

An Analytical Study of Consumer Behavior towards Herbal Cosmetics in Amritsar

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Abstract-- The increasing awareness of health, safety, and environmental sustainability has led to a significant shift in consumer preferences from chemical-based cosmetics toward herbal cosmetic products. This study titled “Consumer Buying Behavior towards Herbal Cosmetic Products” aims to analyze the level of consumer awareness, usage patterns, and key factors influencing the purchase of herbal cosmetics. A descriptive research design with a quantitative approach was adopted for the study. Primary data were collected from 109 respondents aged 18 years and above using a structured questionnaire distributed through online platforms and in-person surveys. Convenience sampling was employed, and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and factor analysis.

The findings reveal that a majority of respondents are aware of herbal cosmetic products and have used them, with skincare and haircare emerging as the most preferred product categories. Social media was identified as the primary source of information, followed by advertisements and recommendations from friends and family. Natural ingredients and the absence of side effects were the most influential factors driving purchase decisions, while price and availability played a comparatively minor role. The study also indicates that young, educated consumers show a strong inclination toward herbal products due to concerns regarding the harmful effects of synthetic chemicals.

Overall, the results highlight a growing acceptance of herbal cosmetics and a positive shift in consumer attitudes toward natural and sustainable beauty products. The study provides valuable insights for marketers and manufacturers to design strategies focused on product quality, ingredient transparency, and digital promotion to strengthen consumer trust and expand market reach.

Keywords: Herbal cosmetics; Consumer behavior; Purchase decisions; Natural products

I. INTRODUCTION

Cosmetics are products designed to clean, protect, and enhance the appearance of the skin, hair, and body. They are available in various forms such as creams, lotions, powders, serums, and gels, and are commonly used to address skin concerns including dryness, acne, pigmentation, and premature aging.

Over time, cosmetic products have evolved beyond basic beauty enhancement and now often include active ingredients that provide therapeutic benefits. This development has led to the emergence of cosmeceuticals, which combine cosmetic and pharmaceutical properties by incorporating ingredients such as vitamins, antioxidants, and alpha-hydroxy acids to improve skin health.

The Indian cosmetic industry has experienced significant growth over the past few decades due to economic development, rising disposable incomes, and increasing awareness of personal grooming. Along with this growth, consumer attitudes have also changed. Modern consumers are becoming more careful about the products they use on their skin and are increasingly concerned about the harmful effects of synthetic chemicals present in many conventional cosmetics. This growing awareness has resulted in a noticeable shift toward natural and herbal alternatives that are perceived as safer and healthier.

Herbal cosmetics are made using natural, plant-based ingredients such as herbs, flowers, roots, and botanical extracts. These products are often associated with traditional systems like Ayurveda and are believed to be gentle on the skin, non-toxic, and environmentally friendly. Common herbal ingredients such as aloe vera, neem, turmeric, sandalwood, and saffron are valued for their antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, moisturizing, and skin-brightening properties. Herbal cosmetic products are widely used in skincare, haircare, and personal hygiene, with skincare products being the most popular among consumers. The preference for herbal products is further strengthened by increasing demand for cruelty-free, organic, and sustainable beauty solutions.

Several studies have highlighted the factors that influence consumer attitudes toward herbal cosmetic products. Rekha and Gokila (2016) reported that quality, price, and perceived safety are major determinants of consumer satisfaction with herbal cosmetics. Ghazali et al. (2017) found that health value, product safety, and environmental concerns significantly affect purchasing behavior for natural personal care products.

Trivedi (2018) emphasized that consumer beliefs about herbal products positively influence brand trust and brand loyalty, suggesting that consumers who perceive herbal products as safe and effective are more likely to make repeat purchases. Maheswari (2022) further observed that brand familiarity, perceived safety, and price strongly shape consumer buying behavior toward herbal cosmetics, particularly among young and urban consumers.

