Research Article

Consumer Responses to Visual, Sensory and Emotional Marketing Cues in Cosmetics: An Exploratory Survey in Thrissur, Kerala

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ABSTRACT

This study describes how cosmetic users in Thrissur, Kerala, report responding to visual, sensory, and emotionally framed marketing cues discussed in consumer-neuroscience and neuromarketing literature. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted with 120 current cosmetic users recruited through convenience sampling. Data were collected primarily through a structured questionnaire administered over approximately 10 days beginning 26 May 2025. Frequencies, percentages, item means, and standard deviations were used to summarize responses, and one-way ANOVAs were calculated from the respondent-level dataset for exploratory demographic comparisons. Quality was the most frequently identified primary brand-choice factor (40.0%), while attractive packaging ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.92$) and sensory experience ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.83$) received comparatively strong agreement. Visual advertisements were the most preferred format (38.3%). A significant gender difference was observed for emotional/cognitive responses, $F(2, 117) = 3.469$, $p = .034$, $\eta^2 = .056$, whereas the corresponding age comparison was not significant, $F(3, 116) = 1.739$, $p = .163$, $\eta^2 = .043$. The study provides locality-specific evidence on explicit consumer responses to marketing cues without presenting self-report data as direct evidence of neural activity. For consumer segments resembling this predominantly younger, female and student sample, dependable product quality should remain central, while visual consistency and sensory experience may support product evaluation. Broad market generalisation is not warranted.

Keywords: Cosmetic Consumers; Consumer Perception; Buying Behaviour; Sensory Marketing; Emotional Advertising; Visual Marketing; Thrissur

INTRODUCTION

Although neuromarketing research has examined consumer responses using laboratory-based techniques, there is still scope to understand how consumers themselves describe their reactions to marketing cues in everyday settings. This is particularly relevant to cosmetic products, where packaging, appearance, fragrance, texture, and emotional messages are part of the consumer experience. Examining these responses in a local context can provide a different perspective from findings obtained through controlled consumer-neuroscience experiments.

This study therefore focuses on cosmetic users in Thrissur, Kerala, and examines their reported responses to visual, sensory, and emotional marketing cues. The study is based on questionnaire responses rather than neurological or physiological measurements. It considers participants' awareness of neuromarketing, the factors they report using when choosing cosmetic

brands, their preferred forms of advertising, and their responses to selected marketing-cue statements. The findings should consequently be understood as evidence of reported consumer perceptions and preferences, rather than as evidence of unconscious neural processes or causal neurological effects.

The study adopts an exploratory descriptive approach because the intention is to understand the responses of the participating consumers rather than to make causal claims about the wider cosmetic market.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

Neuromarketing and Consumer Decision-Making

Consumer neuroscience extends traditional marketing research by adding measures of attention, arousal and neural activity to interviews, surveys and behavioural observation (Lee et al., 2007; Plassmann et al., 2012, 2015). Reviews have also cautioned against overstating what neuroimaging can reveal about consumer choice (Ariely & Berns, 2010). Reviews of available neuroscience tools and EEG applications show that these methods have been used to study advertising, product attributes, memory, preference, and engagement, but the field contains substantial methodological variation (Alvino et al., 2020; Bazzani et al., 2020). Venkatraman et al. (2015) demonstrated that selected physiological and neurophysiological indicators can add predictive information in advertising research. Such findings support multi-method approaches rather than the replacement of self-report measures with neuroscience.

Packaging, visual identity and sensory experience

Packaging is both a functional container and an information-rich visual cue. Shape, symmetry, colour, typography and material can contribute to impressions of quality, safety, premium status and brand character. Romeo-Arroyo et al. (2023) show that packaging design properties can alter perceived premiumness, while Simão et al. (2022) demonstrate that product claims can influence expectations about efficacy and sensory performance. Brand identity may also shape familiarity and implicit evaluation; Thomas et al. (2013) reported different neural responses to branded and unbranded products, although such responses vary by experience and product category.

Cosmetics are also strongly multisensory. Fragrance, consistency, temperature, texture, absorption, and after-feel can become part of how consumers judge a product. Rodríguez et al. (2025) argue that coordinated multisensory skincare experiences can strengthen engagement and continued use. These observations suggest that consumers may explicitly name product quality as a primary reason for choice while still responding positively to the sensory and visual characteristics through which quality is experienced and communicated.

