

Beyond Beauty: Understanding Cosmetic Buying Behaviour Among Young Women through Psychological Need Fulfilment - An Integrated Literature Review

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Abstract

Cosmetic products are generally observed as method and tools for enhancing appearance and beauty. Researches advocates that young women use makeup products and cosmetics for reasons that go beyond looking beautiful and physically attractive. Cosmetics may help in fulfil various psychological needs such as: feeling confident, expressing one's identity, gaining social acceptance, improving self-image, and feeling more in control of self-presentation. Although previous studies have examined factors such as self-esteem, body image, confidence, attractiveness, identity expression, and social influence, these factors have usually been studied separately. As a result, there is limited understanding of the different psychological needs in comprehensive and in totality, that may influence cosmetic buying behaviour among young women.

The purpose of this review research paper was to integrative review of existing research on cosmetics buying behaviour in the psychological need fulfilment perspective. Specifically, the paper aimed to identify the psychological needs discussed in the previous literature and examine how these needs influence cosmetic consumption among young women. The methodology a “Integrated Literature Review” approach was used to identify, evaluate, and synthesise relevant studies. Relevant research articles were collected from major academic databases and analysed using thematic analysis.

The conclusion recommended that cosmetic products consumption is associated with a variety of psychological needs. Existing studies indicate that young women often use cosmetic products to build confidence, maintain a positive and socially approved self-image, express who they are, feel accepted by others, manage social impressions, and gain a greater sense of control over their appearance. The review also showed that these psychological needs are scattered across different research areas and limited research are examined together within a single framework. This review research contributes to the literature by bringing together different psychological perspectives to provide a broader understanding of cosmetic buying behaviour among young women and examined beyond appearance-based explanations, the review highlighted the important role of psychological need fulfilment in cosmetic consumption and offers directions for future research.

Keywords: Cosmetic buying behaviour, young women, psychological needs, self-image, confidence, identity expression, social acceptance, consumer psychology, systematic literature review.

1.Introduction

1.1 Psychological Needs and Consumer Behaviour

Women wearing makeup are perceived by others as more attractive, competent, dominant, and more socially prestigious (Anthonieta Looman Mafra et al,2022). Human behaviour is influenced not only by functional needs but also by psychological needs that shape thoughts, feelings, and actions. Psychological theories suggest that individuals continuously seek experiences that help them maintain a positive sense of self, develop meaningful social relationships, and achieve personal well-being.

Consumer researchers have long argued that products are often purchased for reasons that go beyond their functional benefits. According to Belk (1988), possessions can become part of an individual's extended self and help consumers express who they are. Similarly, Escalas and Bettman (2005) found that consumers often use products and brands to construct and communicate their identities. These findings suggest that consumption can serve important psychological purposes in addition to satisfying psychological needs.

Research in consumer psychology indicates that products may help individuals fulfil a variety of psychological needs, including self-esteem, confidence, identity expression, social acceptance, emotional well-being, and a sense of control. Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987) proposes that individuals are motivated to reduce differences between their actual self and their ideal self. Cosmetics consumption can therefore become a means of moving closer to desired self-images. Compensatory Consumption Theory suggested that consumers may purchase products that help restore feelings of self-worth, belonging, or control when these needs are threatened (Mandel et al., 2017).

The importance of psychological needs in consumption and buying cosmetics is also supported by “Self-Determination Theory”, which highlighted the role of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in human motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Though these psychological needs have been studied in diverse ways across different disciplines. Existing researches consistently suggests that beauty products consumption behaviour often reflects deeper psychological motivations and incentives rather than purely functional. Veçoso et al. (2024) found that regular makeup use was associated with a significant reduction in depressive symptoms among adult women, alongside improvements in self-image perception. The study also reported lower salivary cortisol levels, suggesting reduced stress, indicating that frequent makeup use may contribute to enhanced psychological well-being and mental health. In totality literature indicates that consumer behaviour can be understood by fulfil various psychological needs.

1.2 Cosmetic Buying Behaviour Among Young Women

Cosmetic products have become a significant part of the daily lives of many young women. The global cosmetics industry has grown rapidly over the past few decades, and it's driven by changing beauty standards, increasing product availability, social media influence, and growing interest in personal care, women's work outside and employed, etc.

