

FACTORS INFLUENCING FEMALE CONSUMERS'  
PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARDS COSMETIC  
PRODUCTS IN ONLINE STORES IN CHINA

BY

MA MENG WAN

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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FACTORS INFLUENCING FEMALE CONSUMERS'  
PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARDS COSMETIC  
PRODUCTS IN ONLINE STORES IN CHINA

BY

MA MENGWAN

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## ABSTRACT

In the past ten years, China's e-commerce has grown tenfold as fast and became the largest e-commerce market in the world. Meanwhile, cosmetics industry has also become a demand in e-commerce. Therefore, female consumers as the mainstream consumer of online shopping, and cosmetics become the focus and centre of shopping for them. Thus, there is a vast potential market for cosmetic industry in China due to the influence of the global economy because China is the largest e-commerce country and the second largest cosmetic market around the world. This has led to increased interest among researchers regarding the factors influencing female consumers' intention to buy cosmetic products in online stores in China. This study examines the factors that influence consumers' intention to buy cosmetic products in online stores in China and the conceptual model incorporates trust and price in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Also, primary data was collected using purposive sampling by distributing a self-administrated questionnaire in China of which 384 were valid for analysis in four cities (Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing and Yunnan), SPSS was also used to analyse the collected data and determine the constructs' reliability, Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and multiple regression analysis were also performed. The results revealed that attitude, price and trust significantly and positively influence female consumers' intention to buy cosmetic products in online stores in China while subjective norm and perceived behavioural control do not have a significant influence on consumer's purchase intention to buy cosmetic online. Implications for marketers as well as suggestions for future research are discussed.

خلاصة البحث

في العشر سنوات الأخيرة، نمت التجارة الإلكترونية في الصين بعشرة أضعاف وبسرعة هائلة وأصبحت الصين أكبر سوق للتجارة الإلكترونية في العالم. وفي الوقت الراهن، أصبحت صناعة مستحضرات التجميل مطلوبة في التجارة الإلكترونية. وعليه أصبح المستهلكين من النساء أكثر رواد التسوق على الإنترنت، وتوجه التركيز وتمحور حول مساحيق التجميل. ولذلك هناك سوق كبير واعد لمستحضرات لتجميل في الصين بسبب تأثير الاقتصاد العالمي ولأن الصين أكبر دولة فيها التجارة الإلكترونية وثاني أكبر سوق لمستحضرات التجميل في العالم. وأدى هذا إلى تنامي اهتمام الباحثين بدراسة العوامل المؤثرة على عزم المستهلكين الإناث على شراء مستحضرات التجميل من الإنترنت في الصين. يقوم البحث بدراسة العوامل التي تؤثر على عزم المستهلك على شراء منتجات التجميل على الإنترنت في الصين، ويضم النموذج التصوري الثقة والأسعار إلى نظرية السلوك المخطط (TPB). كما تم جمع البيانات الأولية باستخدام العينة القصدية وذلك بتوزيع استبانات في الصين في أربع مدن هي بكين، شانقهاي، شونقكين، ويونان، منها 384 استبانة صالحة للتحليل. وتم استخدام برنامج (SPSS) الإحصائي لتحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها وتحديد صدق البناء. كما تم إجراء التحليل العاملي الاستطلاعي (EFA) وتحليل الانحدار المتعدد (MRA). وقد أظهرت النتائج أن الاتجاه والسعر والثقة تؤثر بشكل كبير وإيجابي على عزم المستهلكين الإناث على شراء منتجات التجميل من الإنترنت في الصين، بينما لم يكن للمعيار الشخصي ولا للسيطرة السلوكية المتوقعة تأثير كبيراً على عزم المستهلكين الإناث على شراء منتجات التجميل على الإنترنت. وتم مناقشة آثار ذلك على المسوقين وتقديم مقترحات للأبحاث المستقبلية.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Science (Marketing)

.....  
Kalthom Abdullah  
Supervisor

.....  
A.K.M. Ahasanul Haque  
Co-Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Science (Marketing)