Emotional Communication and Ethical Considerations

Emotionally framed advertising can connect products with confidence, self-expression, belonging, or personal transformation. Majeed et al. (2017) found that affective advertising can influence women's consumption responses. In cosmetics, however, emotional persuasion also raises ethical concerns because

appearance-based messages can intensify insecurity or unrealistic beauty expectations. Ethical consumer-neuroscience practice therefore requires voluntary participation, transparency, appropriate data protection, and restraint in claims about what psychological or neural evidence can prove (Christensen et al., 2022).

Current Study

The present study aims to describe the demographic profile, cosmetic-purchase frequency, brand-choice factors, and awareness of neuromarketing among the participating cosmetic users in Thrissur. Secondly, the study focuses on summarizing participants' agreement with visual, sensory, brand-related, and emotionally framed marketing cues. The study further aims to compare explicitly stated brand-choice priorities with responses to packaging, sensory, and emotional cue items. Finally, the study also aims to explore whether the reported response domains differ across selected demographic groups, while interpreting such comparisons cautiously because the sample was non-probabilistic and subgroup sizes were unequal.

Because the research design is exploratory, no directional causal hypothesis is proposed. The demographic ANOVAs are treated as exploratory group comparisons. This approach avoids claiming that the study tests neural, subconscious, or causal effects when the underlying analysis consists mainly of frequencies, percentages, item means, standard deviations, and available ANOVA summaries.

METHODS

Research Design

A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was used among cosmetic users in Thrissur, Kerala. Data collection began on 26 May 2025 and continued for approximately 10 days. Information was obtained primarily through a structured questionnaire, with verbal clarification provided during administration when needed. The design was suitable for documenting reported preferences and reactions within the participating group, but it was not intended to establish causal effects of marketing cues.

Participants, Recruitment and Sample Adequacy

A total of 120 cosmetic users participated in the questionnaire. Participants were approached based on their accessibility and willingness to take part, and all respondents reported current use of cosmetic products. The study therefore used convenience sampling rather than probability sampling.

The choice of 120 respondents was based on the feasibility of obtaining a sufficient number of completed responses within the available data-collection period. No formal a priori sample-size or statistical power calculation was conducted. The sample is therefore considered adequate for the exploratory descriptive purpose of the study, particularly for examining overall response patterns and item-level tendencies. However, the sample should not be interpreted as statistically representative of all cosmetic consumers in Thrissur. This limitation is especially important when comparing demographic subgroups because the number of participants was uneven across categories, including the very small group of respondents aged above 60 years.

The study records do not contain sufficient information to identify the precise venues at which individual respondents were recruited. For this reason, specific recruitment locations have not been reported.

Data Collection Procedure, Completeness and Duplicate Handling

All 120 completed questionnaires were included in the final analysis. The supplied dataset contained complete responses for the demographic, purchasing, advertising, and Likert-scale items, so no questionnaire was removed because of missing data. Each record was treated as one submitted questionnaire.

Ethical Considerations and Consent

The study was conducted as a supervised student research project. Prospective participants were informed about the academic purpose of the questionnaire and voluntarily agreed to participate. Participation was voluntary, and the findings are reported in aggregate form without personally identifying respondents. The retained project records do not contain a formal institutional ethics-approval reference; consequently, no approval number is reported.

Questionnaire and Item Domains

The questionnaire contained demographic questions, purchase-frequency and brand-choice items, awareness of neuromarketing, preferred advertising format, emotions associated with cosmetic advertising, and 15 five-point agreement statements. Agreement responses were coded from 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree). The 15 statements were retained in the three sections in which they appeared in the original questionnaire: five perception/brand-evaluation items, five buying-behaviour items, and five emotional/cognitive items.

The perception/brand-evaluation domain comprised five items concerning packaging, brand colours and design, scientific or emotional messaging and trust, celebrity or influencer use, and logo/visual identity. The buying-behaviour domain comprised five items concerning emotionally appealing advertising prompting purchase, eye-catching store or online placement, sensory experience, luxury or exclusivity, and emotional messaging encouraging product trial. The emotional/cognitive domain comprised five items concerning feelings versus practical use, sensory emotions, confidence or attractiveness, relatable or emotional stories, and emotional values or self-image.

The items were researcher-developed statements informed by concepts discussed in the consumer-marketing and consumer-neuroscience literature. No established or previously validated scale is claimed. The questionnaire was designed for the exploratory objectives of this study, so the three domains are treated as analytical groupings rather than as fully validated psychometric constructs.

