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*Article*

# An Analysis of the Factors Influencing Consumer Viewpoints in Online Shopping

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**Abstract:** A single paragraph of about 200 words maximum. For research articles, abstracts should give a pertinent overview of the work. We strongly encourage authors to use the following style of structured abstracts, but without headings: (1) Background: Place the question addressed in a broad context and highlight the purpose of the study; (2) Methods: Describe briefly the main methods or treatments applied; (3) Results: Summarize the article's main findings; and (4) Conclusion: Indicate the main conclusions or interpretations. The abstract should be an objective representation of the article, it must not contain results which are not presented and substantiated in the main text and should not exaggerate the main conclusions.

**Keywords:** customer emotions; premium cosmetics; qualitative study; emotional triggers; consumer analysis

## 1. Introduction

A worldwide trend, which is also growing swiftly in Iran, is the attraction to luxury items, including high-end cosmetics and personal care products. This trend is most prevalent among the younger demographic of society [1]. The promotion of international luxury brands in Iran, such as cosmetics from MAC, Clinique, Chanel, Kiehl's, Lancôme, Dior, Morph, and Toofaced, exemplifies this phenomenon. Recently, with the rise in smartphone internet users and virtual networks like Telegram and Instagram, many manufacturers and sellers have turned to these platforms as distribution channels. The allure and elegance of the products can trigger internal motivation and the desire to purchase, with this passion being a spontaneous emotional response. Additionally, given that the youth comprises 45% of Iran's population, according to the Iranian Statistics Center (35.7 million individuals aged 20 to 44 years) (Iran Statistics Center 2019), this trend becomes even more significant. Customer emotions play a critical role in the acquisition of luxury goods and significantly influence consumer experiences and reactions. Consumption emotions are the emotional responses experienced before and during the use of a product [2]. Modern consumers form an emotional bond with the product and brand, influencing their purchasing decisions [3–5]. Thus, understanding the impact of customer emotions is crucial for product marketing [6]. Furthermore, identifying all the factors that excite customers in a market, leading to the purchase process, is specific to that market. These factors may include product variety, prices, shopping environment, and other previously mentioned elements. Therefore, in each market, these and other yet-to-be-identified factors should be studied based on the environmental, cultural, technological, and other characteristics of that market. As noted in international studies, the factors affecting customer emotions, particularly in online shopping, are not fully measured, with most research conducted in physical stores, such as [7–9]. This study aims to explore the factors influencing emotions in an online setting from the perspectives of customers and experts using comprehensive views. Moreover, considering that previous international studies were conducted in a Western cultural context, their findings cannot be generalized to all markets, especially the cosmetics market in Iran. Thus, more generalizable results can be achieved by considering non-Western cultures. Conducting thorough research in the Iranian market, taking into account the different consumer values for choosing products, as well as the clear distinction between luxury cosmetic brands and those available in Iran, which have been examined in studies on creating excitement and the factors affecting it for customers, can fill existing gaps, and this study seeks to achieve such goals.

## 2. Background

### 2.1. *The Theoretical Background of the Study*

#### 2.1.1. Customer Emotion

Emotion expression is another form of discourse that is universally recognized and understood. Emotions should be considered a unique element to enhance the product or service offered [10]. Emotions refer to the assessment of customer feelings about the experience of a company brand, product, or service [11]. Emotion is an attitude that can stimulate, organize, and guide people's perceptions, thoughts, and behaviors. Emotions influence all aspects of consumption from pre-purchase decisions to post-consumption behaviors [10]. Researchers differentiate between general emotions and consumption-specific emotions. Unlike general emotions, consumption-specific emotions occur specifically during the use of a product or may be evoked as effective responses. Emotions are brief, intense feelings that occur without conscious effort and are usually accompanied by increased activation of the autonomic nervous system, and physiological changes in heart rate and breathing [12]. Many authors acknowledge that there are positive and negative effects in the experience of emotions, with everyone experiencing either positive or negative emotions. [13] suggested that people's emotional indicators include 62 emotional states. [14] believes that a person can express emotions through facial expressions and may exhibit ten basic emotions including interest, pleasure, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, contempt, fear, shame, and guilt. [13] identified eight primary emotions, including fear, anger, joy, sadness, acceptance, disgust, anticipation, and surprise. In his study, [15] considered negative emotions, which included fear, anger, shame, discomfort, and disappointment. [16] considered the dimensions of customer emotions including excitement, enthusiasm, fun, happiness, interest, excitement, and inspiration. [17] illustrated emotions with components such as anger, comfort, pleasure, fear, happiness, importance, confusion, pride, specialness, distinctiveness, sadness, shame, and complexity. [9] categorized emotions into two groups: positive and negative. In their view, positive emotions included pleasure, excitement, and relaxation, while negative emotions included anger, distress, hatred, and fear. [18] divided emotions into two categories: positive emotions (excitement and happiness) and negative emotions (anger, anxiety, and depression). In their study, [19] focused only on positive emotions, considering them to include comfort, happiness, satisfaction, and romanticism. [20] also divided customer emotions into two categories: positive (joy, pride, fun, entertainment, interest, and attachment) and negative (anger, hatred, humiliation, disgust, enmity, and fear). [21] in their model considered satisfaction, happiness, peace, optimism, pleasure, and excitement as dimensions of positive emotions, and anger, fear, discomfort, and embarrassment as dimensions of negative emotions. [22] took into account positive emotions such as excitement, surprise, peace, and pleasure, and negative emotions such as anger, disgust, hatred, shame, distress, and despair.