As one of the largest consumer groups in the cosmetics market, young women continue to attract significant attention from researchers seeking to recognize and understand the factors that influence cosmetic buying behaviour of young women's. Previous studies have shown that cosmetic consumption is frequently associated with beauty and appearance enhancement. Cash and Cash (1982) found that women frequently use cosmetics to improve their appearance and feel self-confidence in social situations. Similarly, Cash (2002) reported that appearance-related attitudes and body image perceptions play an important role in purchasing and consuming cosmetic and beauty products. Nash et al. (2006) found that the use of makeup was associated with increased confidence and more favourable self-evaluations. Women often reported feeling more attractive, competent, and socially presented and feel equipped after using cosmetic products.

In addition, several studies have emphasised the influence of social factors on cosmetic buying behaviour. Dittmar (2008) argued that consumer culture and societal beauty ideals shape appearance-related consumption patterns, particularly among women. Tiggemann and Slater (2014) explained that appearance comparisons and exposure to beauty-related media can influence young women's attitudes toward appearance and use of beauty products. Recent studies demonstrate that cosmetic buying behaviour is influenced by a combination of personal, social, and psychological factors. Shukre (2023) reported that self-image and personal attitudes significantly influenced by green cosmetics purchase intentions of young Indian women. Rodgers et al. (2024) found that sociocultural pressures, including media influences and social expectations, were associated with greater engagement with cosmetic products among women.

Although these studies have provided valuable insights into cosmetic buying behaviour, most have focused on specific factors such as attractiveness, body image, confidence, or social influence. As a result, the broader

psychological needs that may motivate cosmetic consumption among young women remain insufficiently integrated within the existing literature.

1.3 Cosmetic Consumption and Psychological Need Fulfilment

Researches in consumer behaviour and consumer psychology recommend that cosmetics consumption is often motivated by the desire to satisfy psychological needs rather than merely obtain functional benefits of beauty enhancement. Cosmetics can help for women's express themselves, hiding imperfections, feeling of completeness, build confidence, gain social acceptance, manage emotions, and maintain a positive sense of self. In this context, cosmetic products signify an interesting method because they are closely connected to appearance, identity, and self-presentation.

Research has shown that women often use cosmetics to improve confidence, enhance self-esteem, and develop a more positive self-image (Cash & Cash, 1982; Nash et al., 2006). Cosmetic products may help to feelings of self-worth and personal satisfaction by helping individuals feel more comfortable with their appearance.

The literature also highlights the role of cosmetics in identity expression and self-presentation. Consumer researchers have argued that products and brands are frequently used to communicate who individuals are and who they aspire to become (Belk, 1988; Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Cosmetics directly influence appearance, and it provide consumers with a noticeable method to express personal identities and desired self-images. In addition to self-related needs, cosmetic consumption may also fulfil important social needs. As a result, consumers may use cosmetics to feel more confident in social situations and to align themselves with social expectations and beauty norms (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Dittmar, 2008). Thus, the desire for social acceptance and belonging may therefore contribute to cosmetic buying behaviour.

Researches further indicates that cosmetic products can help individuals manage their appearance and exercise greater control over self-presentation. Cosmetics Consumption often provide symbolic resources that help consumers cope with uncertainty and maintain and strengthen feelings of control, preparedness. (Cutright, 2012; Mandel et al., 2017). Recent studies have extended these results by associating cosmetics consumption for self-image, confidence, social expectations, and personal values. Rodgers et al. (2024) highlighted the influence of sociocultural pressures on women's engagement with cosmetic products.

Taken together, the literature suggests that cosmetic consumption may help fulfil a wide range of psychological needs among young women. However, these needs have generally been examined separately across different research streams. As a result, there is limited understanding of how the various psychological needs associated with cosmetic consumption fit together within a broader framework.

1.4 Research Gap

Previous studies have examined a variety of psychological and behavioural factors, including body image, self-esteem, confidence, attractiveness, identity expression, self-presentation, social influence, and appearance management. These studies have improved our understanding of why young women purchase and use cosmetic products. But existing research literature remains fragmented. Most of the studies highlighted specific psychological factors rather than broader range of psychological needs that may be fulfilled by cosmetics consumption.