The statement ‘An emotionally appealing advertisement has prompted a purchase’ was retained in the buying-behaviour domain because this was the section in which it appeared in the administered questionnaire. The three 5-item domains therefore reproduce the original questionnaire structure. No claim is made that these items constitute an established clinical, neurological or validated consumer-neuroscience scale.

Data Analysis

Categorical variables were summarized using frequencies and percentages. The five-point agreement items were summarized using means and sample standard deviations. Cronbach's alpha was calculated from the respondent-level Likert responses for each five-item domain and for the full 15-item questionnaire. One-way ANOVAs were calculated from the respondent-level domain scores to explore differences across age, gender, and occupation. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha = .05$. Because the sample was obtained through convenience sampling and some subgroups were small, demographic comparisons are interpreted as exploratory rather than as population estimates.

RESULTS

Participant Characteristics

The sample was concentrated in younger adulthood, women, and students. Of the 120 respondents, 80 (66.7%) were aged 20–40 years, 79 (65.8%) were women, and 60 (50.0%) were students. Only three respondents (2.5%) were above 60 years, which substantially limits age-based subgroup interpretation.

Table 1: *Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	%
Age	Below 20	27	22.5
	20-40	80	66.7
	40-60	10	8.3
	Above 60	3	2.5
Gender	Female	79	65.8
	Male	40	33.3
	Other	1	0.8
Occupation	Student	60	50.0
	Professional	20	16.7
	Entrepreneur	11	9.2
	Homemaker	25	20.8
	Other	4	3.3

Source: *Primary Data*

Purchasing Patterns, Awareness and Advertising Preferences

Most respondents reported purchasing cosmetics rarely (51.7%) or monthly (35.8%). Quality was the most frequently selected primary brand-choice factor (40.0%). Recommendations from others (18.3%) and brand reputation (15.8%) followed, whereas packaging and advertising were each selected by only 3.3% as the single main factor. Awareness of neuromarketing terminology was modest: 45.8% answered “No,” and 18.3% were unsure. Visual advertisements were the most frequently preferred format (38.3%), followed by influencer endorsements (24.2%) and informative advertisements (22.5%). Confidence (26.7%), comfort (25.8%), and happiness (21.7%) were the most commonly reported emotions associated with cosmetic advertising.

Table 2: *Cosmetic Purchasing and Communication Preferences*

Measure	Response	n	%
Purchase frequency	Rarely	62	51.7
	Monthly	43	35.8
	Weekly	10	8.3
	Daily	4	3.3
	Never	1	0.8
Primary brand-choice factor	Quality	48	40.0
	Recommendations from friends/family	22	18.3
	Brand Reputation	19	15.8
	Price	12	10.0
	Social media	11	9.2
	Packaging	4	3.3
	Advertising	4	3.3
Awareness of neuromarketing	No	55	45.8
	Yes	43	35.8
	Not sure	22	18.3
Preferred advertising format	Visual (images/videos)	46	38.3
	Influencer endorsement	29	24.2
	Informative ads	27	22.5
	Text based	9	7.5
	Funny/entertaining ads	9	7.5
Emotion associated with cosmetic advertising	Confidence	32	26.7
	Comfortable	31	25.8
	Happiness	26	21.7
	Desire	16	13.3
	Affection and Love	7	5.8
	Nostalgia	5	4.2
	Fear of missing out	3	2.5

Source: *Primary Data*

Item-Level Responses to Marketing Cues

All 15 agreement items had means above the neutral midpoint of 3 and are presented in Table 3. The highest means were observed for attractive packaging (M = 3.83, SD = 0.92) and sensory experience (M = 3.82, SD = 0.83). Brand colours and design (M = 3.76, SD = 0.95), logo and visual identity (M = 3.71, SD = 0.90), and the association of cosmetic use with confidence or attractiveness (M = 3.70, SD = 0.81) also received comparatively strong agreement. The lowest means were recorded for relatable or emotional storytelling (M = 3.38, SD = 1.00) and the statement that an emotionally appealing advertisement had prompted a purchase (M = 3.40, SD = 1.07).

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was calculated using the 120 respondent-level records for the 15 Likert-scale statements. The results are presented in Table 4. The three five-item domains showed acceptable-to-good internal consistency: perception/brand evaluation ($\alpha = 0.760$), buying-behaviour tendencies ($\alpha = 0.852$), and emotional/cognitive responses ($\alpha = 0.776$).