.....  
Rozailin Abdul Rahman  
Examiner

.....  
Zaireena Wan Nasir  
Examiner

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of Business Administration and is accepted as a fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science (Marketing)

.....  
Noor Hazilah Abd Manaf  
Head, Department of  
Business Administration

This dissertation was submitted to the Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences and is accepted as a fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science (Marketing)

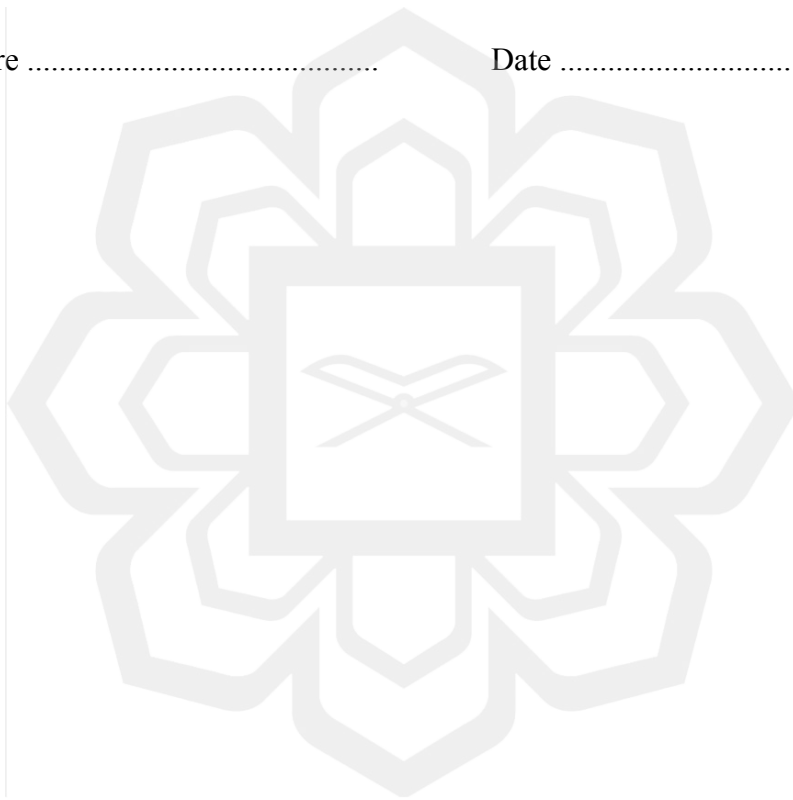
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
APAC	Asia-Pacific

CIECC	China International E-commerce Center World E-commerce
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
IDT	Innovation Diffusion Theory
U&G	Uses and Gratification
SN	Subjective norm
PBC	Perceived behavioral control
ICP	The intention to buy cosmetic products online
ACP	Attitude to buy cosmetic products online
SNCP	Subjective norm to buy cosmetic products online
PBCCP	Perceived behavioral control to buy cosmetic products online

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this information age, the Internet and technology has penetrated every aspect of people's lives and changed their consumption habits and behaviours. The Internet has also been profoundly affecting and changing almost every aspect of people's life. Moreover, industries have been refining the way they conventionally conducted business to cope with the Internet revolution. As a result, some industries that work closely with their consumers are changing faster, and one such sector is the cosmetics industry. The cosmetics history spans over at least 6,000 years in human history, and mostly every society on earth (Hamza, 2011). Indeed, cosmetics have high demand in this era as people, especially young women, pay more and more attention to their appearance.

However, as the popularity of the Internet is on the rise, the e-commerce industry has gradually become the mainstream of the business application field. Indeed, the publicity channels of online cosmetics are continually emerging as the e-commerce industry continues to grow on a global scale. The sustainable development of e-commerce is becoming significantly important nowadays. Also, almost all enterprises apply digital strategy to transform marketing strategy due to e-commerce brought benefit to the companies and marketers around the world. So, what benefits does e-commerce bring to enterprises and customers? For example, e-commerce has enhanced the reality of online shopping, and mobile shopping has also provided people with more payment methods for companies, they can connect customer data

with real-time insights to improve the shopping experience (Susan, 2020). Thus, e-commerce has become an indispensable part in people's life today.

