

Role of Social Media in Shaping Our Perception of Beauty

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Abstract

This review research paper explores the impact of social media on beauty perception and its consequent effects on the beauty industry. Social media platforms have intensified societal pressures regarding physical beauty while simultaneously fostering the rise of influential beauty brands that emphasizes inclusivity, diversity and representation. The study focuses on three brands—Fenty Beauty, Glow Recipe, and Charlotte Tilbury—and analyzes how they employ digital marketing and customer engagement to connect with consumers and reshape beauty standards. These brands have especially used social media and redefined beauty standards in a way that is more inclusive and representative, helped along by developments like tailored product creation and augmented reality technologies.

Keywords: *beauty industry, social media, fenty beauty, glow recipe, charlotte tilbury*

1. Introduction

The beauty industry has and is being increasingly criticized for its promotion of narrow and unrealistic ideals, which have been perpetuated by old beauty brands that have dominated the industry for decades (Thompson & Heinberg, 2017). Societal norms and cultural values significantly impact consumers' perceptions of beauty, which in turn affects their demand for specific cosmetic goods and services (Chandon et al., 2015). The emergence of social media has significantly influenced the issues pertaining to diversity and representation within the cosmetic and beauty industry (McRoberts et al., 2019). This highlights the crucial role played by social media to enable beauty brands to connect directly with consumers, build brand awareness, and drive loyalty growth. This research study seeks to review the existing literature on the evolving beauty brands that have monopolized the market as a result of the advent of social media. The paper further discusses the emergence of new beauty trends, including a shift towards natural makeup and environmentally sustainable and inclusive products, as well as evaluating the market dominance of smaller, newer brands such as Fenty Beauty, Charlotte Tilbury, and Glow Recipe, and investigating their use of digital marketing and customer communication to redefine the beauty industry's mainstream standards.

1.2 Media's Influence on Our Perception of Beauty and its Effect on the Beauty Industry

We live in a digitized era where the emergence of various social applications has changed how we perceive beauty through the emergence of new standards (Henriques & Patnaik, 2020). Social media emphasis on physical beauty is more pervasive than ever in modern culture, especially among the younger generation (Fardouly & Vartanian 2016). Social media comprises several sites; however, social networking sites (SNSs) like Facebook and Instagram prompt peer comparisons about teens' beauty and self-image (Mascheroni et al.2015). Instagram photos of attractive friends and celebrities harm individuals' moods and self-image (Brown & Tiggemann, 2016). Adolescents' exposure to images that promote the slim beauty ideal steer issues of body dissatisfaction, as they place a high value on the likes and comments they receive when comparing their appearance to that of other users, eventually influencing how they sees themselves in the mirror. (Viniestra, et al., 2020). An experiment with 240 teenage males suggested that appearance was one of the primary reasons for social success (Jang-Soon & Hye-Jin, 2017). The media is also extensively used for brand marketing. The images and advertisements on social media sites are presented in such a way that there are no imperfections. Digital alterations are used for airbrushing skin, whitening teeth, and reducing sizes. 82% of women believe it has altered how they view themselves in society (Mills & Jennifer, 2017). The results of a study demonstrated that viewing images of females who had undergone aesthetic enhancement had a statistically significant impact on their desire for cosmetic surgery, and those who frequently used social media were unsatisfied with their appearance and were more likely to seek cosmetic surgery later. (Walker et al., 2021) Social media is an online communication medium with a significant positive societal influence (Dân & Nam, 2018), inspiring businesses to increase their marketing and advertising efforts through product promotion (De Vries & Carlson, 2014; Gensler et al., 2013). By some, social media advertisements are classified as "persuasive discourse" as the language they employ is made up of elements that are easily persuadable. How a company displays itself on social media indicates how its customers would be persuaded to buy their products (Barker, 2017). Therefore, advertising can be considered to influence people's opinions about society and is the precise reason that the "Beauty concept" is created through the marketing of beauty goods on social media (Walker et al. 2021). Through linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural features, advertisements encourage individuals to think that whatever they are showing is real beauty and that their products can enhance their beauty (Zahra et al.,2022). Recent brands like Fenty Beauty have drawn our attention to concerns about societal issues around beauty concepts and their prevalence in mass media advertisements.