Table 3: *Descriptive Statistics*

Domain	Item	M	SD
Perception/brand evaluation	Attractive packaging influences choice	3.83	0.92
	Brand colours/design affect perceived quality	3.76	0.95
	Scientific/emotional messaging increases trust	3.64	0.93
	Celebrity/influencer use improves perception	3.59	0.92
	Logo/visual identity affects reliability	3.71	0.90
Buying-behaviour tendencies	Emotional advertisement has prompted purchase	3.40	1.07
	Eye-catching placement increases purchase likelihood	3.65	0.91
	Texture, scent and product feel influence purchase	3.82	0.83
	Luxury/exclusivity increases purchase likelihood	3.52	0.93
	Confidence/self-love messaging encourages trial	3.62	0.94
Emotional/cognitive responses	Purchases may be based on feelings over practical use	3.65	0.95
	Scents/textures evoke emotions influencing choice	3.64	0.86
	Cosmetic use associated with confidence/attractiveness	3.70	0.81
	Relatable/emotional stories are more convincing	3.38	1.00
	Emotional values/self-image strengthen loyalty	3.58	0.92

Note. N = 120; M= Mean; SD- Standard Deviation
Source: *Primary Data*

Table 4: *Reliability Analysis*

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha	Interpretation
Perception/brand evaluation	5	0.760	Acceptable
Buying-behaviour tendencies	5	0.852	Good
Emotional/cognitive responses	5	0.776	Acceptable
Overall questionnaire	15	0.895	Good

Note. N = 120. Cronbach's alpha was calculated from respondent-level Likert responses. All three domains contain five items and follow the structure of the administered questionnaire.
Source: *Primary Data*

Demographic Comparisons

The respondent-level questionnaire dataset was used to calculate the demographic comparisons. The statistic F = 3.469, p = .034 was associated with gender differences in emotional/cognitive responses, whereas the corresponding age comparison was not statistically significant. The gender comparison for emotional/cognitive responses was statistically significant, $F(2, 117) = 3.469$, $p = .034$, $\eta^2 = .056$. The corresponding age comparison was not statistically

significant, F (3, 116) = 1.739, p = .163, η^2 = .043. No specific pairwise gender difference is claimed because the 'Others' category contained only one respondent. Full group means, standard deviations, and ANOVA statistics are provided in Table 5.

Table 5: *Complete One-Way ANOVA Results with Group Means and Standard Deviations*

Variable	Construct	Group	n	M	SD	F	p	η^2
Age	Perception/brand evaluation	Below 20	27	3.73	0.61	0.357	.784	.009
		20–40	80	3.68	0.69			
		40–60	10	3.74	0.69			
		Above 60	3	4.07	0.31			
Age	Buying-behaviour tendencies	Below 20	27	3.59	0.60	1.233	.301	.031
		20–40	80	3.55	0.82			
		40–60	10	3.88	0.37			
		Above 60	3	4.20	0.53			
Age	Emotional/cognitive responses	Below 20	27	3.51	0.53	1.739	.163	.043
		20–40	80	3.55	0.71			
		40–60	10	3.92	0.47			
		Above 60	3	4.13	0.42			
Gender	Perception/brand evaluation	Female	79	3.65	0.64	0.869	.422	.015
		Male	40	3.81	0.71			
		Other	1	4.00	—			
Gender	Buying-behaviour tendencies	Female	79	3.50	0.78	2.557	.082	.042
		Male	40	3.78	0.64			
		Other	1	4.40	—			
Gender	Emotional/cognitive responses	Female	79	3.48	0.69	3.469	.034	.056
		Male	40	3.80	0.56			
		Other	1	4.00	—			
Occupation	Perception / Brand Evaluation	Student	60	3.69	0.70	0.832	.508	.028
		Professional	20	3.85	0.62			
		Homemaker	25	3.56	0.57			
		Entrepreneur	11	3.91	0.73			
		Others	4	3.60	0.71			
Occupation	Buying Behaviour Tendencies	Student	60	3.64	0.80	0.439	.780	.015
		Professional	20	3.50	0.70			
		Homemaker	25	3.51	0.68			
		Entrepreneur	11	3.82	0.38			
		Others	4	3.60	1.42			
Occupation	Emotional / Cognitive Responses	Student	60	3.64	0.73	1.818	.130	.059
		Professional	20	3.62	0.40			
		Homemaker	25	3.31	0.68			
		Entrepreneur	11	3.89	0.45			
		Others	4	3.60	0.59			

Note. Group statistics are means (SD), with group sample sizes shown in Table 5. Each construct contains five items and follows the original questionnaire structure. The ANOVA calculations were independently reproduced from the 120 respondent-level records.