The size of the global cosmetics market reached \$466.05 billion in 2019, which means that the Asia-Pacific region is the world's largest cosmetics consumption market. (Lan, 2019). Surprisingly, China has become the world's largest e-commerce market and the second-largest consumer of cosmetics. Burbank (2014) stated that, the scale of China's Internet users and shopping are overgrowing, and consumers' dependence on online consumption is also increasing day by day. Now, consumers may spend money online anytime and anywhere, during their spare time, working time or even when taking a bus. Therefore, with the fast-paced growth of China's economy in recent years, China's cosmetics consumption is also rising quickly.

Liu (2016) mentioned that women become the main force of the cosmetics industry, China surpassed Japan and has become the world's second-largest cosmetics consumer in 2013. In 2017, China's cosmetics market accounted for 12.7% of the global market, second only to 18.3% in the United States.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **1.2.1 Global Market**

E-commerce is a global phenomenon nowadays, and almost every country industry is growing at a healthy rate (Bhatia, 2016). So, relying on the network for the transportation of goods is now a widespread phenomenon of international trade. With the development trend of social economy, e-commerce has met people's diversified needs to a large extent and formed a new global international trade system. Compared with the traditional trade mode, e-commerce can cross the space barrier. It can

significantly reduce the cumbersome procedures and long transaction process in conventional international trade and reducing various business costs effectively. Also, e-commerce making the information exchange between the two parties more convenient (Zhang, 2006). Therefore, the sustainable development of e-commerce is becoming significantly more important nowadays. Also, almost all enterprises apply digital strategy to transform marketing strategy because e-commerce brought benefit to the companies and marketers around the world. So, what benefits does e-commerce bring to enterprises and customers? For example, e-commerce has enhanced the reality of online shopping, and mobile shopping has also provided more payment methods for companies, they can connect customer data with real-time insights to improve the shopping experience and so on.

Thus, where is ecommerce now? According to data from Statista, by the end of 2019 ,the global ecommerce market had sales reaching \$3.5 trillion and represented 14% of the total share of global retail sales (Susan, 2020). At present, more than 70% of countries have passed electronic transactions laws and started E-commerce. Moreover, about 1.8 billion consumers worldwide use mobile terminals for online shopping. The global retail sales of products reach 2.8 trillion US dollars. Compared with the previous year, the global e-commerce grew to 20.7 percent in 2019, which has reached \$3.535 trillion, and it is expected to reach nearly \$5 trillion by 2021. (Andrew,2019).

Therefore, six countries among the top 10 fastest-growing e-commerce countries in 2019 hail from the Asia-Pacific region: China, Malaysia, India, Philippines, Indonesia, and South Korea. Figure 1.1 shows the global retail ecommerce sales, it is can be seen from the figure, global e-commerce was grow 21% in 2019 to \$3.535 trillion according to eMarketer, but the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region

alone accounted for 64% of total e-commerce sales worldwide experiencing 25% year-on-year and reached to \$2.271 trillion(Andrew, 2019). Thus, understanding the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region consumer's behaviour and consumer preferences within the region became the subject for many researchers and marketers.

