International Journal for Innovative Engineering and Management Research
PEER REVIEWED OPEN ACCESS INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
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SOCIAL MEDIA-DRIVEN DIGITAL INNOVATION IN SKINCARE MARKETING: TOWARDS DERMATOLOGIST-BACKED BRANDS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Social media and digital tech have revolutionised the skincare market and have had a huge impact on how brands interact with and communicate to young people. Digital innovation through social media can help skincare brands boost consumer awareness and engagement by leveraging interactive content, online recommendations, dermatologist communication, custom information and personalised content, influencers and technology-driven platforms. With this shifting landscape, dermatologist-endorsed skin care products are taking to social media to share their skin care knowledge, product information, health benefits, and skin care credibility. The present study analyses an aspect of digital innovation in skincare marketing via social media with the target of dermatologist-backed brands from college students' perspective. The research aims to examine the effects of the dermatologist expertise communicated through digital media, dermatologist-related skin care content, dermatologist-recommended skin care products, and interactive brand communication on students' awareness and perceptions, trust, authenticity, and purchase responses to dermatologist-sponsored skin care brands. Primary data will be collected from the college students who are consuming the skin care products and following the skin care related contents on social media platforms using structured questionnaire. The data will then be analysed with suitable statistical method such as descriptive statistics, factor analysis, reliability and validity test, and any other appropriate inferential statistical analysis will be employed to test the relationship of the study variables. The research should give companies insights into how their skin care brands are perceived as credible when backed by dermatologists and how the digital innovation created by social media also helps to engage consumers. The results can help skin care marketers and dermatology sponsored brands to create a consumer-centric, transparent, informative, and authentic social media approach which will make a difference with younger consumers.

Keywords: Digital innovation, Skincare marketing, Dermatologist-backed brands, Consumer trust, Brand authenticity, Purchase intention, College students

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I. INTRODUCTION

Cosmetic industry has seen tremendous growth as a result of altered life style. Raising awareness to personal care and skin health. In today's day and age, consumers are more .Be aware of what chemicals are in cosmetics and the potential impact these chemicals can have over time. Many dermatologists recommend people take care of harsh chemicals that can cause skin problems. Irritation, allergies or other skin problems. Now consumers have more information at their fingertips, via social media and advertising, and are more empowered to make their purchasing decisions. Research products for safety, ingredient disclosure and brand authenticity. High awareness and recommendations from dermatologists, have fuelled sales of anti-aging skincare products. The increasing health awareness and recommendations from dermatologists have boosted sales of anti-aging skin care items. In the beauty sector, the oracles of the market influenced buying decisions in the personal care market. This change in the attitude of consumers has led to a rise in demand for safer cosmetics which are also more skin-friendly. Products. Thus, the aim of the present study is to study the consumer preferences towards cosmetic. To produce products using natural ingredients and to determine the factors that affect the purchase of the product. decisions.

II. GROWING IMPORTANCE OF DERMATOLOGY AND SKIN HEALTH

The dermatology field has become an important one in consumer attitudes. towards cosmetic products. Doctors often warn about the dangers of Excessive contact with strong chemicals, artificial preservatives and artificial fragrances. dermatological complications. This has led to consumers looking for dermatologist-tested, clinically, becoming the more popular option. Assessed and substantiated by dermatological data.

Kim and Chung (2011) report that, People's perception of product safety and health benefits is an important factor that affects purchase. Personal care is the mass market segment with the highest number of intentions. Validation in clinical settings boosts consumers' confidence that, Patients think that doctors' recommendations imply less risk and more trustworthiness. Furthermore, with the growing concerns of the skin, like acne, pigmentation, sensitivity, and eczema has spurred shoppers to look for items in line with dermatological requirements. Nowadays, clinical endorsements and safety certifications are used as a trust building tool in the cosmetic industry.

III. RESEARCH GAP

While some studies have been conducted on consumer behaviour in the cosmetic industry, most of them are focused on a specific aspect. concern the general aspects like price, brand image and environmental concern. Limited The effects of dermatological credibility has been specifically examined in research, and Consumer preferences regarding skin claims, and dermatologist suggestions. As more and more products are being used that have been clinically proven and have been approved by dermatologists, there is The need to understand the influence of these

factors on purchase intention, especially in the Indian context. market. This study is set to fill this gap by focusing on the dermatological assurance. and perceived safety in influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

IV. RESEARCH PURPOSE

The aim of this study is to investigate the consumer preference for cosmetic products that highlight dermatological safety, clinical testing and scientifically proven formulations. The study's goal is to gain insight into the dermatologist recommendation, as well as perceived and actual problems and expectations of the patients. These factors affect consumers' purchasing decisions: skin compatibility, product safety, and clinical credibility. decisions. The study aims to identify these factors and get insight into consumer scrutineer and clarify behaviour in the changing beauty and personal care sector.

V. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To measure the purchase intention on perceived authenticity in dermatologist-endorsed beauty products.
- To investigate the relationship between consumer trust and purchase desire to use products endorsed by the dermatologist.
- To examine the use of dermatologist-endorsed products. based on Gender, to determine consumer use of dermatologist-recommended beauty products
- To find out if consumers' buying intention towards the dermatologist-supported beauty products differs among college students.