Source: *Primary Data*

DISCUSSION

One of the clearest findings from the study is that respondents placed greater importance on the perceived quality of a cosmetic product than on promotional features. Quality was selected as the main brand-choice factor by 48 respondents (40.0%), whereas only four respondents each selected packaging and advertising as their single most important factor. This suggests that, when respondents were asked to identify one principal reason for choosing a brand, they tended to prioritise the expected performance and reliability of the product.

At the same time, the item-level results show that packaging and sensory characteristics were not unimportant. Attractive packaging recorded the highest mean score (M = 3.83, SD = 0.92), closely followed by texture, scent and product feel (M = 3.82, SD = 0.83). These findings can be understood by distinguishing between a primary decision criterion and the cues consumers use while evaluating a product. Packaging may create an initial impression of quality, suitability or value, while scent, texture and product feel allow consumers to form a more immediate judgement about the product experience. Thus, respondents may regard quality as the ultimate reason for choosing a product while relying on packaging and sensory characteristics to form expectations about that quality.

The result is also consistent with earlier work suggesting that visual characteristics of packaging can influence perceptions of a product's premium character (Romeo-Arroyo et al., 2023). Similarly, multisensory experiences can become part of consumers' evaluation of topical products and may contribute to engagement and continued use (Rodríguez et al., 2025). In the present study, therefore, packaging and sensory experience appear to complement rather than replace functional considerations.

The preference for visual advertising provides a further indication of the importance of easily processed product information. Visual images and videos were selected by 46 respondents (38.3%), making this the most preferred advertising format. Cosmetics are highly visual products, and consumers can obtain information about appearance, colour, application and presentation quickly from images or demonstrations. Visual material may also make it easier for consumers to compare products and imagine how a product might look or be used. The preference for visual advertising should therefore not be interpreted as evidence that respondents were neurologically influenced by visual stimuli; it simply indicates that visual communication was the format most often preferred by participants in this sample.

The findings concerning emotional advertising are somewhat different. Confidence, comfort and happiness were the most frequently reported emotions, while fear of missing out was selected by only three respondents (2.5%). However, the direct statement that an emotionally appealing advertisement had prompted a purchase produced one of the lowest item means (M = 3.40, SD = 1.07), and relatable or emotional storytelling also received a relatively lower mean (M = 3.38, SD = 1.00). One possible interpretation is that respondents may appreciate positive emotions associated with cosmetic use without considering advertising itself to be the main reason for

making a purchase. Consumers may also find it easier to recognise and report a physical product experience, such as scent or texture, than to identify the precise influence of an advertisement on a purchasing decision.

The relatively lower ratings for direct advertising influence are therefore important. They suggest that respondents did not necessarily reject advertising or emotional communication; rather, they appeared less willing to describe these factors as direct drivers of their purchasing decisions. This distinction is useful because it prevents the results from being interpreted as evidence that emotional or visual marketing automatically produces consumer behaviour. The present findings show reported preferences and perceptions, not subconscious manipulation or neural causation.

The gender comparison for emotional/cognitive responses was statistically significant, $F(2, 117) = 3.469$, $p = .034$, $\eta^2 = .056$. The mean score was 3.48 (SD = 0.69) for women, 3.80 (SD = 0.56) for men, and 4.00 for the single respondent in the 'Others' category. Because the latter group contained only one participant, the significant omnibus result should be interpreted cautiously and should not be used to claim a reliable difference between particular gender groups. The corresponding age comparison was not significant, $F(3, 116) = 1.739$, $p = .163$, $\eta^2 = .043$.

Theoretical Implications

The study contributes primarily by distinguishing survey-based consumer response from direct consumer-neuroscience measurement. Its findings do not demonstrate neural mechanisms. Instead, they show that participants can explicitly recognise the relevance of sensory, visual and emotional features even when many are unfamiliar with the term neuromarketing. This supports a layered view of consumer evaluation in which stated functional priorities such as quality coexist with experiential information from packaging, scent, texture and brand presentation.

