

Impact of influencer marketing on consumer involvement and buying decisions: a study in the skincare category

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Abstract—Influencer marketing has emerged as a dominant promotional strategy in the skincare industry, shaping consumer awareness, involvement, and purchase decisions. The rise of social media platforms has enabled influencers to serve as trusted intermediaries between brands and consumers. This paper examines how influencer marketing increases consumer involvement with skincare products, evaluates the effect of influencer credibility trust, expertise, and authenticity on consumer skincare purchase decisions, and analyses how influencer-created content such as reviews, product demonstrations, and before–after results influences the decision-making process. The study is based entirely on secondary data sourced from peer-reviewed journals, research reports, and online publications. Findings indicate that influencer credibility significantly affects consumer trust, perceived usefulness, and purchase intention. Content formats like reviews and demonstrations enhance product understanding, while before–after visuals strengthen perceived effectiveness. The study concludes that influencer marketing plays a critical role in shaping skincare consumers' involvement and purchase behaviour, though challenges related to authenticity and ethical concerns persist.

Index Terms—Influencer Marketing, Skincare Industry, Consumer Involvement, Buying Decisions, Trust, Authenticity, Social Media Influencers, Purchase Intention

I. INTRODUCTION

The global skincare industry has experienced significant growth over the past decade, driven by increasing consumer awareness, digital engagement, and the rising importance of personal wellbeing in daily routines [1]. As consumers seek more personalized and experience-based guidance, influencer marketing has emerged as one of the most influential forces shaping skincare-related attitudes and behaviours [9]. Social media influencers on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok now act as intermediaries who help consumers explore products, understand routines, and assess suitability for individual skin needs [15].

Skincare is a high-involvement and high-risk category because consumers make decisions based on sensitive concerns such as acne, pigmentation, dryness, allergies, and long-term skin health [7]. These concerns make consumers rely heavily on credible sources of information, and influencers are perceived as relatable individuals whose personal experiences offer practical reassurance [2]. Existing studies reveal that influencer-generated content such as ingredient explanations, routine demonstrations, and personal skincare journeys helps increase consumer involvement by simplifying complex skincare information and presenting it in an accessible manner [5].

Influencer credibility also plays a crucial role in shaping purchase decisions. Research consistently shows that credibility elements trust, expertise, and authenticity significantly influence consumer confidence and intention to purchase skincare products [6]. Influencers who demonstrate ingredient knowledge, maintain transparency about sponsorships, and offer honest evaluations are perceived as more trustworthy than traditional brand communications. This credibility reduces consumer uncertainty and enhances the perceived reliability of product recommendations [5].

Another important insight from the literature is the persuasive effect of influencer-created content formats. High-engagement content such as before and after results, tutorials, reviews, and ingredient breakdowns provide consumers with tangible visual proof and experiential validation of product performance [16]. These visual and experiential cues strongly influence consumers because skincare improvement is inherently observable and

strongly tied to personal appearance [13]. As a result, influencer-generated content often becomes a primary driver of product evaluation and purchase decision-making [13].

Given these evolving dynamics, influencer marketing has become a strategic and essential tool for skincare brands seeking to enhance awareness, strengthen brand perception, and influence buying decisions [14]. By synthesizing findings from multiple secondary sources, this paper explores how influencer marketing increases consumer involvement, how influencer credibility shapes skincare purchase behaviour, and how influencer-generated content influences consumer decision-making. The insights from this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the modern skincare market and provide valuable implications for brands aiming to optimize their digital marketing strategies [4].

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Influencer marketing has become a major area of interest in recent academic research due to its strong ability to shape consumer attitudes, involvement, and purchase decisions in digital environments [1]. In the skincare category, this impact is particularly pronounced because consumers seek guidance, credibility, and experiential validation before selecting products for their personal skin needs [15]. The following review discusses existing research in four primary areas: consumer engagement, influencer credibility, content format, and skincare industry dynamics.