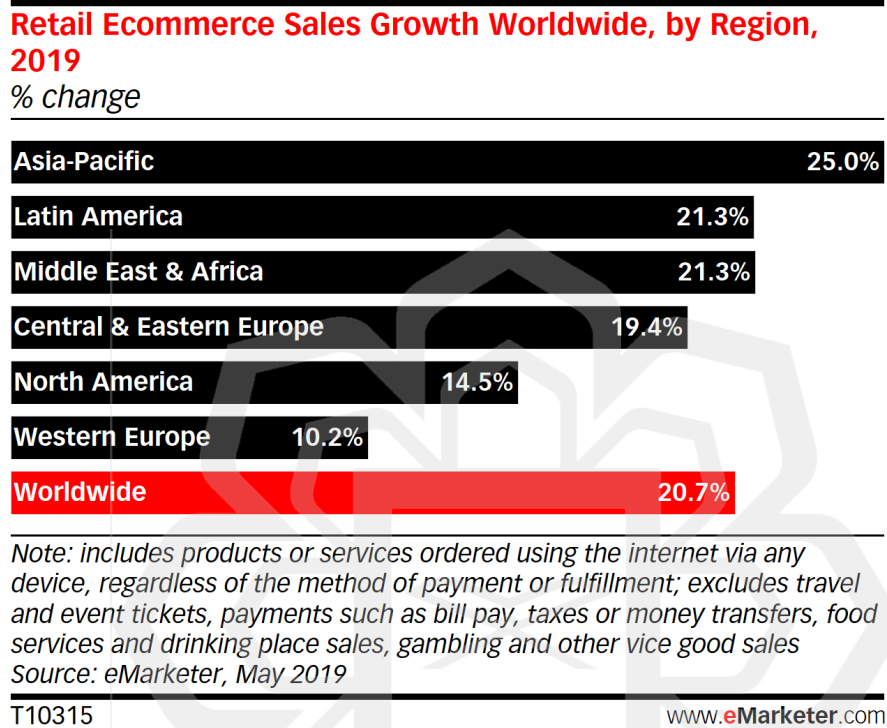


Figure 1. 1Retail Ecommerce sales Growth worldwide, by region in 2019  
 Source: eMarketer.com

### 1.2.2 China's E-Commerce

China's e-commerce started a little later than the United States but caught up. However, China is the highest market with a penetration rate of e-commerce in the world, in the past ten years, China's e-commerce has grown as tenfold, and it has quickly become the largest e-commerce market in the world. Moreover, the annual total e-commerce trade volume in China has increased thirtyfold from RMB 930 billion in 2004 to RMB 29,160 billion in 2017, the compound annual growth rate of

30 percent (Figure 1.2), from 2004 where the total value of e-commerce transactions was 9.3 trillion Yuan to 31.63 trillion Yuan in 2018 (Cao, 2019).