Existing research provides evidence that cosmetics may contribute to multiple psychological outcomes, but there are limited researches on to integrated synthesise these findings from perspective of psychological need fulfilment. The literature lacks an integrated understanding of the different psychological needs that may influence cosmetic buying behaviour of young women. Most of researches on cosmetic consumption have focused on appearance-related motivations, beauty practices, body image concerns, or consumer attitudes toward cosmetic products. Limited attention has been given to identifying and organising the broader psychological needs. This gap restricts a more comprehensive understanding of cosmetic buying behaviour and the psychological functions that cosmetic products may serve in the lives of young women. Thus, an integrated review is required to identify, synthesise, and organise the psychological needs associated with cosmetics buying behaviour of young women. The present

study seeks to provide a more integrated understanding of the psychological motivations and needs underlying cosmetic consumption.

1.5 Purpose and Contributions of the Study

In response to the gaps identified in the literature, the present study undertakes an Integrated Literature Review (ILR) of cosmetic buying behaviour among young women from a psychological need fulfilment perspective rather than focusing on a single psychological factor. The review paper focuses on to identify and synthesise the different psychological needs that have been associated with cosmetic consumption across existing research. Through a integrated synthesis of previous studies, the review explores how cosmetic consumption is linked to self-related, social, emotional, and personal control needs discussed in the literature.

The study makes three important contributions. First, it brings together fragmented findings from different research and consolidated overview of the psychological needs associated with cosmetic buying behaviour of young women. Second, it extends the cosmetic consumption literature by moving beyond traditional appearance-based explanations. Also highlighting the psychological functions of cosmetic products. Third, it identifies important gaps in the existing literature and offers directions for future research on psychological need fulfilment and consumer behaviour.

The study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What psychological needs have been associated with cosmetic buying behaviour among young women in existing literature?

RQ2: How do cosmetic products help fulfil these psychological needs?

RQ3: What major psychological need themes emerge from the literature on cosmetic consumption among young women?

RQ4: What research gaps and future research opportunities exist in the current literature?

2. Methodology

2.1 Review Design

The present study adopts an “Integrative Literature Review” approach to examine the psychological needs associated with cosmetic buying behaviour among young women. An integrative review was considered appropriate because it enables researchers to bring together findings from different streams of literature and develop a broader understanding. Unlike studies that focus on a single theory or variable, an integrative review allows the synthesis of diverse perspectives and findings to identify common patterns and themes.

The primary objective of this review research paper is to explore the range of psychological needs that have been associated with cosmetic buying behaviour of young women in existing literature. Previous studies have examined various psychological factors such as self-esteem, confidence, self-image, identity expression, social acceptance, belongingness, appearance management, and perceived control. Though, these factors have often been studied independently. This review paper seeks to integrate these findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological motivations underlying cosmetic consumption.

To ensure a structured and transparent review process, relevant studies were identified and searched of major academic databases. Predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to select studies. The selected literature was then analysed and synthesised to identify recurring psychological themes associated with cosmetic buying behaviour among young women.

A thematic analysis approach was employed to organise and interpret the findings. Through repeated examination of the selected studies, common psychological needs were identified and grouped into broader thematic categories. This approach enabled the development of an integrated understanding of how psychological needs influence cosmetic buying behaviour among young women.

2.2 Search Strategy

A comprehensive literature search was conducted to identify studies related to cosmetic buying behaviour and psychological factors among young women. Relevant studies were retrieved from major academic databases commonly used in consumer behaviour, marketing, and psychology research. These databases included Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar. Both foundational and recent studies were considered to capture the development of knowledge in this area and to ensure that contemporary perspectives on cosmetic consumption were included.

A combination of keywords related to cosmetic consumption, young women, and psychological factors was used during the search process. The main search terms included:

- Cosmetic buying behaviour and cosmetic consumption
- Beauty product consumption and purchase behaviour
- Beauty product
- Female consumers
- Self-esteem and self-worth
- Confidence
- Self-image
- Identity expression
- Self-presentation
- Social acceptance
- Belongingness
- Appearance management
- Psychological needs

Different combinations of these keywords were used across the selected databases to maximise the coverage of relevant studies. The search strategy was designed to capture studies that examined cosmetic buying behaviour from psychological, social, and consumer behaviour perspectives.

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of the reviewed literature, clear inclusion and exclusion criteria were established before the screening process.

Inclusion Criteria

- Published in peer-reviewed academic journals.
- Written in the English language.
- Examined cosmetic buying behaviour, cosmetic consumption, beauty product consumption, or related consumer behaviour topics.
- Focused on female consumers, young women, students, or consumer groups where women represented a significant proportion of the sample.
- Investigated psychological factors such as self-esteem, confidence, self-worth, identity, self-image, self-presentation, social acceptance, belongingness, appearance management, emotional well-being, or related constructs etc.