A. Influencer Marketing and Consumer Engagement

Studies consistently show that influencer marketing enhances consumer engagement by offering interactive, relatable, and personalized content [2]. Unlike traditional advertising, influencers communicate through personal narratives, real-life product trials, and honest experiences, which strengthens consumer attention and emotional connection [10]. In the skincare domain, engagement is intensified because influencers help simplify complex skincare concepts such as ingredient analysis, routine building, and product compatibility [9].

Consumers engage more deeply when influencers demonstrate product usage in real-life contexts, such as morning routines, nighttime skincare regimens, or multi-step application tutorials [1]. These forms of content motivate consumers to research further, compare product alternatives, and spend more time evaluating skincare solutions. Additionally, the interactive features of social media, such as comment sections and live Q&A sessions, encourage active participation and community building, further strengthening consumer engagement [16].

B. Influencer Credibility Factors

The credibility of influencers is repeatedly cited in scholarly work as a fundamental determinant of their persuasive effectiveness [6]. Although influencers vary widely in their expertise, content style, and communication approach, three core components consistently emerge across studies: trust, expertise, and authenticity. These dimensions collectively shape how consumers interpret influencer messages and evaluate product recommendations [15].

Trust

Trust represents the belief that the influencer is honest, transparent, and unbiased [1]. Research shows that trust is strengthened when influencers disclose sponsorships clearly, provide balanced opinions, and maintain consistent communication across posts [4]. In skincare specifically, trust becomes crucial because consumers must rely on influencers to share truthful accounts of their experiences, potential side effects, and suitability for different skin types [5]. Consumers perceive trustworthy influencers as honest intermediaries, reducing skepticism and increasing openness to recommendations [14].

Expertise

Expertise refers to the influencer's perceived knowledge, experience, or professional background [5]. In skincare, this dimension plays an especially influential role because products often require technical knowledge of ingredients, formulations, chemical interactions, and skin concerns [12]. Studies show that influencers who frequently discuss ingredients, routines, and scientific explanations are more likely to be perceived as experts, even if they lack formal dermatological training [9]. Consumers depend on such expertise to navigate the

overwhelming number of skincare products available in the market and to make informed decisions that align with their individual needs [10].

Authenticity

Authenticity captures the influencer's genuineness, transparency, and perceived sincerity [7]. Literature emphasizes that authenticity is not limited to honest reviews; it also includes showing imperfections, discussing personal struggles, sharing failures, or openly admitting when products do not meet expectations [16]. Authentic influencers create deep emotional resonance, prompting followers to view them as relatable individuals rather than brand representatives [15]. In the skincare domain, authenticity is particularly powerful because consumers expect genuine results, unfiltered experiences, and honest assessments [13].

Together, these three credibility factors significantly influence consumer attitudes, perceived product usefulness, and purchase intention [6]. Scholars consistently find that influencers who score high on trust, expertise, and authenticity generate stronger engagement, more positive brand evaluations, and higher likelihood of conversion [10].

C. Influence of Content Format on Consumer Decision-Making

Content format plays a central role in determining how persuasive influencer marketing is [16]. In the digital era, skincare influencers utilize a wide range of content types, each offering different levels of informational and emotional impact [13]. The literature identifies several influential formats, including product reviews, tutorials, demonstration videos, ingredient analyses, and before and after visuals [10].

Product Reviews

Product reviews help consumers understand features, benefits, drawbacks, pricing, and expected outcomes based on real user experiences [1]. Unlike brand advertisements, influencer reviews are often perceived as more honest and nuanced because they highlight practical pros and cons [15]. Reviews reduce information gaps and guide consumers in comparing alternatives, making them a crucial tool for decision-making [12].

Tutorials and Demonstrations

Tutorials and demonstrations play an instructional role, showing consumers how products should be applied, layered, or combined with other products [9]. Research finds that such content reduces uncertainty, enhances consumer confidence, and increases perceived value because consumers can visualize the practical use of the product [10]. Demonstrations are particularly effective in skincare because they show texture, absorption, consistency, and immediate effects [2].

Before–After Results

Before–after photos or videos serve as highly persuasive visual evidence [7]. Literature describes them as “performance cues” that reduce perceived risk by showcasing real transformation [16]. These visuals create strong emotional impact and shape perceptions of product efficacy [13]. In an industry that heavily depends on visible improvements, before–after content is among the most influential formats [12].

