevance, particularly for regions like Uttar Pradesh, where digital adoption in beauty shopping is growing rapidly. After a systematic review process, 45 scholarly articles were selected for analysis.

Based on the literature synthesis, four major features of social media advertising informativeness, interactivity, emotional appeal, and credibility were identified as key influencers of two components from the TPB model: attitude and subjective norms. These, in turn, are proposed to affect the consumer’s intention to purchase cosmetic products. The model and accompanying hypotheses are developed by aligning existing findings with the specific behavioural patterns observed in online cosmetic buying. While no original data was collected for this study, the framework sets a strong foundation for future empirical research, where the model can be tested quantitatively using techniques such as structural equation modelling (SEM) or regression analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

This study proposes a conceptual framework that extends the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by incorporating specific features of social media advertising informativeness, interactivity, emotional appeal, and credibility to better understand how these factors influence consumers’ attitudes, social pressures (subjective norms), and ultimately, their intention to purchase cosmetic products. The framework is particularly relevant in the context of digitally active consumers in regions like Uttar Pradesh, where cosmetic shopping is increasingly influenced by online engagement, peer validation, and influencer culture.

4.1. Informativeness Shapes Positive Attitudes

In a product category like cosmetics, consumers often seek clarity and assurance. Informative advertising ads that clearly explain product benefits, usage instructions, or ethical sourcing builds trust and helps consumers form a favourable attitude toward the product [2,4,6,14]. In India, many buyers expect not just a promotional message but useful content that helps them make better choices. Recent studies confirm that when consumers perceive an ad to be informative, they’re more likely to view the product positively and develop brand loyalty [6,14]. Cerave’s educational marketing campaigns and brands like The Ordinary have successfully used transparent ingredient-based communication to connect with conscious buyers [15].

4.2. Interactivity Reinforces Social Expectations

Beyond content, consumers also value how brands engage with them. Features such as polls, live Q&As, quizzes, influencer shout-outs, or even reply-to-comment threads help brands appear more human and approachable. This sense of interaction enhances peer recognition and visibility, contributing to subjective norms a key element in TPB [3,4,9]. Studies from Indonesia and India indicate that interactive formats not only improve recall but also make consumers more aware of what others are buying, liking, or recommending [9,10,16]. In short, the more a consumer feels part of the conversation, the more likely they are to accept peer-influenced purchase behaviour.

4.3. Credibility Builds Social Confidence

When it comes to skincare or beauty, credibility is critical. Buyers are far more likely to trust a product endorsed by a dermatologist, influencer, or satisfied user especially if the message feels real and honest. Credibility, whether built through expertise, transparency, or authenticity, reinforces subjective norms by providing social proof [7,11,17]. In a collectivist culture like India’s, people often rely on trusted sources to validate their choices. Multiple studies show that a credible endorsement

can increase not only brand trust but also the perceived pressure to conform to what is socially approved [10,11,18].

4.4. Emotional Appeal Enhances Attitude

While information and credibility appeal to the mind, emotional storytelling appeals to the heart. Cosmetics ads that celebrate self-expression, self-confidence, or beauty empowerment tend to leave a lasting impression [3,8,13]. This emotional resonance builds a stronger and more favourable attitude toward the product. Whether it’s a relatable testimonial, a transformation video, or messaging aligned with identity or values, emotionally rich ads are found to significantly influence brand evaluation and purchase likelihood [12,13]. In India, campaigns that reflect cultural diversity or aspirational lifestyles often perform better among digital beauty consumers.

4.5. Linking Attitudes and Norms to Intention

Consistent with the TPB model, both attitude and subjective norms are found to significantly shape purchase intention across multiple studies [1,2,3]. If a consumer believes a cosmetic product is good (attitude) and sees others approving or recommending it (subjective norm), they’re much more likely to consider buying it. This holds true particularly in digitally engaged and youth-driven markets like urban Uttar Pradesh. Several studies support the role of social media engagement, peer influence, and influencer trust in triggering actual consumer behaviour in cosmetics [4,6,9,10,13].

Together, these findings suggest that the proposed conceptual model built on a solid behavioural foundation and tailored to modern digital realities can serve as a useful base for future empirical testing. By exploring how consumers interact with beauty content online, this study contributes to a better understanding of how social media advertising is reshaping buying decisions in the cosmetic industry.

Table 1: Summary of Proposed Hypotheses and Theoretical Basis

Hypothesis	Pathway	Theoretical Justification	Key References
H1	Informativeness → Attitude	Consumers trust clear and relevant ads	[2, 4,]
H2	Interactivity → Subjective Norms	Peer interaction reinforces norms	[3, 9,]
H3	Emotional Appeal → Attitude	Emotional storytelling boosts connection	[8, 12, 13]
H4	Credibility → Subjective Norms	Trusted sources shape intention	[7, 17,]
H5	Attitude → Purchase Intention	Favourable attitudes predict action	[1, 3]
H6	Subjective Norms → Purchase Intention	Social influence predicts behaviour	[1, 4,]

5. Conclusion and Implications

This conceptual study draws on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to offer a timely and relevant framework explaining how features of social media advertising namely informativeness, interactivity, emotional appeal, and credibility influence consumer behaviour in the cosmetics sector. These elements shape attitudes, reinforce subjective norms, and ultimately contribute to the intention to purchase, especially among digital-first consumers in regions like Uttar Pradesh.

Across both global and regional studies, informativeness stands out as a key factor in developing trust and clarity. When brands communicate detailed, transparent, and relevant product information

especially regarding ingredients, usage, and ethics it helps consumers feel more confident in their choices.

The interactive nature of social media live sessions, comment threads, polls, and direct messaging fosters two-way engagement. These interactions create a digital social environment where individuals are influenced by peer validation, group trends, and influencer activity. Researchers found that such interactivity played a critical role during the COVID-19 pandemic in shaping buyer choices for self-care products, particularly when physical shopping options were limited. These findings reinforce the idea that interactive platforms help establish the subjective norms that guide purchase intention.

Credibility especially when conveyed through influencers, dermatologists, or peers emerged as another critical factor. Consumers are more inclined to purchase products when they believe the message is coming from a trustworthy, authentic source. Local studies have emphasized that in Indian contexts, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, credibility in advertising is not just desirable but necessary to reduce perceived risks and increase brand reliability.

On a more emotional level, social media advertising that taps into feelings of empowerment, identity, and beauty norms resonates powerfully with consumers. Emotional narratives tend to stick in memory and build long-term brand associations. Prior studies, including those focusing on cosmetic consumers in India, have shown that emotional connection often has a more significant influence on brand loyalty than logic or facts alone [3, 12, 13].

Marketers can leverage these insights to design credible and interactive campaigns, ensuring compliance with regulations while using innovative promotional strategies to enhance engagement [21]-[23]. Understanding broader behavioural aspects, including stress and coping tendencies, can also help create more empathetic and consumer-centric marketing approaches [24].

Ultimately, this study confirms that attitudes and subjective norms, as proposed by TPB, are reliable predictors of purchase intention in the digital cosmetics space. Consumers not only consider their personal evaluation of a product but are also guided by the social cues and endorsements around them.

Implications for Brands and Researchers

For cosmetic brands, especially those targeting emerging markets like Uttar Pradesh, the findings offer clear direction. Informative and transparent content must be prioritized, but should also be delivered through interactive and emotionally resonant formats. Working with credible voices such as local influencers, skin care professionals, or real customer testimonials can significantly enhance both brand image and conversion rates.

From a research perspective, this framework enriches the traditional TPB model by incorporating digital-era variables. It bridges the gap between psychological theory and contemporary advertising practice.

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