#### 2.1.2. Influences on Customer Emotional Purchases

Numerous investigations have explored emotional buying, aiming to pinpoint factors that facilitate these purchases. The elements influencing emotional buying behavior can be categorized into four types: personal factors, product-related aspects, environmental and situational elements, and factors associated with the individual that influence the propensity for emotional purchases. The stronger a consumer's inclination toward emotional buying, the higher the likelihood of such purchases [23]. Product-related aspects are pertinent to items purchased on an emotional basis. Emotional buying patterns differ according to the product and its category. Environmental elements include store layout, unique displays, shelf indicators, and attractive graphic advertisements or sales promotions. Additionally, media formats that deliver information in the online shopping environment can impact emotional shopping tendencies. Situational elements involve the financial resources and time available for purchasing and the accessibility of credit [24]. Various investigations have demonstrated the impact of diverse factors on the emotions involved in purchasing various products and services, aiming

to offer a comprehensive overview of the influences on customer emotions and emotional buying behavior. These can be broadly categorized as outlined below.

#### Personal Factors

**Demographic details (age, gender, income level, etc.)** are used as independent variables. There are differing views on whether consumers' income and age significantly impact online shopping positively [25]. Previous research generally shows that younger individuals are more inclined to make emotional purchases than older individuals [24]. The distinction between men and women also influences decision-making priorities. Some studies indicate that men engage in online shopping more than women [25]. Income is also strongly associated with emotional buying behavior. Individuals with lower household incomes often rely on shopping lists [24]. Personality traits encompass thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, perceptions, activities, and other various characteristics of an individual. Personality can be described as the features, appearance, and attributes of human beings. Emotional shopping is viewed as an emotional component of personality that allows a person to act swiftly without extensive deliberation or consideration of alternative costs. To comprehend the role of personality in motivating purchases, the five-factor personality model is utilized, which includes openness, extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism, covering all characteristics of human personality [26].

**Variety-seeking:** Some scholars suggest that consumers seek variety and options, which may be a primary reason for brand switching and emotional purchases. Additionally, variety-seeking behaviors are linked to emotional buying [27].

**Hedonism:** The enjoyment of shopping refers to the pleasure derived from the buying process [28]. Individuals who take pleasure in shopping are termed recreational buyers, who spend more time shopping and shop more frequently [29].

#### Contextual variables

**Available duration:** Consumers with ample time for shopping often exceed their planned purchases. Therefore, a shopper who feels comfortable in a store may prolong their stay, thereby increasing the likelihood of unnecessary purchases [25]. Conversely, shopping habits and choices may alter when time is limited. However, shoppers with sufficient time experience less pressure in selecting items and consequently pay more visual attention to the store environment, fostering serene and positive emotions during shopping [29].

**Available resources:** This pertains to the monetary funds or additional finances individuals possess or spend daily. Furthermore, available resources significantly influence people's purchasing decisions. It serves as a purchasing power. Greater financial resources enable customers to alter their planned purchasing patterns, thereby enhancing their purchasing power [25].

**Financial well-being:** This refers to an individual's economic health, distinct from the "available resources" variable in their bank account. When assessing this variable, one considers a person's overall financial situation from a long-term perspective. High scores on the financial well-being scale are thought to increase the likelihood of emotional purchases [25].

**User familiarity:** The experience of using websites or social media significantly impacts e-commerce. The online shopping experience, a common situational factor, relates to user-friendly interfaces and the enjoyment derived from online shopping [30].

#### Merchandise and ecological factors

**Presence of companions and peers in the setting:** Based on the premise that friends and relatives bolster a buyer's decision-making, resulting in increased purchases, establishments catering to couples,



friends, or groups generally perform better. Peer presence heightens purchasing desire, while family members' presence diminishes it [25].

**Store ambiance:** This encompasses the arrangement of products, lighting, and color schemes. It significantly influences consumer emotions and buying behaviors, potentially fostering emotional and intensified shopping behaviors [25].

**Exclusivity and modernity of products:** Purchases of emotionally charged products result from engagement with the product and the buyer's desire for emotional purchases. Emotional buying, driven by current fashion trends and new brand introductions, spurs consumers toward emotional purchases [29].

**Promotional activities and marketing stimuli:** Sales promotions aim to stimulate customer demand and encourage emotional purchases of specific brands. Well-planned advertisements can also induce consumer purchase intentions, particularly when products are discounted. Consumers are more inclined to make emotional purchases in such scenarios [25].

**Supportive interactions with staff:** A courteous salesperson's presence in-store constitutes exceptional customer service. Positive interactions during shopping can heighten the likelihood of emotional purchases, while knowledgeable staff can mitigate buyer's remorse by providing support throughout the purchasing process [25].

**Product specifications:** Certain products evoke more emotional responses than others based on category, price, and symbolic significance. Emotional purchases are more probable for products with lower prices or shorter production cycles [31].