Ingredient Breakdowns and Scientific Explanations

With rising ingredient-consciousness among modern consumers, many influencers explain active ingredients, formulation strengths, product safety, and suitability for different skin types [6]. This educational content appeals to rational decision-makers who prioritize scientific validation [14]. It enhances credibility and addresses concerns about allergies or side effects.

Overall, literature converges on the argument that diversified content formats heighten both cognitive processing (understanding) and emotional engagement (connection), resulting in stronger influence over skincare purchase decisions [1].

D. Skincare Industry Dynamics

The skincare market exhibits characteristics that make influencer marketing exceptionally effective [1]. Unlike other consumer categories, skincare products are deeply personal and involve significant uncertainty due to differences in skin types, allergies, sensitivity issues, and varying product outcomes [5]. Consequently, consumers seek credible assurances and comparative evidence before making purchase decisions [15].

Research highlights that peer recommendations play a particularly strong role in this domain [7]. Influencers serve as digital peers whose experiences reduce perceived risk and help consumers predict product performance [16]. Because skincare decisions require experiential learning, consumers often feel more reassured when influencers share long-term routines, show real-time skin progress, or offer personalized advice [10].

The industry has also shifted toward scientific and ingredient-based marketing [6]. Consumers want transparency about product formulations, chemical safety, and clinical benefits [14]. Influencers who communicate scientific explanations, regardless of formal expertise bridge the informational gap between brands and consumers. This trend amplifies the authority of credible skincare influencers and positions them as key information sources [2].

Furthermore, the emotional dimension of skincare should not be overlooked. Skin issues such as acne, pigmentation, or sensitivity often affect self-esteem [13]. Influencers who share relatable struggles, personal journeys, and emotional transformations create strong connections with followers, enhancing both trust and persuasion [5].

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine how influencer marketing increases consumer involvement with skincare products.
2. To analyze the effect of influencer credibility, trust, expertise, and authenticity on consumers' skincare purchase decisions.
3. To study how influencer-created content (reviews, demos, before and after results) shapes consumers' decision-making process for skincare products.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based entirely on secondary research and adopts a descriptive and analytical design to explore the impact of influencer marketing on consumer involvement and buying decisions in the skincare category. The methodology is structured to ensure systematic collection, evaluation, and synthesis of existing scholarly and industry-based evidence relevant to the research objectives. Because no primary data is collected, the study emphasizes the careful selection of credible sources, thematic organization of findings, and rigorous qualitative analysis.

The research design is qualitative, secondary, and descriptive-analytical in nature. It is qualitative because the study aims to understand concepts, relationships, and behavioural patterns—such as influencer credibility, content format, and consumer involvement—rather than measure variables numerically. It is secondary because all information is drawn from existing literature, including journal articles, conference papers, industry reports, and other published materials, instead of surveys, interviews, or experiments. It is descriptive and analytical because the study both describes existing findings on influencer marketing and skincare consumer behaviour and critically synthesizes these findings to derive meaningful insights and conceptual connections aligned with the research objectives. This design is appropriate given that influencer marketing in skincare has been widely researched, and synthesizing this dispersed knowledge strengthens understanding of broader trends, mechanisms, and implications.

The nature and scope of the study are limited to influencer marketing as a digital promotional tool, skincare products as the selected category, and consumer involvement and purchase decisions as the behavioural outcomes of interest. The study focuses on how influencers affect awareness, engagement, trust, perceived product effectiveness, and eventual buying decisions within the skincare domain. The analysis is confined to publicly available literature and does not make use of proprietary datasets.

As a secondary research paper, the study relies exclusively on published and credible sources, including peer-reviewed journals, academic articles, conference papers, reputable online publications, and industry reports related to influencer marketing and skincare. The referenced studies—such as those examining influencer credibility, skincare purchase behaviour, and the role of social media in shaping consumer trust form the core dataset for this research. Only those sources directly addressing influencer marketing, consumer behaviour, or skincare purchasing decisions are included to maintain focus and relevance.