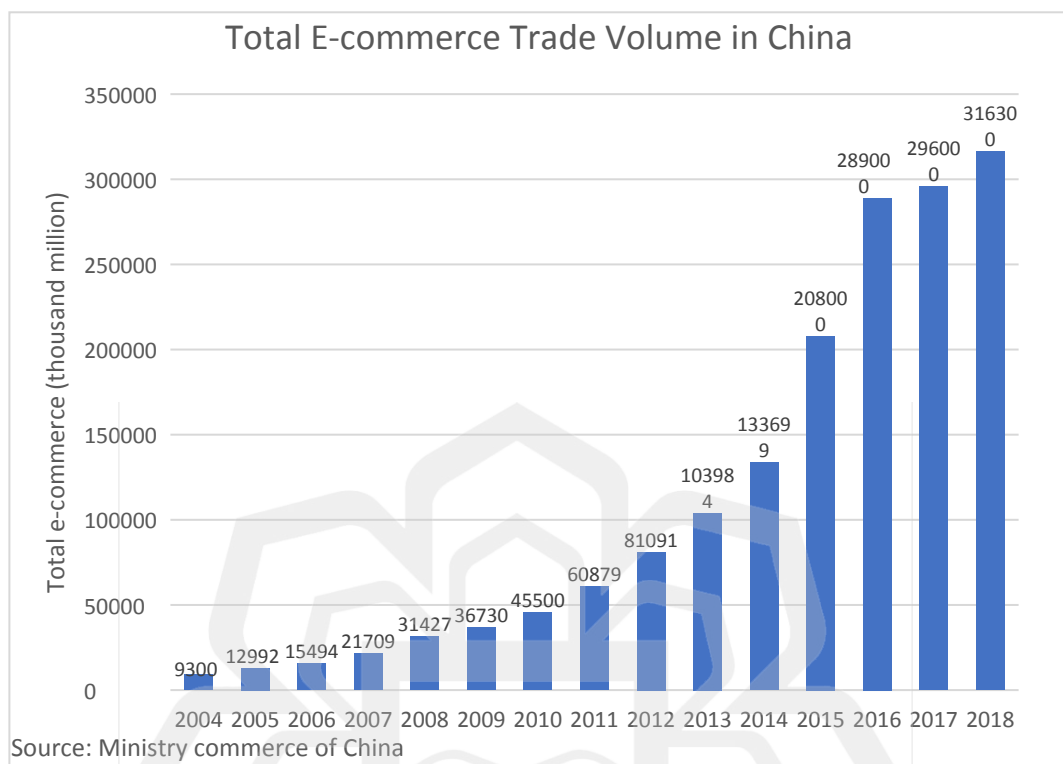


Figure 1. 2 Total E-Commerce Trade Volume in China  
Source: Ministry of Commerce of China

According to the data from Ecommerce sales by country in 2019, the global e-commerce market is mainly has composed five countries: China, United States, United Kingdom, Japan, and South Korea. China is now the world's largest e-commerce country and one of the fastest growing. Also, China's e-commerce sales have expected to reach \$1934 trillion, three times more than of the USA (\$586.92 billion)in 2019. China only surpassed US e-commerce sales in 2013 for the first time. Since then, the gap has widened rapidly, with China dominating 54.7 percentage of the global e-commerce market, almost double the number two to six combined (Andrew,2019).It is beyond any doubt that E-commerce is a driving force in the Chinese economy and with an average annual growth rate of 38.2% in E-commerce transactions in the past five years

Moreover, e-commerce is a rapidly developing industry in China, especially the online shopping market. For example: by March 2020, China had 904 million Internet users, and the Internet penetration rate in China reached 64.5%. The vast number of Internet users constitutes China's booming consumer market and lays a solid user base for the development of the digital economy (Xu, 2020). According to another survey from (Xin,2019), among young people in China, transnational online shopping accounts for a large proportion of consumption, and its generation is a unique position in China's economic construction, which has a significant influence on international trade.

Almost 88% of Chinese consumers use mobile terminals for online shopping, it ranked first in the world until now(CIECC Report, 2019). More importantly, Chinese e-commerce has created a vast business ecosystem. It was driving mobile payment development, express logistics, digital business services, original brands, and other industries and reshaping the operating models of many industries, including clothing, cosmetics, home appliances, and so on.

Meanwhile, e-commerce is a rapidly developing industry in China, especially the online shopping market. According to Xu(2020), by March 2020, China had 904 million Internet users, and the Internet penetration rate reached 64.5%. It is because the vast number of Internet users constitutes China's booming consumer market and lays a solid user base for the development of the digital economy (Yue,2019).

### **1.2.3 China's Cosmetic Market**

In the cosmetic market, young consumers as the mainstream consumer of online shopping, cosmetics naturally become the focus and center of shopping. Personal care, skincare products, and cosmetics are the second major category in the online shopping market, maintaining fast growth in recent years. Therefore, China today is the world's biggest e-commerce market because it surpassed Japan and became the world's second-largest cosmetics consumer market in 2013 (Bhatia, 2016). In 2017, China's cosmetics market accounted for 12.7% of the global market, second only to the United States at 18.3%, (Top 10 Global Consumer Trends,2020).