**Consumer interaction with the merchandise** Customer interaction with the merchandise and brand is an incentive state of curiosity sparked by a specific stimulus or circumstance. In general, engagement is visualized as an exchange between an individual (consumer) and an entity (merchandise). Product interaction may vary between emotional purchasing and scheduled, customary purchasing [29]

## 2.2. Foundation of the Experiment

In this segment, various local and foreign investigations connected to exploration variables are surveyed. [32] executed an inquiry titled "Assessing the impact of online shop attributes on impulsive shopping caused by consumer emotions." The findings underscored that the environmental features of virtual stores (store content, design, and navigation) positively and significantly influence impulsive online shopping behavior. Moreover, the mediating role of consumer emotions in the relationship between virtual store environmental features and impulsive shopping behavior was validated. [33] performed a study titled "Exploring determinants influencing online purchasing intent in Iran: A study of the fashion and apparel markets." His results highlighted that innovation, perceived security, quality of information, and trust within the fashion industry positively and significantly affect online purchase intent. Additionally, cost-effectiveness and timeliness positively and significantly impact perceived value in online fashion shopping. Furthermore, perceived value positively influences online purchasing intent. [34] conducted another investigation titled "Identification of foundational components (value proposition to customers) and their influence on customer satisfaction utilizing sentiment analysis through text mining." The results indicated that analyzing customer sentiments and user-generated content to explore consumer attitudes toward products is a practical and effective method for businesses to present successful products endorsed by consumers. [35] carried out a study titled "Exploring the impact of emotion on customer purchase intent with the mediating role of customer involvement." The study aimed to explore how emotions affect customer purchase intent, with customer engagement and brand image serving as mediators. Data analysis confirmed that emotions influence customer engagement, emotions affect brand image, engagement impacts brand image, and brand image influences purchase intent. [36] conducted research titled "Investigating factors influencing online shopping and sales promotions on consumer emotional buying behavior." Data analysis revealed that online shopping and sales promotion tools influence consumer behavior,

and gender exhibits a significant relationship with emotional shopping. [7] conducted research titled "Individual and in-store factors influencing emotional purchasing behavior among consumers in small towns." Findings indicated that personal factors, including available time and family influence, exert a positive and intriguing influence on emotional buying behavior. In-store factors similarly impact impulsive buying behavior. However, the influence of available funds on impulsive buying behavior remained inconclusive. [21] conducted a study titled "The effects of positive and negative emotions in online shopping on consumer satisfaction, repurchase intention, and recommendation intention." Results demonstrated that positive emotions have a more significant impact compared to negative emotions. [26] conducted research titled "Impact of personality on emotional shopping behavior in developed countries." Findings revealed that traits such as openness, extroversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism have substantial effects, while agreeableness has a minimal impact on emotional purchasing behavior. [8] conducted research titled "Exploring factors influencing emotional buying behavior." Study results indicated that available funds directly influence emotional buying behavior, with this effect becoming significant indirectly through the mediating variable of purchase intent. [16] conducted research titled "The Moderating Role of Situational Factors (Available Money and Time) on Emotional Behavior." This study demonstrated the direct effects of environmental characteristics on customers' positive emotional responses and the direct effects of customers' positive emotional responses to retail environments on emotional purchasing behavior.

### 3. Research Approach

To fulfill the study's objective of identifying the facets of customer emotions and examining, prioritizing, and categorizing the precursors influencing customer emotions during the purchase of luxury cosmetic items, a two-phase methodology (qualitative-quantitative) was employed, combining thematic analysis and the fuzzy Delphi technique. Thematic analysis aimed to pinpoint customer emotion facets through firsthand experiences of customers actively involved in purchasing numerous luxury cosmetics via online shopping groups. Conversely, the fuzzy Delphi technique, achieving consensus among experts, explored potential precursors influencing customer emotions. Identified precursors were subsequently prioritized and categorized based on their significance.

#### 3.1. Thematic Examination

Initially, an extensive semi-structured interview approach was employed to gather essential primary qualitative data. To this end, a selection was made of active and seasoned customers who have participated extensively in online cosmetics sales Telegram groups (based on repeated IDs in group listings). Given the qualitative nature of the study, sampling was conducted through a purposive or judgmental method, with sample size determined based on theoretical saturation. Consequently, the initial sample comprised 23 participants, achieving saturation through these interviews. The interview protocols comprised two principal segments. The first segment elicited information on respondents' demographic characteristics, their virtual network usage (in daily hours), and their time spent engaging in online cosmetics group purchases. The second segment aimed to capture respondents' emotional dimensions and factors influencing these during their group engagement and purchasing process phases. Respondents were prompted to articulate emotions such as fury, apprehension, joy, and trepidation upon entering an online cosmetics sales Telegram group, viewing products, perusing comments, engaging in discussions, and comparing prices. Responses were meticulously recorded using audio recording equipment to ensure comprehensive capture of insights. Subsequently, data from interviews underwent data-driven inductive thematic analysis to identify, scrutinize, and delineate patterns or themes within qualitative data. This method facilitated exposition of explicit as well as implicit meanings, assumptions, and insights conveyed through words, phrases, and sentences [37]. Furthermore, interpretation of themes and data analysis outputs were grounded in established theoretical frameworks, supported by input from three academic experts in marketing. Reliability of interview data was evaluated using the ICR method and the "Holsti method". In this

study, initial coding was performed by the researcher followed by validation by an expert, yielding a reliability coefficient of 87%, indicating robust research data.