The data collection procedure followed several structured steps. First, relevant keywords such as “influencer marketing”, “skincare consumer behaviour”, “influencer credibility”, “social media influencers”, “purchase intentions in skincare”, and “content formats in influencer marketing” were identified. These keywords guided searches across academic databases and digital repositories. Second, using these terms, the researcher retrieved relevant literature from online journals, institutional websites, and research repositories, prioritizing recent studies related to skincare, cosmetics, and digital influence. Third, retrieved documents were screened for relevance, conceptual depth, and source credibility, ensuring inclusion of only strong academic or high-quality institutional work. Finally, a refined dataset of selected studies was compiled, forming the foundation for the literature review, analysis, and discussion. The compiled works cover topics such as influencer credibility, social media impact on skincare purchases, the mediating role of brand trust, and systematic evaluations of influencer marketing in skincare.

To maintain academic rigor, the study applies specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. Included sources are those focusing on influencer marketing, digital influence, skincare or cosmetics, consumer purchase behaviour, purchase intention, trust, credibility, engagement, and related concepts. Conceptual papers, empirical studies, case studies, and systematic reviews are all considered. Excluded sources include studies on traditional celebrity endorsements without digital relevance, unrelated product categories unless theoretically relevant, and low-credibility non-academic materials. These criteria ensure that the analysis remains aligned with the research objectives.

Given the qualitative and secondary nature of the study, a thematic analysis approach was adopted. Selected literature was coded to identify recurring themes such as influencer credibility (trust, expertise, authenticity), content formats (reviews, demonstrations, before–after visuals, ingredient explanations), consumer involvement, purchase intention, decision-making, brand trust, and perceived risk. These themes were categorized into broader conceptual groups, including influencer engagement, credibility factors, content-based influence on consumer decisions, and skincare-specific dynamics. A comparative and integrative analysis was conducted across the selected studies to identify consistent patterns, converging insights, and complementary findings. Where multiple works supported similar observations such as authenticity being a key driver of trust the insights were synthesized to form strong conclusions. Each theme was then linked back to the primary research objectives concerning consumer involvement, influencer credibility, and content influence, ensuring coherence between literature, analysis, and outcomes.

Secondary data plays an important role in this study because it provides access to a broad base of empirical and conceptual work across diverse contexts. It allows incorporation of findings derived from various methodologies without conducting primary research and enables the identification of patterns and gaps across existing studies. However, secondary reliance also limits the study, as it does not directly measure consumer attitudes or behaviours; instead, interpretations are based on prior research findings.

To enhance validity and reliability, only credible sources such as peer-reviewed journals and reputable institutional publications were used. Key concepts and claims were cross-verified with multiple studies wherever possible, and transparent referencing ensures traceability and verification of all information used. Although the research does not generate new primary data, it maintains conceptual rigor through systematic synthesis and logical structuring of established findings.

Ethical considerations were also maintained throughout the study. Since the research uses only publicly available secondary data, it does not involve human participants and thus avoids ethical concerns such as confidentiality or consent. All sources are properly acknowledged, and no ideas or findings from original authors are misrepresented. Proper citation practices were followed to avoid plagiarism and ensure academic integrity.

V. ANALYSIS

The analysis of secondary research reveals multiple interconnected patterns that explain how influencer marketing shapes consumer involvement and buying decisions in the skincare category. Since skincare is a high-risk and high-involvement product segment, consumers rely strongly on credible information, experiential content, and emotional reassurance, all of which influencers offer [1]. Across the reviewed literature, three dominant themes consistently emerge: the enhancement of consumer involvement, the role of influencer credibility in purchase decisions, and the influence of different content formats on consumer decision-making.

Findings show that influencer marketing significantly increases consumer involvement by stimulating both cognitive and emotional engagement [15]. Cognitive involvement rises as influencers simplify complex skincare concepts by explaining ingredients, comparing products, and breaking down routines, thereby motivating consumers to research more deeply, evaluate alternatives, and assess product suitability [9]. Emotional involvement is strengthened when influencers share relatable skin journeys and personal experiences, creating empathy and a sense of shared struggle, which deepens trust and connection [7]. Additionally, consumers spend more time engaging with influencer-based content such as routines, tutorials, and review videos, and interactive spaces like comment sections and live sessions further deepen this involvement [1], [2]. Influencers who cater to specific skin problems or demographic needs also increase the perceived personal relevance of content, leading directly to heightened consumer involvement [5]. Overall, influencer marketing enhances both cognitive and emotional involvement, making consumers more informed, attentive, and confident.