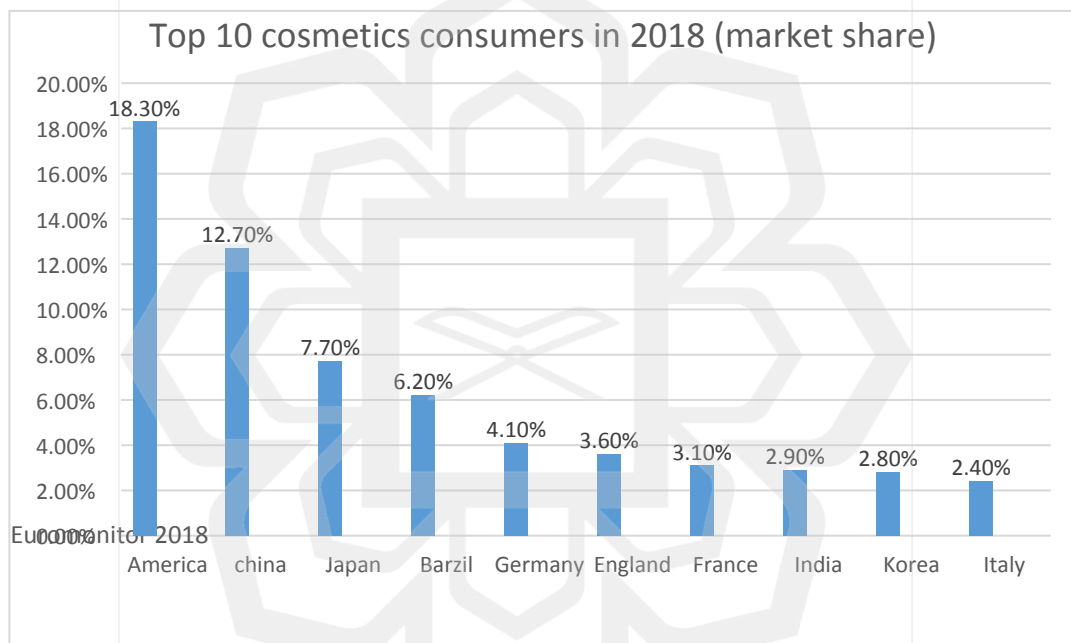


Figure 1. 3Top 10 Cosmetics Consumers in 2018 (Market Share)

China's online cosmetics market is also developing rapidly today. The transaction volume of online cosmetics in China has increased 20 times in seven years from 12.49 billion Yuan in 2009 to 260 billion Yuan in 2018 following the data of Qianzhan.com, Industry Research Institute (2016). So, today online shopping for cosmetics has become the second-largest online consumer product in China.

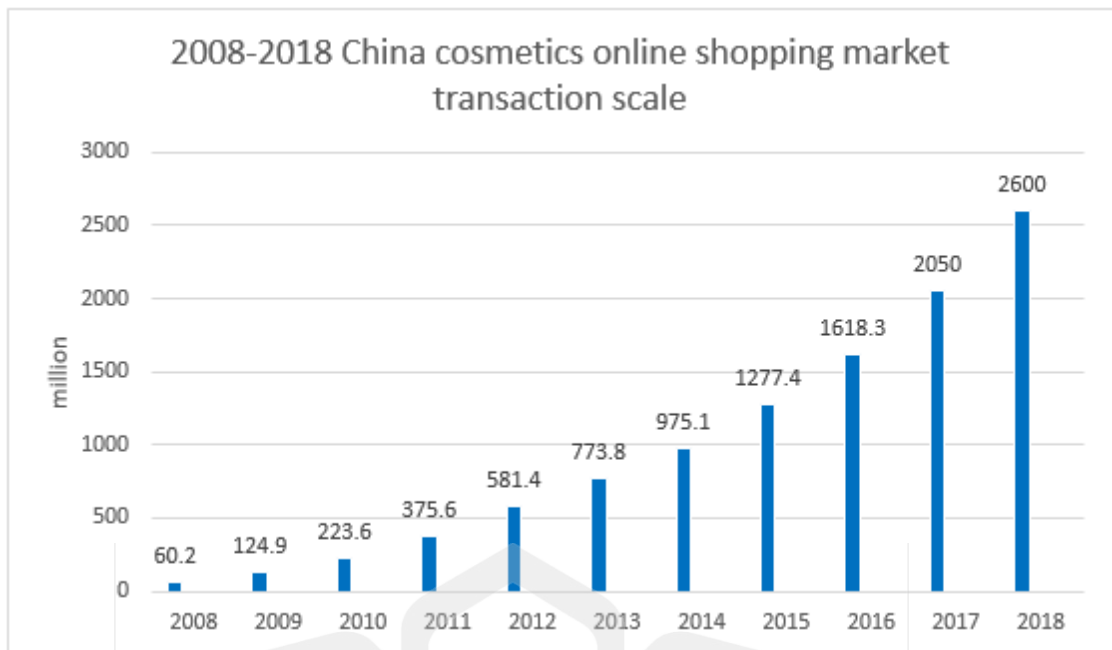


Figure 1. 42008-2018 China Cosmetics Online Shopping Market Transaction Scale  
Source: Qianzhan.com industry research institute