### 3.2. Fuzzy Delphi Technique

Aligned with the study's objective of identifying factors influencing customer emotions during purchasing, a collaborative decision-making approach [38–45] was adopted, aiming to achieve consensus through expert panel deliberations [46]. This method holds particular significance in qualitative inquiries [47–54]. Panelists for the Delphi method were selected based on predefined criteria, emphasizing expertise and practical experience [55]. For this study, a panel comprising 15 experts in psychological marketing from luxury cosmetics-importing firms active in virtual networks, along with managers of Telegram groups specializing in luxury cosmetic products, was assembled.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Content Analysis Outcomes

As delineated in Sections 1-3, initial interviews were conducted to capture authentic consumer perspectives. Insights garnered from these interviews yielded three primary categories of information: (1) Demographic details, daily virtual network usage hours, and time allocation to purchasing cosmetics and hygiene products in online groups; (2) Dimensions of consumer emotions; and (3) Potential precursors to consumer emotions. For content analysis, interview transcripts were meticulously reviewed and iteratively examined to identify overarching textual patterns. Initial codes were established to catalog content, resulting in 454 primary codes. Subsequently, these codes were categorized into 33 thematic groups, aligning coherent concepts and themes. Table 1 summarizes findings from this phase, focusing on concepts pertinent to the study's objectives and their frequency in interview responses. Ultimately, this process yielded 11 secondary themes, underpinning two organizing themes: "positive emotions" and "negative emotions," within the overarching theme of consumer emotions.

In the subsequent phase, utilizing the findings from the prior stage, a conceptual map illustrating the dimensions of customer emotional states is constructed. This visual representation takes the form of a network diagram akin to a web structure, detailing various thematic levels and their interrelationships. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual map derived from this study.

Table 1. Seeking and identification of codes and themes.

Comprehensive theme	Organizing theme	Secondary theme	Basic codes
Customer emotions	Positive emotions (191)	Pleasure and joy (84)	Happiness, joy of being in a group and the possibility of buying (33)
			Happy to be in the group and feel good about it (16)
			The pleasure of interacting in a group (14)
			Hope in supply and buying the product from the group and hoping for the product's effectiveness (21)
		Excitement and arousal (55)	High excitement and arousal in the cosmetic group (27)
			Becoming emotional due to being in the cosmetic group and emotional shopping (19)
			Getting emotional and standing on ceremony to buy (9)
		Love and emotionality (15)	Interest in/ passion for members and cosmetic products (15)
		Easy and reliable (18)	Peace of mind and confidence in the shopping group (18)
		Positive surprise (19)	Being surprised by the variety of prices and effects of products (19)
	Negative emotions (263)	Sadness (50)	Boredom and getting bored of the group (11)
			Feeling of misery due to comparison of prices and inability to buy the desired product (8)
			Annoyance and resentment from admin and members (6)
			Being sad in the group due to the price comparisons, behaviors, sold out products, cancellations, etc. (13)
			Depression due to the dollar rate, depression from buying / not buying the product (8)
		Fear (72)	Buying / not buying because of loneliness (4)
			Confusion in choosing, listing and buying products (14)
			Feeling worried and lost (23)
			Being nervous and annoyed by the volume of group conversations and wandering in groups (10)
			Anxiety and stress from listing and ordering to delivery of the product (16)
		Regret, feeling inferior (69)	Concern when choosing a product and the suitability of the purchased product (9)
			Regret from buying or not buying (17)
			Regret and envy for not having the product with the inability to buy it (16)
			Regret from buying too much (17)
			Guilt from giving wrong advice to members and a large and repeated volume of purchases (8)
		Anger (48)	Feeling humiliated against others (4)
			Embarrassment in the group (7)
			Getting angry with the admin and group members (13)
			Annoyance and resentment of the atmosphere that dominates the group and the people of the group (12)
			Hatred of people and shopping groups (4)
		Jealousy (6)	Complaining about admin and members, dissatisfaction and bad feeling about ordering and buying products (19)
			Jealousy of other people's purchases (6)
		Disappointment (18)	Feeling of despair (18)