VI. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study published in the ACR Journal (2023) investigated the perceptions and awareness of consumer regarding Along with skincare cosmetic products, they also found that young adults were using them in the 18-24 age group, mainly women. The majority were aged 40 to 44, representing the majority of respondents and users of skin care products. The findings The results showed a preference for multifunctional and dermatologist recommended products. in this age group. The study revealed a marked age bias in product usage, as well, Alluding to the fact that socio-demographic factors have a significant impact on skin care. consumption patterns.

EPRA Journals (2025) conducted research on the effect of demographic variables on consumer behaviours and revealed that age is a key factor in shaping skincare concerns.Younger consumers (under 25) are concerned with acne control and UV protection, whereas those in the 25-40 age range are interested in a balance of benefits. People in age groups 40-55 demonstrate a higher preference for anti-aging products and the majority are linked to dermatologist endorsed products. positioning. The study of this age difference was confirmed and showed that there was a significant difference in product preference among the ages. and usage behaviour.

A research study published by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (2024) The studies were conducted to explore factors influencing repurchase intention to skincare products and the researchers found that age group 18-35 years accounted for 64.4% of the users in the study. Conversely, older consumers (50 years and over) Younger respondents (under 18 years) were less engaged at less than 1.7% of respondents. age groups. The results validate a statistically significant relationship between age and skincare repurchase behaviour.

A Cosmetics Business report (2023) pointed out that women aged over 55 years, especially the baby boomers, have been more active in using skin care. Compared with the overall market trends. Although the overall trend has been an overall decrease in the use of beauty products, Among the demographic groups, use and frequency of use was greater for the male, adult, and college-educated populations, particularly when it comes to categories that relate to the skin.

Ahlsten (2023) investigated how cosmetic surgery is branded and concluded that:According to Ahlsten (2023) cosmetic surgery is branded in the following ways: A professional brand can help to improve the credibility and authenticity associated with products.Credibility and authenticity perceptions are greatly improved with professional branding. The Coherent visual identity, professional presentation and consistency were highlighted as key aspects of the study. Aesthetic areas communication trustworthiness. Consumers make associations: To provide structured branding, with experience and reliability, increasing total confidence in the service provider.

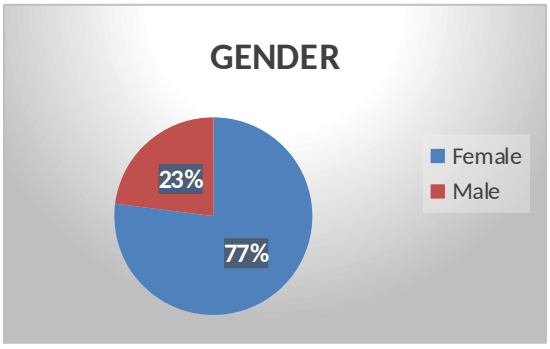
VII. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research used descriptive design of the research. The aim of the study is to explain consumer behavior, trust, perceived authenticity and the intention to buy dermatologist-backed beauty brands. The study also looks at relationships between Experts' credibility, ingredient transparency, and professional branding are some of the variables. The variables measured were elements, consumer trust, and purchase intention. This study is of quantitative type because the data collected in the study is numerical data through a A structured questionnaire was used to gather the data and statistical tools were used to analyse the data.In this study, a non-probability convenience sampling method was used. Respondents were sampled in a non-random manner as a result of availability and desire to complete the survey. The target audience are the college students / young adults they were consumers who knew of or used dermatologist-recommended beauty products in the population. products.

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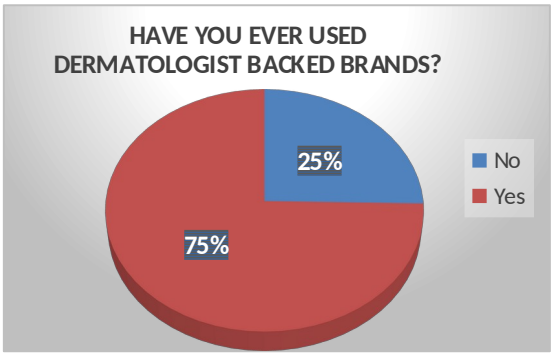
VIII. DATA ANALYSIS

CLASSIFICATION BASED ON GENDER



This analysis indicates the gender split of the respondents. The sex ratio of the sample is 77:23 with females comprising 77% and males comprising 23%. This suggests that the sample was female dominated, reflecting the overall trend of women being more engaged in the use of beauty products.

HAVE YOU EVER USED DERMATOLOGIST-BACKED BRANDS?



According to the diagram, 75% of the respondents has used brands recommended by dermatologists and 25% have not. This indicates that a big portion of the sample has already used these brands, which justifies the study.

CLASSIFICATION BASED ON AWARENESS



The findings indicate that 84% of people know about beauty products and brands back by a dermatologist, while 16% do not. This reflects consumers' high level of market awareness.