Influencer credibility defined through trust, expertise, and authenticity emerges as one of the strongest determinants of skincare purchase decisions [6]. Trust plays a vital role in reducing the perceived risks associated with skincare purchases, such as irritation or reactions. Influencers who provide transparent, honest, and balanced reviews help consumers feel safer and more assured in their decisions [14]. Expertise is equally important, as consumers value influencers who demonstrate knowledge of ingredients, formulations, and skincare science, enabling them to navigate an increasingly complex market [12]. Authenticity is identified as the core of persuasion, as influencers who show unfiltered results, realistic expectations, and even failures foster trust and relatability, which significantly increases the likelihood of purchase [16], [13]. Collectively, these elements of credibility deepen consumer trust, increase perceived product reliability, and strongly boost purchase intentions.

Different content formats also play a critical role in shaping consumer decision-making [10]. Reviews enhance transparency by offering practical insights and real-life experiences, thereby reducing uncertainty and helping consumers compare alternatives [1], [15]. Tutorials and routine demonstrations increase consumer confidence by showing correct product usage and providing clarity on application techniques, texture, and absorption, which reduces ambiguity [9], [2]. Before–after visuals serve as powerful evidence of efficacy, appealing both emotionally and rationally, and significantly influencing belief in product outcomes [16], [13]. Ingredient explanations appeal to analytical consumers who seek scientific validation and reassurance regarding safety and effectiveness, thereby supporting rational decision-making [6], [14]. Together, these formats create a persuasive ecosystem where emotional storytelling, scientific clarity, and visual proof operate simultaneously.

The combined effect of involvement, credibility, and content formats results in a multi-stage influence pathway that strongly shapes skincare decision-making [12]. Consumers initially engage emotionally or cognitively with influencer content, then evaluate the influencer's credibility, and finally respond to content formats that validate the product's effectiveness [15]. This layered influence mechanism explains why influencer marketing produces stronger impact than traditional advertising in the skincare domain [1].

VI. FINDINGS

The findings of this secondary research provide a comprehensive view of how influencer marketing shapes consumer involvement, trust formation, and purchasing behaviour in the skincare category. By synthesizing insights from multiple peer-reviewed studies, industry reports, and conceptual papers, the analysis reveals several consistent patterns that highlight the psychological, informational, and emotional mechanisms through

which influencers affect consumer decisions [1], [10]. The first major finding is that influencer marketing significantly increases consumer involvement. Influencers simplify skincare information by explaining routines, ingredients, and expected results, making it easier for consumers to understand product functions and benefits. As a result, consumers become more active in researching products, comparing alternatives, and engaging with skincare-related content. Emotional involvement also rises when influencers share relatable personal skin journeys, creating a deeper sense of connection and trust [7]. Additionally, community interactions such as comments, group discussions, and shared advice further deepen consumer involvement and engagement [2].

The second important finding is that influencer credibility defined through trust, expertise, and authenticity strongly predicts purchase intention [6]. Consumers tend to trust influencers who provide honest, transparent, and balanced reviews, reducing uncertainty and perceived risk associated with skincare purchases. Expertise further enhances decision-making, particularly when influencers explain ingredient science or provide guidance on skincare routines [9]. Authentic influencers who show real results and genuine personal experiences wield strong persuasive power and significantly increase the likelihood of purchase [16].

The third finding shows that influencer content formats shape consumer decision-making at different psychological levels. Reviews reduce uncertainty by offering practical insights and firsthand experiences, while tutorials and demonstrations build consumer confidence by showing correct product usage and routine integration [15]. Before–after visuals serve as strong proof of effectiveness and appeal to both emotional and rational processing, whereas ingredient explanations attract rational consumers who seek safety, scientific validation, and product compatibility [13]. Each format influences a different stage of the decision-making process, making content variety a crucial factor.