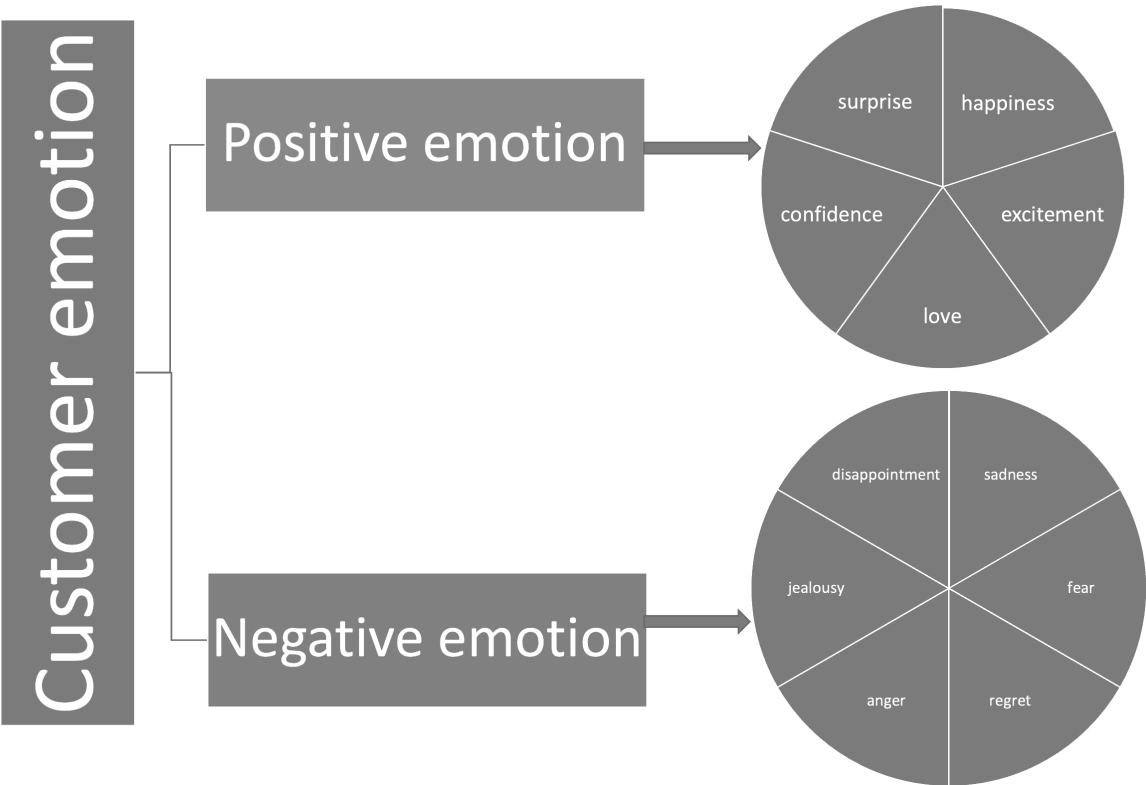


Figure 1. Conceptual map illustrating dimensions of customers’ emotional experiences during the purchase of luxury cosmetics and health products in Telegram groups



#### 4.2. Fuzzy Delphi Approach

**Initial stage:** As previously indicated, interviews with engaged consumers identified key factors influencing emotional responses during online shopping from the consumer perspective. These factors, combined with those identified in prior emotional studies, constituted the foundational framework for applying the Delphi approach. Table 2 presents the influential factors affecting consumer emotional states.

**Second stage:** Initially, a semi-structured interview, divided into three segments, was conducted: A. Questions pertaining to experts' demographic characteristics to gain a comprehensive understanding of the panel; B. Thirty-six items assessing experts' evaluations of each factor's potential impact on the subject under study as per Table 2 (factors derived from literature reviews and qualitative interviews, rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly influential" to "minimally influential"); C. Lastly, experts were posed a general question: "Besides the aforementioned factors, please identify any other factors you believe influence consumer emotions during the purchase of cosmetics and health products, and specify their effects." Subsequently, this semi-structured questionnaire was disseminated to the 15 selected panel members comprising psychological marketing specialists, active managers of luxury cosmetics Telegram groups, and executives from luxury cosmetics-importing firms in Bandar Abbas engaged in online sales, alongside managers of Telegram groups focusing on luxury cosmetic products via email or in face-to-face meetings.

**Table 2.** Determinants influencing emotions in e-commerce based on interviews and accessible sources.

Row	Studied variable	Row	Studied variable
1	Available time	19	Browsing groups
2	Available money	20	Enjoyment of shopping
3	Product Specifications	21	Method of presenting items and product photos
4	Shopping style	22	Listing and pricing in the group
5	Experience	23	Price is more suitable than the store and online shops
6	Internet usage time	24	Group promotional activities and marketing drivers
7	Age	25	The atmosphere of the group
8	Gender	26	Number of group members
9	Income level	27	Presence of friends and peers in groups
10	Level of education	28	Shopping channel (providing invoices and showing other people's purchases)
11	Friendly relations of admin of the group	29	Convenience and the possibility of buying all brands
12	Psychological characteristics of the consumer	30	Reliability and quality of the group
13	Economic prosperity	31	Customer curiosity
14	Brand image	32	Desire to experience new products
15	Level of customer engagement with the product and brand	33	Group buying versus individual group buying
16	Luxury and up-to-date products	34	Reading reviews and get feedback from the product and use it
17	Diversity-seeking	35	Individual interactions in the group
18	Family influence	36	Culture and cultural factors

**Third stage: Data assessment a.** The subsequent phase involved scrutinizing the responses from the panel members, utilizing the fuzzy Delphi technique to achieve consensus on the experts' viewpoints. Consequently, to transform the qualitative analysis into fuzzy values, trapezoidal numbers were employed as a corresponding conversion standard.