Therefore, with the continuous increase in residents' disposable income and the change of consumption concept, cosmetics have become a critical product consumer category outside the necessities of life. According to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, China's cosmetics retail sales totaled RMB 251.4 billion in 2017, and online consumption totaled RMB 169.113 billion. However, many research results on the theory of online consumer purchasing decisions in the existing literature. Still, the research on the determinants of online consumers shopping for cosmetics are limited. This study focuses on consumer behavior and takes online cosmetics selling as the research object to explore the motivation of online consumers to purchase cosmetics and the formation of reasons for their purchase behavior and explore the influence of online marketing on consumers' purchase intention to purchase cosmetics and the formation of reasons for their purchase behavior and explore the influence of online marketing on consumers' purchase intention.

In the past few years, people's entrepreneurship has focused on e-commerce as an excellent direction for entrepreneurship, and marketers have been looking for the highest online shopping consumer group. It is worth noting that women play an essential role in the whole Asian consumer market, and online shopping has become an emerging way to promote the consumption of Asian women. Unlike European and American women, Asian women view online shopping as a fun social activity and entertainment (Jisu, 2018). Moreover, according to the data of the scale and usage rate of online shopping users in China, the primary consumers of online shopping are women, higher education, and those aged 30-49. In terms of gender, women account for 66.1 percent of online shoppers, 32.2 percentage points higher than men. From the perspective of the proportion of online shopping by different gender groups, women's portion of online shopping is 68.3 percent, 36.6 percentage points higher than that by men. Women are more likely to shop online than men (Li, et al, 2019).

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

With the continuous development of marketing and psychological research, consumers' consumption behavior intention gradually goes deeper for researchers. They start to use the research results of various disciplines to predict the consumption intention. The theory of planned behavior is one of the models they use. Because the development of e-commerce in China has received extensive attention, there are some studies on the online shopping behaviour of Chinese consumers, such as Weng et al., (2013), and Xiao & Liu (2012) which mainly addressed online shopping behaviour of Chinese female consumers. They have also discussed product categories mostly and delivery of services and consumer satisfaction with online shopping in China. But studies based on TPB toward online purchase of cosmetics are limited, especially for

woman group. So, this is a study gap that can be noticed and solved by conducting this survey.

Researchers and marketers will understand how to influence various factors to predict individual consumption by using the TPB model. For example, Taiwan scholars Wu(2006) applied the theory of planned behavior to online bookstore purchase behavior. The results showed that college students' attitudes towards online book purchases, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control would significantly affect their behavioral intention of online book purchases, thus affecting their final purchase behavior. Liu(2008) added the theory of planned behavior to the green consumption behavior of Chinese consumers, believing that green consumption behavior is a function of behavioral intention and perceived behavioral control, which in turn depends on attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. Moreover, some studies use TPB to predict network consumption behavior such as online service usage (Hsu & Chiu, 2004), online shopping (Lim & Dubinsky, 2005), online content payment (Han et al, 2016), etc. from their research results show that TPB model can help researchers understand consumers' consumption psychology, also this is a benefit for marketers which may help them understand consumers' psychology consumption behavior through this study then develop marketing strategies to attract their consumers.

Meanwhile, due to the rapid development of e-commerce, consumers' shopping habits have undergone significant changes. As a result, E-commerce is the factor behind this evolution. Consumers do not need to go out shopping, because e-commerce gives the shopping experience to consumers' fingertips through computers and mobile devices, revolutionizing the way consumers shop. At the same time, online