Another consistent finding is that consumers perceive influencers as advisors rather than advertisers. Influencers are viewed as relatable, approachable, and honest, and their recommendations resemble personal advice rather than promotional messaging. This perception significantly strengthens their persuasive power compared to traditional advertising methods [14].

Finally, the high-risk nature of skincare amplifies the impact of influencer marketing. Because skincare involves long-term usage and carries risks such as irritation or negative reactions, consumers rely more heavily on personal testimonials, progress updates, patch-test information, and warnings shared by influencers [5]. These risk-reducing cues make influencers more trusted in the skincare category than in many other beauty or cosmetic segments. As a result, consumers increasingly depend on influencer guidance when evaluating and choosing skincare products.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the impact of influencer marketing on consumer involvement and buying decisions in the skincare category, relying entirely on secondary research. The analysis of existing literature clearly demonstrates that influencer marketing has a deeply transformative influence on consumer behaviour, perceptions, and decision-making within this highly sensitive and high-involvement product sector [1]. Through an integrated synthesis of prior studies, several important insights emerge that collectively strengthen our understanding of how influencers shape consumer psychology and purchasing outcomes in the skincare market [15].

First, the research consistently highlights that influencer marketing substantially enhances consumer involvement in skincare products [2]. Influencers increase both cognitive and emotional involvement by offering clear educational explanations, relatable personal stories, and demonstration-based content that simplifies complex skincare concepts. Their ability to present products and routines in real-life contexts enables consumers to navigate skincare choices with greater clarity and confidence [9]. As a result, consumers become more engaged with skincare content, conduct further research, and develop stronger awareness of product suitability, benefits, and risks [16].

Second, the study reaffirms that influencer credibility evaluated through trust, expertise, and authenticity is one of the strongest predictors of skincare-related purchase decisions [6]. Consumers place greater value on recommendations shared by influencers who are transparent, relatable, and knowledgeable. Trust reduces perceived risks associated with trying new skincare products, while expertise provides a rational basis for decision-making by helping consumers understand ingredients and skin science [5]. Authenticity creates meaningful emotional resonance, fostering reliability and genuine connection [7]. Collectively, these attributes significantly enhance the persuasive potential of influencer content and strengthen purchase intention [12].

Third, the analysis reveals that the type of content produced by influencers plays an essential role in shaping consumer evaluations. Reviews enhance transparency, tutorials build confidence in application, ingredient explanations appeal to rational consumers, and before–after visuals provide compelling evidence of product efficacy [13]. Together, these formats reduce uncertainty, increase clarity, and build the psychological assurance necessary for making informed skincare decisions [1].

Furthermore, the study underscores that consumers perceive influencers not merely as marketers but as trusted advisors [14]. Their accessibility, relatability, and consistent communication foster parasocial relationships that deepen their impact on purchasing behaviour [4]. In skincare, where product outcomes can influence self-esteem and physical appearance, the advice and personal experiences shared by influencers carry significant weight [13]. This peer-like trust makes influencer marketing considerably more impactful than traditional advertising [16].

Finally, the personal and high-risk nature of skincare products further amplifies the influence of influencer marketing. Consumers rely on influencers to minimize risk through honest testimonials, realistic experiences, and long-term usage insights [5]. As a result, influencer marketing becomes not simply a promotional tool but a decision-support mechanism that guides consumers throughout the entire skincare journey—from awareness to purchase and even post-purchase use [15].

In conclusion, this study establishes that influencer marketing is an essential and highly effective driver of consumer involvement and purchase decisions in the skincare industry [1]. Its impact operates through interconnected pathways that include credibility, content quality, emotional resonance, and educational value [2]. As digital platforms continue to evolve and consumers increasingly demand relatable, evidence-based product information, influencer marketing will remain a pivotal force in shaping skincare preferences and buying behaviour [14]. This secondary research reinforces the critical relevance of influencers in today's skincare landscape and offers valuable insights for brands, marketers, and future academic investigations [10].