- Provided empirical, conceptual, or review-based evidence relevant to consumer behaviour and psychology.

Exclusion Criteria

- Conference papers, dissertations, book reviews, editorials, magazine articles, and non-peer-reviewed publications.
- Non-English publications.
- Studies focused primarily on cosmetic surgery, dermatological treatments, plastic surgery, or medical interventions.
- Studies examining product formulation, manufacturing processes etc.
- Articles that did not include any psychological, behavioural, or consumer-related perspective.

2.4 Study Selection Process

The study selection process followed a systematic and transparent procedure to identify the most relevant articles for the review. After conducting the database search, all retrieved records were compiled and screened in multiple stages screening process was guided by the inclusion and exclusion criteria established for the study.

In the first stage, duplicate records identified were removed. After the removal of duplicates, the titles and abstracts of the remaining articles were screened to assess their relevance to cosmetic buying behaviour, young women, and psychological factors associated with cosmetic consumption. In the second stage, studies that clearly did not align with the objectives of the review were excluded.

2.5 Data Extraction and Analysis

After the final selection of studies, relevant information was systematically extracted from each article to facilitate comparison and synthesis. The data extraction process focused on key aspects of each study, including the author(s), year of publication, research objective, methodology, sample characteristics, and major findings related to cosmetic buying behaviour.

Particular attention was given to the psychological factors discussed in the selected studies. During the review process, concepts such as self-esteem, confidence, self-image, identity expression, social acceptance, attractiveness, appearance management, emotional well-being, and perceived control appeared repeatedly across the literature.

To analyse the selected studies, a thematic analysis approach was adopted. Thematic analysis is widely used in this integrated literature reviews because it allows researchers to identify recurring patterns and themes. Through comparison of the selected articles, similar psychological factors were grouped together and interpreted as indicators of broader psychological needs associated with cosmetic consumption.

The analysis was conducted in three stages. First, key psychological concepts reported in each study were identified and coded. Second, similar codes were grouped into broader categories based on conceptual similarities. Third, these categories were synthesised into higher-order themes that reflected the major psychological needs associated with cosmetic buying behaviour among young women.

This process enabled the identification of recurring psychological need themes across the reviewed literature and provided a structured framework for understanding how cosmetic products contribute to psychological need fulfilment.

3. Findings and Discussion

The purpose of this review was to identify the psychological needs associated with cosmetic buying behaviour among young women and to understand how these needs influence cosmetic consumption. The analysis of the selected studies revealed that cosmetic purchasing decisions are not driven solely by functional benefits or appearance enhancement. Even, cosmetic products often serve psychological purposes that help young women

manage personal, social, and emotional aspects of their lives. Frequently reported factors included self-esteem, confidence, self-worth, self-image, identity expression, attractiveness, social acceptance, belongingness, emotional well-being, appearance management, and perceived control.

The findings further suggested that cosmetic products function as symbolic resources that help young women achieve desired psychological outcomes. Cosmetics contribute to a positive self-evaluations and feelings of confidence. For others, they provide opportunities for identity expression, social acceptance, emotional comfort, or greater control over self-presentation. These findings support the interpretation that consumption behaviours often extend beyond functional utility and are closely linked to psychological need fulfilment.

Based on the thematic analysis, four broad categories of psychological needs emerged from the reviewed literature: self-related needs, identity-related needs, social needs, and control needs. These categories provide a useful framework for understanding the diverse motivations underlying cosmetic buying behaviour among young women.

The following sections discuss each of these psychological need categories in detail.

3.1 Self-Related Needs and Cosmetics Buying Behaviour

Among the psychological factors identified in the reviewed literature, self-related needs emerged as one of the most frequently discussed psychological needs underlying cosmetics buying behaviour among young women. These needs primarily include self-esteem, self-worth, confidence, attractiveness, and positive self-evaluation. The findings suggest that many young women use cosmetic products not only to improve their physical appearance but also to feel better about themselves and strengthen their sense of personal value.