**Table 3.** Trapezoidal fuzzy values corresponding to the qualitative assessments.

Trapezoidal fuzzy numbers	Value
(7,8,9,9)	Very much
(5,6,7,8)	Much
(3,4,5,6)	Average
(2,3,3,4)	Little
(0,0,1,2)	Very little

b. Post conversion of the qualitative assessments provided by the panel members into trapezoidal fuzzy values, the fuzzy geometric mean of each element was computed using Eqs. 1 and 2 [46].

$$A_j^i = (a_1^i, a_2^i, a_3^i, a_4^i) \quad i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, n \\ j = 1, 2, 3, \dots, m \quad (1)$$

$A_j^i$  represents the  $i^{th}$  expert's opinion about the  $j^{th}$  factor.

$$A_{j \text{ avg}} = (a_{j \text{ avg } 1}^i, a_{j \text{ avg } 2}^i, a_{j \text{ avg } 3}^i, a_{j \text{ avg } 4}^i) = \\ (\prod_{i=1}^n a_i)^{1/n} = \\ \left( \sqrt[n]{a_1^{(i)}}, \sqrt[n]{a_2^{(i)}}, \sqrt[n]{a_3^{(i)}}, \sqrt[n]{a_4^{(i)}} \right) \quad (2)$$

Where,  $A_{j \text{ ave}}$  denotes the average expert assessment concerning the  $j$ th constituent.

c. Subsequently, the variance between expert opinions and component averages was determined using Equation (3) and conveyed to the committee via the ensuing survey. This method enabled integration [56–62] of feedback from all participants and discrepancies between each expert's views and the collective opinions, prompting them to adjust and refine their perspectives to achieve group consensus.

$$\left( a_{j \text{ avg } 1} - a_1^{(i)}, a_{j \text{ avg } 2} - a_2^{(i)}, a_{j \text{ avg } 3} - a_3^{(i)}, a_{j \text{ avg } 4} - a_4^{(i)} \right) = \\ \left( \sqrt[n]{a_1^{(i)}} - a_1^{(i)}, \sqrt[n]{a_2^{(i)}} - a_2^{(i)}, \sqrt[n]{a_3^{(i)}} - a_3^{(i)}, \sqrt[n]{a_4^{(i)}} - a_4^{(i)} \right) \quad (3)$$

Following the questionnaire's final segment requesting subjects to identify additional factors influenc-

ing customer emotions from their unique viewpoints, newly proposed elements were incorporated into existing factors (Table 4). These were returned to experts alongside the results of Equation (3).

**Table 4.** Factors influencing customer emotions from the panel’s perspective

Row	Recommended factor
1	The presence and company of a good friend in shopping
2	Courage and risk of buying
3	Religion and religious beliefs
4	The halo effect of believing in the amazing effect of luxury products
5	The influence of beauty influencers in cyberspace
6	Iranian sanctions and the non-import of luxury brands
7	Not having a purchase account from Iran
8	Marital status
9	Showing off and attracting attention
10	Currency fluctuations
11	Unfamiliarity with websites of the brands
12	Visual appeal of the group

d. As previously stated, a subsequent questionnaire was formulated based on initial findings, distributed to experts to potentially amend their views based on peer feedback. This survey also provided panel-raised factors for review and weighting by other members. Each factor’s weight was transformed using trapezoidal numbers per linguistic variables [63] according to Table 3.

$$\begin{aligned} .B_j^i &= (b_1^i, b_2^i, b_3^i, b_4^i) \quad i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, n \\ j &= 1, 2, 3, \dots, m \quad (4) \end{aligned}$$

Where  $B_j^i$  represents the  $i^{th}$  expert’s perspective on the  $j^{th}$  component. The mean geometric values [64–71] and variances between each member’s assessment and the mean were calculated using Equations (2) and (3), mirroring initial steps. The third and fourth stages of the fuzzy Delphi method were iterated until consecutive mean values approached a logical consensus, signaling acceptance [46]. The critical threshold for consensus was set at 0.2 [72]. Additionally, the variance between mean opinions from the first and second rounds was computed using Equation 5 [72].

$$d(B_{j\text{ ave}}, A_{j\text{ ave}}) = \left| \frac{1}{4} [(b_{j\text{ ave } 1} + b_{j\text{ ave } 2} + b_{j\text{ ave } 3} + b_{j\text{ ave } 4}) - (a_{j\text{ ave } 1} + a_{j\text{ ave } 2} + a_{j\text{ ave } 3} + a_{j\text{ ave } 4})] \right| \quad (5)$$

Where  $A_{j\text{ ave}}$  denotes the mean of first-round opinions, and  $B_{j\text{ ave}}$  represents the mean of second-round opinions. The outcomes are detailed in Table 5. The table demonstrates that the geometric mean disparity between first and second rounds for 8 variables exceeds the acceptable threshold (0.2). Moreover, factors 37 to 48 introduced in the first round lacked evaluation, precluding calculation of their mean disparity. These factors necessitate a third round of assessment. d. To address this, a third round questionnaire was designed to reflect feedback from the previous round and implement expert adjustments toward consensus. Procedures mirrored those of the second round, and outcomes are presented in Table 5.

$$C_j^i = (c_1^i, c_2^i, c_3^i, c_4^i) \quad i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, n \\ j = 1, 2, 3, \dots, m \quad (6)$$

Where  $C_j^i$  signifies the  $i^{\text{th}}$  expert's perspective on the  $j^{\text{th}}$  component. Results from the third round, detailed in Table 5, show that variances between mean opinions of the second and third rounds fall within acceptable ranges across all criteria, indicating consensus on factors influencing customer emotions. e. Finally, the last step involved analyzing defuzzified mean values of each factor to identify influential factors. Criteria with  $5 \leq A_{j\text{ ave}}$  were considered viable [73]. Defuzzified mean expert opinions for each factor were calculated using Equation 7 [46].

$$K_j = \frac{(a_{j\text{ ave } 1} + a_{j\text{ ave } 2} + a_{j\text{ ave } 3} + a_{j\text{ ave } 4})}{4} \quad (7)$$

According to Table 5, some defuzzified mean values for factors fall below the acceptable threshold (5) and should be excluded from the list of factors affecting customer emotions. These include internet usage, educational level, family influence, group size, cultural factors, religion, belief in the halo effect of luxury products, marital status, desire for attention, and visual appeal. Other variables were identified as influencing emotions in luxury cosmetic product purchases.