The study also illustrates the importance of aligning statistical groupings with the instrument actually administered. The 15 items were analysed in their original three 5-item sections. This preserves consistency between the questionnaire, reliability analysis, and ANOVA results. Future studies should validate these domains using established instruments and factor-analytic evidence before treating them as stable constructs.

Practical Implications

The findings have practical relevance primarily for consumer groups similar to those represented in this study. Because the sample consisted largely of younger adults, women, and students, the findings should not be assumed to apply equally to all cosmetic consumers.

For the participants in this study, product quality appears to be the strongest starting point for brand selection. Marketing communication should therefore support, rather than replace, the actual qualities of the product. Information about ingredients, product benefits, safety, and expected performance should be presented clearly and should be consistent with the product experience.

The findings also suggest that visual presentation can contribute to how consumers evaluate cosmetics. Packaging, colour, logo design and product

presentation received relatively positive responses, while visual images and videos were the most preferred form of advertising. Cosmetic brands targeting similar consumers may therefore benefit from clear and attractive visual communication, particularly where images or short demonstrations help consumers understand the appearance or use of a product.

Sensory characteristics also deserve attention. The relatively high score for texture, scent and product feel indicates that consumers may consider the experience of using a cosmetic product alongside its functional qualities. Where appropriate, advertising could therefore demonstrate application, texture or finish rather than relying only on abstract promotional claims.

The emotional findings point towards positive themes such as confidence, comfort and self-care rather than fear-based appeals. However, the comparatively lower influence reported for emotional advertising suggests that emotional content should be used carefully and should remain credible. These implications are best viewed as possible directions for further market testing rather than as recommendations that can be generalised to the entire cosmetics industry.

Limitations and Future Research

This study should be interpreted in light of several limitations. The first concerns sampling. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling, and the resulting sample was not evenly distributed across demographic categories. Most respondents were aged 20–40 years (66.7%), women accounted for 65.8% of the sample, and students represented 50.0%. Only three respondents were above 60 years of age. These characteristics limit the extent to which the findings can be transferred to other consumer groups.

A second limitation is the use of self-reported questionnaire responses. Participants reported what they believed or felt about marketing cues, but the study did not record brain activity, eye movements, skin conductance or other physiological measures. Consequently, the findings should not be interpreted as direct evidence of neural responses or subconscious influence.

A further limitation is that the original records do not provide sufficiently detailed information about the specific venues used for recruitment. This restricts the amount of contextual information that can be provided about the sample.

Future research could address these limitations by recruiting larger and more diverse samples and by using established measurement instruments alongside researcher-developed items. Studies combining self-report data with behavioural or physiological measures could also provide a stronger basis for examining the relationship between marketing cues and consumer responses. Research involving different age groups, occupations, locations and consumer segments would help determine whether the patterns observed in this exploratory study are consistent across populations.

CONCLUSION

The present study provides an exploratory account of how 120 cosmetic users in Thrissur described their responses to selected visual, sensory and emotional marketing cues. The results show that

quality was the most frequently reported primary factor in brand choice, while packaging and sensory experience received comparatively high agreement when respondents evaluated individual marketing-cue statements.

Visual images and videos were the most preferred advertising format, and confidence, comfort and happiness were the emotions most commonly associated with cosmetic advertising. At the same time, respondents gave comparatively lower ratings to emotional storytelling and to the direct influence of emotionally appealing advertisements on purchase. This suggests that consumers may value the experience and presentation of cosmetic products without necessarily viewing advertising or emotional appeals as the main reason for their purchasing decisions.

Overall, the findings point towards a combination of functional and experiential evaluation. Product quality appears to provide the main foundation for choice, while packaging, visual identity, scent and texture may contribute to the way consumers form and evaluate impressions of a product. These findings should, however, be understood within the limits of the convenience sample and the self-reported nature of the data.

Most importantly, the study does not demonstrate a neurological mechanism or establish subconscious consumer influence. It provides a descriptive starting point for further research using validated measurement instruments, broader samples and, where appropriate, direct behavioural or physiological measures.

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Author Contributions

Aysha Mehjabeen: Conceptualization, data collection, questionnaire administration, data organization, initial analysis, and manuscript preparation.

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage Disclosure

The authors declare that generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used only to assist with language editing, grammar improvement, and manuscript formatting where necessary. All research activities, including study design, data collection, statistical analysis, interpretation of results, and scientific conclusions, were performed solely by the authors. The authors have carefully reviewed and take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the submitted manuscript