Previous research has consistently shown that appearance and self-perception are closely connected. Cash and Cash (1982) found that cosmetic use can influence both self-confidence and social impressions. Similarly, Cash (2002) reported that appearance satisfaction plays an important role in shaping appearance-related behaviours and attitudes. These findings suggest that cosmetic products may contribute to how individuals evaluate themselves and their appearance. Studies have also linked with cosmetics use to increased confidence and positive self-perceptions. Nash et al. (2006) found that women often reported feeling more confident, attractive, and socially prepared after applying makeup. Cosmetics use was associated with more positive self-evaluations and greater comfort in social situations. These findings indicate that cosmetics may help in psychological readiness in everyday life.

From a psychological and emotional perspective, cosmetics use helps a women to enhance self-esteem, confidence, and positive self-perception. Makeup can reduce feelings of insecurity and social anxiety by allowing individuals to feel more comfortable and in control of their appearance. The process of applying cosmetics often serves as an emotional coping mechanism and a self-care ritual that promotes relaxation, mood enhancement, and emotional well-being. Additionally, makeup provides a means of self-expression, helping women align their external appearance with their personal identity and emotional state. According to Robertson and Kingsley (2021), women use cosmetics not only to enhance their physical appearance but also to fulfil important psychological and emotional needs. Cosmetic use can increase self-confidence and self-esteem, help manage feelings of anxiety and self-consciousness, and provide a means of self-expression and identity development. For many women, makeup also offers a sense of creativity, personal satisfaction, and emotional well-being.

In recent studies Udayanga et al. (2024), in a study of university students, found that confidence and personal perceptions were important factors associated with cosmetic use. Similarly, research on young female consumers has shown that individuals often purchase cosmetic products because they believe these products can enhance their appearance, increase confidence, and improve how they feel about themselves. Many women consumers associate cosmetics use with looking more presentable, competent, and socially desirable. Overall, the reviewed studies indicate that cosmetic buying behaviour among young women is strongly linked to self-related psychological needs.

3.2 Identity-Related Needs and Cosmetics Buying Behaviour

Another important psychological need identified in the reviewed literature is the need for identity expression and identity reinforcement. Consumer behaviour researchers have long argued that products are often used not only for their functional benefits and utilities but also for the symbolic meanings they carry. Belk (1988) proposed that allowing consumers to express important aspects of their identity through the products they use. Also, Escalas and Bettman (2005) suggested that consumers use products and brands to communicate desired identities. In the context of cosmetic consumption, these ideas are particularly relevant because cosmetics directly influence appearance and self-presentation. The reviewed studies suggested that many young women use cosmetic products as a means of expressing their self-image and desired identity. Cosmetic products help the individuals to communicate a particular impression, such as professionalism, confidence, sophistication, creativity, or individuality.

Recent evidence also supports the role of identity in cosmetic consumption. Shukre (2023), in a study of young Indian women, found that self-image significantly influenced purchase intentions for cosmetic products. The findings suggest that consumers are more likely to purchase products that reflect how they see themselves or how they wish to be seen by others. In same way Shim et al. (2024) reported that identity, personal values, and lifestyle preferences influenced beauty product choices among Millennial and Generation Z consumers.

The literature further indicates that cosmetics may help the consumers to move closer to their ideal self-image. Young women often use cosmetics to express a version of themselves that is consistent with their personal goals, aspirations, and preferred identities. In this sense, cosmetics buying becomes more than an appearance-enhancing activity; it becomes a way of expressing and reinforcing desired aspects of the self-image. Overall, the reviewed studies suggest that identity-related needs play an important role in cosmetic buying behaviour among young women. Cosmetic products serve as symbolic resources that help in express self-image, communicate personal values, and reinforce desired identities of young women consumers.

3.3 Social Needs and Cosmetic Buying Behaviour

The literature also revealed that social needs play an important role in shaping cosmetic buying behaviour among young women. A natural desire to be accepted, valued, and included within their social environments of human beings is obvious. Baumeister and Leary (1995) stated that the need for belongingness is one of the greatest fundamental human motivations. Individuals generally seek positive social relationships and strive to avoid social neglect and rejection. In the context of cosmetics consumption, appearance often influences on the first impressions, social interactions, and perceptions of attractiveness. Thus, cosmetic products may help the individuals feel more confident and socially accepted in different situations.