Table 5. Mean geometric variation of expert perspectives and defuzzified mean assessments.

Row	Studied variable	Mean difference	Defuzzified mean values			
		1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> round	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> round	1 <sup>st</sup> round	2 <sup>nd</sup> round	3 <sup>rd</sup> round
1	Available time	0.1	0.00	6.820	6.713	6.713
2	Available money	0.05	0.00	7.553	7.501	7.501
3	Product Specifications	0.12	0.06	7.501	7.621	7.553
4	Shopping style	0.15	0.09	6.274	6.121	6.026
5	Experience	0.26	0.16	6.698	6.431	6.593
6	Internet usage time	0.12	0.11	4.964	4.844	4.728
7	Age	0.11	0.12	5.398	5.280	5.152
8	Gender	0.15	0.00	6.289	6.136	6.136
9	Income level	0.18	0.12	7.316	7.501	7.621
10	Level of education	0.11	0.00	4.252	4.138	4.138
11	Friendly relations of admin of the group	0.16	0.16	6.653	6.490	6.389
12	Psychological characteristics of the consumer	0.07	0.10	7.266	7.341	7.341
13	Economic prosperity	0.11	0.00	6.928	7.039	7.151
14	Brand image	0.11	0.00	7.266	7.382	7.382
15	Level of customer engagement with the product and brand	0.06	0.00	6.913	6.850	6.850
16	Luxury and up-to-date products	0.10	0.10	6.374	6.475	6.374
17	Diversity-seeking	0.26	0.14	5.073	5.342	5.488
18	Family influence	0.11	0.11	4.937	4.818	4.701
19	Browsing groups	0.21	0.17	6.758	6.975	7.151
20	Enjoyment of shopping	0.11	0.00	7.087	7.200	7.200
21	Method of presenting items and product photos	0.31	0.10	6.177	6.490	6.389
22	Listing and pricing in the group	0.11	0.00	6.975	7.087	7.087
23	Price is more suitable than the store and online shops	0.19	0.12	7.675	7.869	7.997
24	Group promotional activities and marketing drivers	0.12	0.00	7.501	7.621	7.621
25	The atmosphere of the group	0.17	0.11	6.866	7.039	6.928
26	Number of group members	0.07	0.00	3.943	4.021	4.021
27	Presence of friends and peers in groups	0.45	0.09	6.431	5.972	5.875
28	Shopping channel (providing invoices and showing other people's purchases)	0.11	0.00	4.006	4.116	4.116
29	Convenience and the possibility of buying all brands	0.18	0.12	7.316	7.501	7.621
30	Reliability and quality of the group	0.06	0.00	7.675	7.744	7.744
31	Customer curiosity	0.15	0.15	6.370	6.218	6.374
32	Desire to experience new products	0.22	0.18	6.162	5.933	5.751
33	Group buying versus individual group buying	0.22	0.19	5.301	5.079	4.880
34	Reading reviews and get feedback from the product and use it	0.11	0.00	4.252	4.138	4.138
35	Individual interactions in the group	0.33	0.10	6.593	6.928	6.820
36	Culture and cultural factors	0.11	0.00	4.252	4.138	4.138
37	The presence and company of a good friend in shopping	-	0.16	-	6.431	6.593
38	Courage and risk of buying	-	0.14	-	5.199	5.342
39	Religion and religious beliefs	-	0.00	-	3.624	3.624
40	The halo effect of believing in the amazing effect of luxury products	-	0.12	-	4.943	4.943
41	The influence of beauty influencers in cyberspace	-	0.14	-	5.751	5.894
42	Iranian sanctions and the non-import of luxury brands	-	0.00	-	7.621	7.621
43	Not having a purchase account from Iran	-	0.00	-	7.316	7.316
44	Marital status	-	0.00	-	3.530	3.530
45	Showing off and attracting attention	-	0.00	-	3.815	3.815
46	Currency fluctuations	-	0.14	-	6.289	6.447
47	Unfamiliarity with websites of the brands	-	0.09	-	6.177	6.081
48	Visual appeal of the group	-	0.11	-	4.575	4.465

The Delphi method aims to pinpoint factors influencing customer emotions through collaborative consensus. Ultimately, 36 factors were identified as influential, prioritized based on their individual significance, and detailed in Table 6. Subsequently, these factors were categorized into personal, situational, product, and group variables, as outlined in Table 7.