In India, well-known brands such as Himalaya, Patanjali, Biotique, Lotus Herbals, Khadi Naturals, and Forest Essentials have successfully introduced a wide range of herbal cosmetic products that combine traditional herbal knowledge with modern scientific research. These brands have gained consumer trust by promoting natural ingredients, ethical sourcing, and eco-friendly practices. The increasing use of social media, online shopping platforms, and influencer marketing has also played an important role in spreading awareness about herbal cosmetics and influencing purchase decisions, especially among younger consumers.

As consumers become more informed and health-conscious, their expectations from cosmetic products are changing. Today, buyers not only look for immediate beauty benefits but also consider long-term skin health, product safety, and environmental impact. Although the demand for herbal cosmetics is rising, factors such as price sensitivity, brand reputation, availability, and perceived effectiveness continue to influence purchasing decisions. Therefore, it is essential to understand how consumers evaluate herbal cosmetic products and what motivates them to choose herbal alternatives over chemical-based cosmetics.

In this context, the present study aims to examine consumer buying behavior toward herbal cosmetic products. The study focuses on assessing consumer awareness, usage patterns, brand preferences, and the key factors influencing purchase decisions. By analyzing these aspects, the research seeks to provide useful insights for marketers, manufacturers, and policymakers to develop effective strategies that meet consumer expectations and support the sustainable growth of the herbal cosmetics industry.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The cosmetic industry has undergone significant transformation over the past few decades, driven by changing consumer lifestyles, rising awareness of personal care, and growing concern about the long-term effects of chemical-based products.

Cosmetics are no longer used only for enhancing appearance but are increasingly valued for their role in maintaining skin health and overall well-being. With this shift, consumers have begun to seek products that are safer, more natural, and environmentally responsible. This transition has contributed to the growing popularity of herbal and natural cosmetic products across both urban and semi-urban markets.

Herbal cosmetics, formulated using plant-based ingredients such as aloe vera, neem, turmeric, sandalwood, and saffron, are perceived as gentle, non-toxic, and free from harmful side effects. Many consumers associate these products with traditional systems like Ayurveda and holistic wellness. Several studies confirm this shift in consumer preferences. Arya et al. (2012) found that a majority of consumers preferred Ayurvedic medicines and cosmetics due to their reliability and safety, with Dabur emerging as the most trusted brand. Similarly, Subbulakshmi and Geetamani (2017) observed that herbal cosmetics were favored over non-herbal alternatives because of increased awareness regarding the harmful effects of chemical-based products.

A number of researchers have examined the factors influencing consumer buying behavior toward herbal and natural cosmetics. Rekha and Gokila (2016) identified quality, price, and quantity as major determinants of consumer satisfaction with herbal cosmetics, while Maheswari (2022) reported that brand familiarity, perceived safety, and price strongly influence purchase decisions. Singh and Kaur (2022) further highlighted that product quality and brand reputation are the most influential elements of the marketing mix, with consumers willing to pay more for trusted herbal brands. These findings indicate that consumers not only value natural ingredients but also rely heavily on brand credibility and perceived effectiveness.

Health consciousness and environmental awareness also play a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes. Ghazali et al. (2017) found that health value, product safety, and environmental concern significantly affect purchasing behavior and repurchase intentions for organic personal care products. Similarly, Sethi et al. (2020) emphasized that the shift from chemical-based to herbal products is largely driven by growing health awareness among Indian consumers. Bhat et al. (2020) reported that a majority of female college students preferred natural cosmetics due to perceived safety, although limited awareness reduced overall trust in herbal products.

Demographic and behavioral factors have also been widely explored in existing literature. Matić and Puh (2016) observed that gender, preference for organic products, and openness to new brands significantly influence the purchase of natural cosmetics, with women being more inclined toward herbal products. Chhetri (2021) found that age, education, and occupation significantly affect cosmetic buying behavior, while income was not a strong predictor. Homiga and Patkar (2024) further revealed that young consumers (18–24 years) dominate the herbal cosmetics market, with key influencing factors including price, product quality, brand reputation, and ingredient transparency.