Studies included in the review suggest that social norms and cultural expectations significantly influence cosmetic consumption. Dittmar (2008) highlighted how consumer culture and beauty ideals shape appearance-related behaviours, particularly among women. Beauty standards promoted through society, media, and popular culture often create expectations regarding physical appearance, which may encourage cosmetic use. Tiggemann and Slater (2014) found that exposure to appearance-focused media and beauty-related content can increase appearance concerns and apprehensions among young women. These evaluations motivate individuals to use cosmetic products in order to align themselves with perceived social ideals and standards of attractiveness and appearance. Rodgers et al. (2024) reported that sociocultural pressures from media, peers, and broader social environments were associated with greater engagement with cosmetic products and beauty-related practices among women. These findings suggest that cosmetic consumption is often influenced by a desire to fit into valued social groups and meet socially accepted appearance norms.

Young women often report that using cosmetic products before social events, educational settings, professional interactions, and public appearances. In such situations, cosmetics use may reduce concerns about negative evaluation and increase feelings of social comfort and acceptance. Overall, the findings suggest that social needs represent an important psychological needs underlying cosmetics buying behaviour among young women. Cosmetics may help consumers achieve social acceptance, strengthen feelings of belongingness, meet social

expectations, and enhance confidence in interpersonal interactions. These findings highlight the significant role of social relationships and cultural influences in shaping cosmetic consumption behaviour.

3.4 Control Needs and Cosmetics Buying Behaviour

Perceived control refers to the belief that one can effectively manage important aspects of life and self-presentation. Although this theme received less attention than self-related and social needs, the reviewed studies suggest that it remains an important motivation underlying cosmetic consumption. Researchers have argued that consumption can help individuals maintain or restore feelings of control, particularly during situations characterised by uncertainty, stress, or self-doubt. Cutright (2012) suggested that consumers often engage in cosmetics consumption behaviours that enhance feelings of personal control and order.

Cosmetics offer an opportunity to energetically manage their appearance and self-presentation. This process may create feelings of preparedness, predictability, and personal control. Rather than passively accepting their appearance, consumers are able to take deliberate actions that align with their personal goals and preferences. The reviewed literature also suggests that appearance management itself can be viewed as a form of personal control. Many young women use cosmetic products as part of daily routines it helps them feel more organised, presentable, prepared, and confident before engaging in academic, professional, or social activities. This routine may provide a sense of stability and psychological comfort.

Mandel et al. (2017) argued that consumers sometimes engage in consumption behaviours to cope with psychological discomfort or restore threatened aspects of the self. Cosmetic products may serve a similar function by helping individuals regain confidence and a sense of control over how they are perceived by others. Recent studies of female consumers also suggest that personal attitudes, appearance management practices, and product involvement influence cosmetic purchasing decisions. These findings indicate that cosmetic consumption is not only about achieving a desired appearance but also about exercising personal choice and maintaining control over self-presentation. Overall, the reviewed literature suggests that control needs contribute to cosmetic buying behaviour among young women. Cosmetic products allow consumers to actively manage their appearance, exercise personal choice, and create a greater sense of control over self-presentation. As a result, cosmetic consumption may function as a mechanism through which individuals maintain feelings of competence, preparedness, and personal control in everyday life.

3.5 Integrated Discussion: Psychological Needs Underlying Cosmetic Buying Behaviour Among Young Women

The findings of this review suggested that cosmetic buying behaviour among young women cannot be fully explained by appearance enhancement alone. Although improving physical appearance remains an important motivation, the reviewed literature indicates that cosmetics consumption is also closely connected to a variety of psychological needs. Young women often purchase and use cosmetic products because these products help them achieve desired psychological outcomes that extend beyond functional and aesthetic benefits. The analysis revealed that cosmetic consumption is associated with multiple psychological needs, including self-esteem, confidence, self-worth, identity expression, self-image, social acceptance, belongingness, and perceived control. This suggests that cosmetic products perform important symbolic and psychological functions in addition to their practical use of beauty enhancement.

An important finding of the review is that these psychological needs are often interconnected rather than independent. For example, improvements in appearance may strengthen confidence and self-worth, which can in turn facilitate social interactions and feelings of acceptance. Similarly, identity expression through cosmetic products may contribute to both positive self-evaluations and greater confidence in social situations.

The review also highlighted the role of cosmetics as symbolic resources. Young women do not simply purchase cosmetic products to change how they look; they also use them to express who they are, communicate desired identities, navigate social expectations, and manage how they present themselves to others. Cosmetic products therefore function as tools that support both personal and social aspects of the self. Another important observation is that existing research remains fragmented. Studies have examined concepts such as self-esteem, body image,

confidence, self-presentation, identity, social influence, and appearance management separately. However, relatively limited attention has been given to understanding how these factors collectively reflect broader psychological needs associated with cosmetic consumption. As a result, the literature provides valuable insights but lacks a comprehensive framework that integrates these diverse motivations.