VIII. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study carry significant implications for managers, brand strategists, and decision-makers within the skincare industry, particularly as influencer marketing continues to reshape consumer perceptions and purchasing behaviour [15]. Understanding these implications is essential for designing effective marketing strategies and achieving sustained competitive advantage. First, the study shows that influencer credibility defined by trust, expertise, and authenticity is a key driver of consumer trust and purchase intention [6]. Therefore, managers should collaborate with influencers who possess genuine product knowledge, prioritize honest and balanced reviews over forced endorsements, and ensure clear disclosure of sponsorships. By partnering with credible influencers, brands can reduce consumer skepticism and strengthen trust, which is especially important in skincare where consumers are cautious due to potential side effects and sensitivity.

The research also demonstrates that different influencer content formats such as reviews, demonstrations, before–after visuals, and ingredient explanations impact consumer decision-making at different psychological stages [10]. This provides managers with strategic direction in campaign design. Reviews and testimonials should be used to build transparency and reduce information gaps, while demonstrations should be prioritized to increase consumer confidence in how to correctly use products. Before–after visuals are particularly effective for persuasive, results-driven campaigns, whereas ingredient-based content appeals strongly to informed, science-oriented consumers [16]. Aligning specific content formats with stages such as awareness, consideration, evaluation, and purchase can significantly enhance the effectiveness of marketing strategies.

Another managerial implication relates to strengthening brand positioning through heightened consumer involvement. The analysis indicates that influencer marketing increases both cognitive and emotional involvement, making consumers more attentive and connected to brands [9]. Managers can leverage this by encouraging routine-based content, long-term skincare journeys using brand products, and community engagement through Q&A sessions, live demonstrations, and interactive comment-based discussions. Such strategies deepen brand recall, build stronger emotional bonds, and increase the likelihood of repeat purchases.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that influencers should be treated as strategic partners rather than merely promotional tools. Since consumers perceive influencers as trusted advisors rather than advertisers, managers should focus on building long-term collaborations instead of one-time paid posts [14]. Encouraging influencers to share honest feedback, realistic experiences, and long-term usage reports, while giving them creative freedom, allows them to preserve their authentic voice. This authenticity strengthens parasocial relationships between influencers and followers, leading to stronger persuasion and better brand outcomes.

Given that skincare is a high-risk product category associated with concerns such as irritation, breakouts, and allergic reactions managers must also use influencers to reduce perceived consumer risk [5]. Influencers can help by highlighting patch tests, demonstrating routines, discussing ingredient sensitivities, and sharing long-term progress updates. Honest communication of realistic expectations rather than exaggerated promises increases consumer confidence and willingness to try new products, thereby driving higher conversion rates.

Additionally, the study underscores the importance of transparency and ethical influencer practices. Fake reviews, undisclosed sponsorships, and manipulated visuals can severely damage trust in both influencers and brands. To avoid reputational risks, managers should enforce strict guidelines on disclosure, encourage factual product demonstrations, and avoid partnering with influencers known for misleading content [2]. Ethical practices build long-term brand trust and credibility.

Finally, the findings highlight the need for tailoring influencer strategies to different consumer segments. Gen Z consumers prefer authenticity, raw visuals, and relatable micro-influencers; Millennials value expertise, ingredient transparency, and data-backed recommendations; and individuals with sensitive skin rely heavily on long-term testimonials or dermatologist-backed influencers [6]. By matching the right influencers and content formats to specific target segments, managers can optimize marketing ROI and achieve more personalized, effective outreach.

A. Limitations & Challenges

- This study is based entirely on secondary data, limiting the ability to validate findings through primary research.
- Influencer marketing effectiveness varies across platforms, which is not deeply differentiated in this paper.
- Consumer biases, fake reviews, and paid promotions challenge the authenticity of influencer content.
- Rapid changes in social media trends may make certain insights time-sensitive.

B. Future Implications

- Brands should prioritize collaborations with credible, authentic influencers with expertise in skincare.
- Future studies can include primary surveys measuring real-time consumer reactions.
- Skincare brands can explore AI influencers, dermatology-backed influencers, and nano-influencers for higher trust.
- Ethical guidelines must be strengthened to maintain transparency in paid partnerships.
- Understanding cross-cultural differences in influencer impact could benefit global skincare companies.

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