Brand trust and loyalty are recurring themes in herbal cosmetic research. Trivedi (2018) demonstrated that consumer beliefs about herbal products significantly influence brand trust and brand loyalty, mediated through brand affect. Grover et al. (2022) also emphasized that brand identity, perceived quality, and trust play a crucial role in purchase and repurchase behavior. Studies focusing on Patanjali products, such as Rani et al. (2019) and Singh and Kharb (2023), highlight that consumers associate herbal brands with safety, health consciousness, and environmental friendliness, although some still perceive herbal products as expensive or slower in delivering results.

Marketing communication and media exposure further shape consumer perceptions. Anute et al. (2015) found that television was the primary source of awareness for cosmetic products, while Karki (2024) demonstrated that social media advertising significantly influences perception, attitude, and buying behavior. Jain and N.R. (2023) confirmed that advertisements, peer recommendations, and trust are dominant factors in cosmetic purchase decisions, particularly among young consumers and students. These findings indicate that modern promotional strategies play a critical role in expanding the reach of herbal cosmetic brands.

Despite the extensive body of research on herbal and cosmetic products, most studies are cross-sectional in nature and are limited to specific cities, districts, or consumer groups. Many studies focus on broad factors such as brand, price, quality, and safety, but comparatively fewer examine regional variations in awareness, usage patterns, and purchase motivations in emerging urban centers. In particular, there is limited empirical research on consumer awareness and buying behavior toward herbal cosmetic products in Amritsar, a city experiencing rapid urbanization, changing lifestyles, and increasing exposure to digital marketing and modern retail formats.

III. METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a quantitative and descriptive research design to identify the key factors influencing consumer buying behavior toward herbal cosmetic products. The study was conducted in Amritsar city and its surrounding areas, where awareness of natural, organic, and herbal personal care products has increased due to changing lifestyles, rising health consciousness, and the growth of online retail platforms. This region provides an appropriate context to examine consumer perceptions, preferences, and purchasing patterns related to herbal cosmetic products.

The sample for the study consisted of consumers aged 18 years and above who currently use or have previously used herbal cosmetic products. The respondents included students, working professionals, and other individuals from different educational and income backgrounds. This population was selected because it represents a growing segment of health-conscious consumers who actively seek information about product ingredients, safety, and brand reputation before making purchase decisions. Only respondents who met the following inclusion criteria were considered: (i) users or previous users of herbal cosmetic products, (ii) residents of Amritsar or nearby areas, and (iii) individuals capable of understanding and responding to a structured questionnaire.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered both online and offline. The online survey was distributed through Google Forms and social media platforms, while offline responses were collected from public places such as shopping areas, campuses, and marketplaces. A total of 140 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 125 responses were received. After eliminating incomplete and inconsistent entries, 109 valid responses were retained for final analysis.

The questionnaire was developed based on existing literature on consumer behavior toward herbal and cosmetic products and consisted of two sections. The first section captured demographic information including age, gender, education level, and monthly income. The second section measured consumer awareness, usage patterns, brand preferences, spending behavior, and factors influencing purchasing decisions. Key dimensions included natural ingredients, absence of side effects, product effectiveness, price sensitivity, brand reputation, availability, and eco-friendly or cruelty-free claims. Responses to attitudinal statements were recorded using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).



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Sample statements included: "I believe that herbal cosmetic products are safer for long-term use" and "I consider both quality and price before purchasing herbal cosmetic products."

The reliability and validity of the measurement instrument were assessed prior to analysis. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.78 to 0.89, indicating satisfactory internal consistency among the items. The suitability of the data for factor analysis was confirmed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure (0.747) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 601.880$, $p < 0.001$), which demonstrated adequate correlations among variables. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation. Four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were retained, explaining 63.81% of the total variance. These factors were interpreted as: Price Sensitivity and Promotions, Health Benefits and Effectiveness, Product Suitability and Preference, and Effectiveness and Results (Trust in Outcomes), reflecting the major determinants of consumer buying behavior toward herbal cosmetic products.

IV. ANALYSIS

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed to identify the underlying dimensions influencing consumer buying behavior toward herbal cosmetic products in Amritsar and the surrounding areas.

The analysis was conducted using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation to obtain a clear and interpretable factor structure.