Overall, the review contributes to the literature by bringing together diverse psychological explanations of cosmetics consumption and highlighting the range of psychological needs that may be fulfilled through cosmetics buying behaviour. By adopting a broader psychological perspective, the study moves beyond traditional appearance-based explanations and provides a more holistic understanding of cosmetic consumption among young women.

Table 1. Summary of Key Studies on Cosmetic Buying Behaviour Among Young Women

Author(s)	Year	Context/Focus	Key Findings
Cash & Cash	1982	Cosmetics and psychosocial outcomes	Cosmetic use was associated with positive self-perceptions and confidence.
Higgins	1987	Self-discrepancy theory	Consumers engage in behaviours that reduce the gap between actual and ideal selves.
Belk	1988	Extended self	Products can become part of identity and self-expression.
Baumeister & Leary	1995	Need to belong	Social acceptance and belongingness are fundamental human motivations.
Deci & Ryan	2000	Psychological needs	Human behaviour is influenced by the fulfilment of important psychological needs.
Cash	2002	Body image and appearance	Appearance-related perceptions influence self-evaluation and behaviour.
Escalas & Bettman	2005	Identity and consumption	Consumers use products and brands to express desired identities.
Nash et al.	2006	Cosmetics and confidence	Cosmetic use increased confidence and positive self-perceptions.
Dittmar	2008	Consumer culture and identity	Consumption is closely linked to identity and social expectations.
Tiggemann & Slater	2014	Appearance-related media influences	Media exposure increases appearance concerns among young women.
Mandel et al.	2017	Compensatory consumption	Consumption can help individuals cope with psychological deficiencies and self-discrepancies.
Tengli & Srinivasan	2022	Natural cosmetics	Psychological and personal factors influence cosmetic purchase behaviour.
Shukre	2023	Young Indian women and green cosmetics	Self-image and attitude influence purchase intentions.

Author(s)	Year	Context/Focus	Key Findings
Rodgers et al.	2024	Sociocultural pressures and cosmetics	Social pressures influence engagement with cosmetic products.
Shim et al.	2024	Clean beauty and Gen Z consumers	Identity, values, and self-expression influence cosmetic choices.

Table 2. Psychological Needs Identified in Cosmetic Buying Behaviour Literature

Psychological Need	Related Concepts in Literature	Representative Studies
Self-Esteem and Self-Worth	Confidence, attractiveness, positive self-evaluation	Cash & Cash (1982); Cash (2002); Nash et al. (2006)
Identity and Self-Expression	Identity expression, self-image, ideal self, symbolic consumption	Belk (1988); Higgins (1987); Escalas & Bettman (2005); Shim et al. (2024)
Social Acceptance and Belongingness	Social approval, peer influence, cultural expectations, belongingness	Baumeister & Leary (1995); Dittmar (2008); Tiggemann & Slater (2014); Rodgers et al. (2024)
Agency and Control	Appearance management, personal agency, perceived control	Cutright (2012); Mandel et al. (2017);
Values and Ethical Needs	Sustainability, ethical consumption, environmental concern	Tengli & Srinivasan (2022); Shukre (2023); Shim et al. (2024)

4. Conclusion

Cosmetic products may fulfil more than one psychological need at the same time. A product that helps a consumer feel more attractive may also increase confidence, strengthen self-worth, and improve social comfort. This highlights the complex nature of cosmetics consumption and suggests that purchasing decisions are influenced by a combination of personal and social motivations and needs. The study also revealed that existing research has largely examined psychological factors such as self-esteem, identity, social influence, and appearance management separately. By synthesising findings from different research streams, this integrated review provided a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological needs underlying cosmetic buying behaviour among young women.

This research paper also contributes to the consumer behaviour and cosmetics literature by showing that cosmetics consumption can be understood as a means of fulfilling a range of psychological needs. Future research may further explore how different psychological needs interact with one another and whether some needs are more influential than others in shaping cosmetic buying behaviour. Researchers may also examine how these needs vary across cultures, age groups, and different categories of cosmetic products. Such research can help develop a deeper understanding of the psychological processes that influence cosmetic consumption. Overall, the review suggested that cosmetic buying behaviour among young women is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by a variety of psychological needs.

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