CONSUMER TRUST

CLASSIFICATION BASED ON CONSUMER TRUST

VARIABLE	Mean	Std. Deviation
Trust1	4.243	0.887
Trust2	4.12	0.7965
Trust3	4.167	0.8802
Trust4	4.13	0.8339
Trust5	4.19	0.8344

The descriptive statistics show that the average scores of the consumer trust are high and above 4.0, which means that consumers have high trust in dermatologist-supported beauty brands. People are more inclined to believe claims and endorsements from experts.

PERCEIVED AUTHENTICITY

CLASSIFICATION BASED ON PERCEIVED AUTHENTICITY

VARIABLE	Mean	Std. Deviation
PA1	4.073	0.8303
PA2	4.073	0.9078
PA3	4.01	0.8636
PA4	4.117	0.8901
PA5	4.167	0.8414

Mean values of perceived authenticity are above the neutral point indicating that consumers believe dermatologist-supported brands are more authentic and credible. There is low inter-response variation, meaning that the respondents agree with each other.

PURCHASE INTENTION

CLASSIFICATION BASED ON PURCHASE INTENTION

VARIABLE	Mean	Std. Deviation
PI1	4.27	0.8868
PI2	4.127	0.9092
PI3	4.133	0.8934
PI4	4.073	0.8816
PI5	4.223	0.9071

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The mean scores on the purchase intention items are above 4.0, which suggests a positive attitude towards purchasing dermatologist-recommended beauty products. This is a reflection of the impact of trust, authenticity and clinical credibility on consumer purchasing.

IX. RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

RELIABILITY TEST

VARIABLE	NO. OF ITEMS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	CONSISTENCY
CONSUMER TRUST	5	0.886	EXCELLENT
PERCEIVED AUTHENTICITY	5	0.886	EXCELLENT
PURCHASE INTENTION	5	0.896	EXCELLENT

Cronbach's Alpha for each of the constructs is between 0.886 and 0.896, which is considered to be a good level of internal consistency (generally >0.70). Thus, the measuring items of Consumer Trust, Perceived Authenticity and Purchase Intention are reliable and appropriate for further statistical analysis.

Significant Relationship between Consumer Trust and Perceived Authenticity on Purchase Intention

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.851[a]	.724	.722	.39661
a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Authenticity, Consumer Trust				

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.263	.142		1.843	.066
	Consumer Trust	.424	.055	.396	7.667	.000
	Perceived Authenticity	.522	.054	.499	9.674	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention						

The regression results show that the model is significant ($p < 0.05$). Consumer trust ($\beta > 0$, $p < 0.05$) and perceived authenticity ($\beta > 0$, $p < 0.05$) are significant factors to increase purchase intention for dermatologist-backed beauty brands. Therefore, it is accepted.

Consumer purchase intention of dermatologist-backed brands differ across genders

ANOVA					
Purchase Intention					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.720	5	2.144	3.976	.002
Within Groups	158.520	294	.539		
Total	169.239	299			

The difference in purchase intention between gender is significant based on the value of significance (0.002) which is less than 0.0 5

X. FINDINGS

The average ratings between consumer trust and credibility and transparency are at a moderate level, suggesting that these are positively related. Perceived authenticity scores are also higher than average, demonstrating that professional branding increase brand genuineness.

The purchase intention had high mean scores, suggesting a positive buying intention for dermatologist supported beauty products. One thing that stood out as a key factor in trust was ingredient transparency. Clear and easy disclosure of ingredients, functions and safety standards are a manager's responsibility. Simplifying explanations of the active ingredients can decrease perceived risk and consumer confidence.

Thirdly, the study shows that professional and clinical branding factors in the process of forming perceived authenticity. The design of packaging, the medical terms, minimalistic aesthetics and the information communicated should reinforce the authenticity cues with a clinical positioning strategy. In addition, age can differ in purchase intention, which suggests age-segmented strategies should be implemented.

A younger audience might be more receptive to a preventative skincare message, whereas an older one might be more receptive to a message geared towards solving problems or anti-aging.

XI. SUGGESTIONS

The design of the packaging, medical terms, dermatologist recommendations, and scientific claims help to create a sense of authenticity and trustworthiness. It is evident that authenticity is not merely about heritage or storytelling in the cosmetic industry, but is built in the process with cues of professionalism and scientific legitimacy.

Purchase intention, consumer trust and perceived authenticity was found to have a significant positive impact. The more consumers see a brand as credible and authentic, the more likely they are to buy from it.

This concludes that trust and authenticity have the capacity to act as psychological mechanisms that convert brand credibility to actual buying intention. This was a substantial variation by age group, which serves to support the importance of demographic factors in consumer decision making.

The different age groups could value skincare in different ways – whether to treat acne, prevent skin issues or handle anti-aging – which can lead to varying levels of receptivity to dermatologist-influenced positioning.

XII. CONCLUSION

The study finds that trust and perceived authenticity of dermatologist brands positively affect the purchase intention, with the involvement of the trust and ingredient transparency. The number of years affects the usage and intention to purchase. Hence, brands with savvy positioning will likely achieve greater success in the crowded skin care market in India by leveraging medical validation and using clear communication.

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