The adequacy of the sample was confirmed through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure (0.747) and a statistically significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 601.880$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Only items with factor loadings greater than 0.60 were retained to ensure construct reliability and discriminant validity.

The adequacy of the sample was confirmed through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure (0.886) and a statistically significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 4283.472$, $df = 435$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the data were highly suitable for factor analysis. Only items with factor loadings greater than 0.60 were retained to ensure construct reliability and discriminant validity. Reliability analysis further supported the internal consistency of the instrument, with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.956 across 30 items, reflecting excellent reliability. The factor analysis extracted six key dimensions of gig work—flexibility, financial stability, skill development, work-life balance, algorithmic influence, and job insecurity—highlighting the dual nature of gig employment in Amritsar, where perceived autonomy and earning opportunities coexist with economic insecurity and limited employment protection.

Table 1:
Rotated Component Matrix (Factor Loadings)

Study Variables	<i>A. Factor 1 B. (Price Sensitivity and Purchase Behavior)</i>	Factor 2(Health Benefits and Effectiveness)	Factor 3(Product Suitability and Preference)	Factor 4(Effectiveness and Results)
I am more likely to buy herbal cosmetic products when they are available at discounted prices or with promotional offers.	.842			
The affordability of herbal cosmetic products is important in my Purchasing decision.	.842			
I consider both the quality and price before purchasing herbal cosmetic products.	.803			
The price of the product is the most important factor in my decision To purchase herbal cosmetics.	.709			
I am satisfied with the effectiveness of herbal cosmetic products.		.847		
Herbal cosmetic products provide better health benefits compared to non-herbal alternatives.		.826		
I believe that herbal cosmetic products are safer for long-term use.		.810		
I believe that using herbal cosmetic products contributes to a Healthier lifestyle.		.633		
I am more likely to buy herbal cosmetic products when they are available at discounted prices or with promotional offers.			.739	
I believe herbal cosmetic products are more suitable for my skin type Than non-herbal alternatives.			.733	
I prefer using herbal cosmetic products instead of chemical-based ones.			.720	
I regularly buy herbal cosmetic products.			.668	
I believe herbal cosmetic products deliver better results than chemical-based products.				.820
Herbal cosmetic products improve the health and appearance of my skin				.797
I trust the effectiveness of herbal cosmetic products more than non-Herbal alternatives.				.670

The findings revealed four key dimensions influencing consumer buying behavior toward herbal cosmetic products. The factor loadings for **Price Sensitivity and Purchase Behavior (F1)** were the highest (0.75–0.83), indicating that consumers place strong emphasis on pricing, affordability, and perceived value for money when making purchase decisions. **Health Benefits and Effectiveness (F2)**, with loadings ranging from 0.72 to 0.82, reflected the importance consumers attach to the perceived safety, natural composition, and health-related advantages of herbal cosmetic products. **Product Suitability and Preference (F3)**, with factor loadings between 0.74 and 0.81, highlighted the role of individual needs, compatibility with skin or hair type, and personal preferences in shaping product choice. The fourth factor, **Effectiveness and Results (F4)**, exhibited strong loadings in the range of 0.78 to 0.85, emphasizing that visible outcomes, performance, and user satisfaction significantly reinforce continued usage and repeat purchase intentions. Cronbach's alpha values for all four factors exceeded 0.78, confirming satisfactory internal consistency and reliability, with no significant cross-loadings observed, thereby supporting the validity of the factor structure.

Table 2:
Total Variance Explained

Factor	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative Variance (%)
F1: Price Sensitivity and Purchase Behavior	4.142	27.611	27.611
F2: Health Benefits and Effectiveness	2.172	14.481	42.092
F3: Product Suitability and Preference	1.700	11.334	53.426
F4: Effectiveness and Results	1.558	10.385	63.811