**Table 6.** Precursors influencing customer emotions in purchasing luxury beauty and hygiene products.

Significance rank of the factor	Factors affecting customer emotions	Significance rank of the factor	Factors affecting customer emotions
1	More economic prices than physical stores and online shops	14	Individual interactions in the group
2	Reliability and quality of the group	15	Time available
2	Group promotional activities and marketing incentives	16	Experience
2	Iranian sanctions and the non-importation of luxury brands	16	The presence and company of a good friend in shopping
2	Convenience and the possibility of buying all brands	17	Currency fluctuations
2	Income level	18	Method of presenting items and product photos
3	Product Specifications	18	Friendly relations of group admin
4	Available money	19	Luxury products commensurate with modern fashion
5	Brand image	19	Customer curiosity
6	Psychological characteristics of consumers	20	Gender
7	Not having a purchase account in Iran	21	Unfamiliarity with shopping style
8	Reading reviews and get product feedback	22	Brand websites
9	Pleasure of shopping	23	Effect of beauty influencers in cyberspace
10	Browsing groups	24	Presence of friends and peers in groups
10	Economic prosperity	25	Desire to experience new products
11	Method of listing and pricing in the group	26	Diversity seeking
12	Atmosphere of the group	27	Courage and risk of buying
13	Mental engagement with the product and brand	28	Age

**Table 7.** Personal, situational, product, and group factors influencing emotional responses

Variable	Effective factors
Group and product variables	Method of presenting items and provide product photos, method of listing and pricing in the group, economic prices than physical stores and online shops, the atmosphere (environment) of the group, reliability and quality of the group, product specifications, group's promotional activities and marketing stimuli, convenience and the possibility of buying, friendly relationships with the admin of groups, brand image, luxury products commensurate with the latest fashion, familiarity with the admin of the group or website of all luxury brands, reading comments and receiving feedback from the product
Situational variables	Available time, available money, economic well-being, influence of beauty influencers in cyberspace, Iranian sanctions and non-import of luxury brands, not having a purchase account from Iran, currency fluctuations, presence and company of a good friend (partner) in purchases, presence of friends and peers in groups
Personal variables	Being curious, becoming a customer in groups, boldness and risk-taking, desire to experience new products, degree of mental involvement with the product and brand, being enjoyable or hedonistic buying, diversity-seeking, age, gender, consumer psychological characteristics (introversion, being conservative), interactions of the individual in the group

5. Discussion

In previous research on customer emotions, this study extended the scope to Iranian consumers within the luxury cosmetics sector, considering Iran’s unique circumstances including sanctions. Moreover, the study aimed to advance understanding of factors influencing customer emotions, drawing on both theoretical foundations and empirical consumer behavior insights in marketing. To achieve this, a dual-phase research approach was employed to identify factors impacting emotions when purchasing luxury cosmetic products.

The initial phase involved qualitative research through customer interviews, which formed the basis for a thematic framework encompassing emotions, customer perspectives, dimensions, and influential factors. Insights from interviews with customers and actual buyers from Telegram groups, who experience a range of emotions during product engagement and purchase, coupled with existing literature, informed the development of semi-structured questionnaires. Thematic analysis was applied to interpret data, revealing various positive and negative emotions among Telegram group members,

resonating with findings by [9,17,20,21], and [18]. Predominantly, interviewees expressed feelings of happiness and pleasure, followed by "enthusiasm and excitement", "positive surprise", "relaxation and confidence", and "love and emotional attachment", which collectively serve as stimuli for purchasing luxury cosmetics and health products.

Conversely, negative emotions, such as sadness, fear, regret, inferiority, anger, jealousy, and despair—particularly fear—play a role in consumer decision-making, driving efforts to minimize their impact [74–83]. These findings underscore the significant influence of emotional triggers in luxury cosmetic purchases.

In the second phase, a fuzzy Delphi method was employed to achieve consensus among experts, prioritizing factors influencing emotional responses during purchasing decisions. Following three rounds of evaluation and deliberation among panel members, 36 factors emerged as pivotal in shaping customer emotions and guiding product selection. These factors were categorized based on their perceived impact, revealing insights not previously discussed.

Among the key findings, the factor "economical pricing relative to physical and online stores" ranked highest, followed by "group credibility and quality" and "Iranian sanctions impacting luxury brand imports", novel aspects not extensively covered in prior literature. Additionally, advertising efforts, marketing initiatives, and income levels were identified as influential, aligning with [25] and Ciunova Shuleska [24]. This underscores the predominant influence of product group factors, followed by situational factors, on Iranian consumer emotions, with personal factors playing a secondary role. These insights shed light on the emerging market dynamics of luxury goods via online platforms like Telegram, offering valuable perspectives on Iranian consumer behavior.

## 6. Limitations of the Study

- (1) This study focuses exclusively on customer emotions within the luxury cosmetics sector, limiting its generalizability to other industries and product categories. Future research should explore emotional dynamics across diverse contexts and products to enrich understanding in this domain.
- (2) The study's sample primarily comprises members of Telegram groups engaged in luxury cosmetics, predominantly female. Consequently, caution is advised when extrapolating findings to broader consumer demographics. Future studies should strive for more representative samples to enhance the applicability of findings across diverse consumer segments.

## 7. Future Studies

- (1) Given the first limitation, researchers are encouraged to explore the broader dimensions of customer emotions in online shopping across various virtual platforms and product categories, contributing to enhanced consumer insights in Iran.
- (2) Future studies could benefit from examining more diverse consumer demographics, including both male and female participants, or conducting nationwide studies to capture broader consumer sentiment.

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