The four factors extracted through Exploratory Factor Analysis together explained 63.81 percent of the total variance, which exceeds the minimum acceptable threshold of 60 percent commonly recommended in human behaviour and consumer research (Hair et al., 2020). The first factor, *Price Sensitivity and Purchase Behavior*, accounted for the largest proportion of variance at 27.61 percent, indicating that consumers' buying decisions for herbal cosmetic products are primarily influenced by pricing, affordability, and perceived value for money. The second factor, *Health Benefits and Effectiveness*, explained 14.48 percent of the variance, highlighting the importance consumers place on the perceived health advantages, safety, and functional benefits of herbal products. The third factor, *Product Suitability and Preference*, contributed 11.33 percent of the variance, suggesting that personal needs, compatibility with skin or hair type, and individual preferences significantly shape purchase choices. The fourth factor, *Effectiveness and Results*, accounted for 10.39 percent of the variance, reflecting the role of actual product performance and visible outcomes in reinforcing continued usage and customer satisfaction. Overall, the EFA findings demonstrate that consumer buying behaviour toward herbal cosmetics is driven by a combination of economic considerations, perceived health value, personal suitability, and product performance. These results indicate that marketers and manufacturers should balance competitive pricing with credible claims of health benefits, product effectiveness, and user-oriented positioning to strengthen consumer trust and market acceptance.

V. DISCUSSIONS

The results provide clear evidence regarding the key determinants of consumer buying behavior toward herbal cosmetic products in Amritsar and the surrounding areas. Using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and Varimax rotation, four distinct dimensions were identified: Price Sensitivity and Purchase Behavior, Health Benefits and Effectiveness, Product Suitability and Preference, and Effectiveness and Results. Together, these four factors explained 63.81 percent of the total variance, exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 60 percent in behavioral research and confirming the robustness of the extracted factor structure. The findings support existing theoretical perspectives in consumer behavior literature, which emphasize the combined influence of economic, health-related, and psychological factors in shaping purchasing decisions for natural and herbal products.

Among the extracted factors, Price Sensitivity and Purchase Behavior emerged as the most influential dimension, with the highest factor loadings ranging from 0.709 to 0.842. Items related to affordability, promotional offers, and the consideration of both price and quality loaded strongly on this factor, indicating that consumers are highly responsive to price variations when purchasing herbal cosmetic products. This suggests that although consumers value herbal products for their natural composition, purchasing decisions remain strongly guided by economic considerations such as discounts, value for money, and perceived affordability. These findings imply that competitive pricing strategies and promotional campaigns can significantly enhance market penetration for herbal cosmetic brands.

The second factor, Health Benefits and Effectiveness, demonstrated strong loadings between 0.633 and 0.847, reflecting the importance consumers place on the perceived health advantages and safety of herbal cosmetic products. Respondents expressed satisfaction with the effectiveness of herbal products and believed that such products are safer for long-term use and contribute to a healthier lifestyle. This indicates that consumers associate herbal cosmetics with wellness, reduced side effects, and improved personal care outcomes. The prominence of this factor highlights the growing health consciousness among consumers and reinforces the need for manufacturers to emphasize scientifically supported health claims, ingredient transparency, and product safety in their marketing communication.

Product Suitability and Preference formed the third factor, with loadings ranging from 0.668 to 0.733. This dimension captures consumers' beliefs that herbal cosmetics are better suited to their skin type, their preference for herbal over chemical-based alternatives, and their regular purchasing behavior. The results suggest that beyond price and health considerations, individual compatibility and personal preference play a significant role in shaping brand choice and repeat purchases. Consumers who perceive herbal cosmetics as more compatible with their personal needs demonstrate stronger loyalty and a higher likelihood of consistent usage. This underscores the importance of product customization, skin-type-specific formulations, and personalized marketing strategies in enhancing consumer engagement.

The fourth factor, Effectiveness and Results, recorded high loadings between 0.670 and 0.820, emphasizing consumers' trust in the outcomes delivered by herbal cosmetic products.

Items related to improved skin health, enhanced appearance, and superior results compared to chemical-based products loaded strongly on this factor. This finding indicates that tangible performance and visible results reinforce consumer confidence and encourage continued usage. Trust in outcomes serves as a critical driver of satisfaction and long-term brand commitment, suggesting that companies must ensure product efficacy and substantiate claims through quality assurance and consumer testimonials.

Overall, the findings reveal that consumer behavior toward herbal cosmetics in Amritsar is shaped by a combination of economic sensitivity, perceived health benefits, personal suitability, and trust in product performance. The decision-making process is not limited to price considerations alone but is also influenced by beliefs about safety, effectiveness, and individual compatibility. These results provide empirical evidence that successful marketing strategies in the herbal cosmetics sector must adopt a multifaceted approach—balancing affordability with credible health benefits, emphasizing product effectiveness, and addressing personal preferences. By aligning product development and promotional strategies with these key factors, marketers and manufacturers can strengthen consumer trust, enhance satisfaction, and expand the market for herbal cosmetic products in emerging urban centers such as Amritsar.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study provides comprehensive insights into consumer behavior toward herbal cosmetic products in India, with a particular focus on young, educated, and predominantly female respondents. The demographic profile of the sample indicates that a large majority of participants belonged to the 18–25 age group (85.3 percent), with females representing 60.6 percent of the respondents and more than 80 percent possessing at least a graduate-level education. This composition reflects a segment of consumers that is generally more aware of health, appearance, and environmental concerns, as well as more exposed to digital platforms and modern marketing channels. The high level of awareness regarding herbal cosmetic products (89 percent) and the substantial proportion of users (62.4 percent) demonstrate that herbal cosmetics have achieved significant recognition and acceptance among this consumer group.

Social media emerged as the dominant source of information (51.4 percent), followed by recommendations from family and friends and traditional advertising, indicating that both digital influence and interpersonal communication play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase intentions.

With regard to usage patterns, the findings show that herbal cosmetics are not merely occasional products but are integrated into the daily routines of many consumers, as 34.9 percent reported using cosmetic products on a daily basis. Skincare (40.4 percent) and haircare (33.9 percent) were identified as the most frequently used categories, suggesting that consumers associate herbal products particularly with personal health, hygiene, and long-term care of skin and hair. These preferences reflect a growing belief that herbal formulations are safer and more beneficial for regular use compared to chemical-based alternatives. In terms of purchasing behavior, most respondents reported monthly spending below ₹1000, indicating a high level of price consciousness. At the same time, online shopping platforms were the preferred mode of purchase for 43.1 percent of respondents, highlighting the importance of convenience, accessibility, and digital retail channels in influencing buying decisions among younger consumers.

The factor analysis further strengthens these observations by identifying four key determinants of consumer buying behavior: price sensitivity and promotions, health benefits and effectiveness, product suitability and preference, and effectiveness and results. Among these, price-related considerations remain highly influential, suggesting that even health-conscious consumers carefully evaluate affordability, discounts, and value for money before making purchases. At the same time, the strong emphasis on health benefits, natural composition, and perceived effectiveness indicates that consumers are increasingly motivated by concerns about safety, long-term well-being, and the avoidance of harmful chemicals. The factors related to product suitability and results highlight the importance of personal compatibility, visible outcomes, and user satisfaction in reinforcing repeat purchase behavior. The most commonly cited reasons for choosing herbal cosmetics—natural ingredients (49.5 percent) and absence of side effects (31.2 percent)—clearly reflect a shift toward preventive and wellness-oriented consumption patterns.

Moreover, the high level of satisfaction reported by respondents, with 64.3 percent being satisfied or very satisfied, along with the overwhelming willingness to recommend herbal cosmetics to others (93.6 percent), indicates strong consumer trust, positive brand perceptions, and the potential for sustained market growth through word-of-mouth promotion. However, the study also identifies important areas for improvement. Respondents expressed a desire for a wider variety of product options, more competitive pricing, and better fragrance and packaging. These suggestions reveal that while consumers are broadly satisfied with the concept and benefits of herbal cosmetics, they also expect continuous innovation, improved sensory appeal, and greater affordability. Overall, the findings suggest that consumer behavior toward herbal cosmetics in India is shaped by a complex interaction of demographic characteristics, health consciousness, digital influence, price sensitivity, and product performance, offering valuable implications for marketers and manufacturers seeking to strengthen their presence in this rapidly growing segment.

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