1.3 Influencer Marketing

Several academic studies have demonstrated that celebrity endorsements significantly boost the effectiveness of advertising (Bergkvist and Zhou, 2016). However, in addition to employing 'conventional' celebrities like actors, supermodels, and athletes, businesses are more frequently turning to social media influencers who have gained fame by successfully branding themselves as social media experts to promote their products (Marwick, 2015). As a third party, social media influencers are seen as more trustworthy and relatable than conventional female celebrities. They are frequently seen as consumption role models by those who share the same self-

concept as them, with their product reviews significantly affecting young female purchase decisions (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Female participants in a previous study comparing the efficacy of celebrity endorsements with product reviews from an unidentified "regular" customer were more favorable toward an experienced product when it was pushed by a relatable consumer (Wei & Lu, 2013). A consumer's buying intention is impacted by brand growth and self-concepts (Hermand et al., 2019). 40% of customers bought the products that social media influencers used, suggesting a higher trust rate compared to recommendations than those of friends and family (Sekhon et al., 2016). According to a study, social media influencers significantly improved the brand perception of cosmetic items and individuals' awareness of the self, explaining the motivations behind their consumption choices (Hermanda et al., 2019). The beauty industry is known for its ever-changing landscape and fluctuating demand for cosmetic and personal care products. As cultural and societal values change, we see the emergence of new beauty trends. The trend of environmentally sustainable products has recently emerged with an emphasis on using natural and organic ingredients. The mainstream beauty standards are losing favor as 47% of beauty product consumers say they want to shop from brands with diversity or inclusivity (Mintel, 2023). In recent years many more minor and newer brands have emerged, eroding the market dominance of large beauty companies. Brands like Fenty Beauty, Charlotte Tilbury, and Glow Recipe are amongst the most interesting and popular owing to their smart Digital marketing, and brand/customer communication.

1.4 Fenty Beauty

With increasing attention surrounding beauty concepts related to women of color and society's definition of beauty, in 2017, pop singer Rihanna launched Fenty Beauty. Analyzing Fenty more closely can assist us in understanding the way the brand is positioned and how it generates a connection with women consumers through identification with diversity, inclusivity, and representativeness. Growing up in Barbados, intrigued by her mom's beauty products, Robyn Rihanna Fenty developed her vision of what a beauty line should be. She aimed to close the gaps she saw in products created to suit diverse skin types and tones. Fenty Beauty set out to develop product lines that can be used by everyone "so that women everywhere would be included," an idea that a celebrity brand had never attempted. Before Fenty, it was found that only one in five African American women felt that the beauty industry adequately represented them (Nielsen, 2017). Over 70% of women of color surveyed reported difficulty finding products matching their skin tones (Beautycon Media and Culture Co-Op, 2016). Fenty Beauty addressed this long-standing lack of inclusivity and revolutionized the diversity of products in the beauty industry. The brand initially featured 40 different foundations, which has now expanded to 50, offering a wide variety for all skin types. In addition, the carefully produced shades in the range served as an argument for inclusion rather than simply the number of shades. This made it possible for so many women to identify with and feel welcomed by the brand. Instead of simply adding her name to a brand, she aimed to create well-liked products that placed customers first, explaining the company's marketing plan and the reasons for its success. Fenty promotes equality in its product range and through its advertising and social media activity. In a study, researchers examined the Fenty Beauty advertisement video launched in 2017, looking at the semiotics messages and their verbal and visual

signs (2019). The ad includes eleven women with different skin tones, hair, body sizes, ethnicity, and religion. This sends the message that everyone is beautiful in their manner, the way God has created them. There is no concrete standard for beauty related to skin tone, hair, and facial symmetry. There is also the notion that makeup should be kept natural to enhance your natural beauty and features. By creating products with the customer experience in mind, and constantly prioritizing what the customer wants, Fenty was able to appeal to a large audience. Consumers are constantly looking for inclusive, diversified beauty products. This is a crucial marketing tactic, which is one of the reasons why word-of-mouth advertising for the brand was phenomenal. This branding technique has the potential to transform the representation of women in the beauty industry and encode brands to diversify and extend the shades of their product collections. Through these actions, Fenty Beauty has been instrumental in re-educating global consumers about the diversity of beauty while capitalizing on all races and expanding beauty ideals.

1.5 Glow Recipe

K- Beauty or Korean Beauty has accumulated a reputation and interest in the Western nation since its introduction to U.S. markets in 2011. According to Prophecy Market Insights, the global K-beauty products market is projected to reach about \$31.6 billion in sales by 2029. Laneige, Iope and Sulwhasoo, Glow Recipe, and Peach and Lily are many brands that have successfully penetrated the U.S. cosmetics market. Glow Recipe, launched in 2014, was one of the brands leading the Korean skin-care movement. Christine Chang and Sarah Lee, the company's co-CEOs, established Glow Recipe in 2014 as a selection of other K-beauty items imported from Seoul to aid smaller firms in entering the U.S. Three years later, they launched their in-house skin-care line. The brand is widely recognized for its naturally fruit-powered ingredients that give the skin a next-level glow. In addition, all of its products are cruelty-free and 100% natural. According to brand founders Lee and Chang, social media presence has most actively promoted the consumer and brand connection. Each social media platform has a distinct way of communicating with its users, so brands must tailor their marketing messaging to the specific demands and habits that users on each network use exclusively. It is widely known that TikTok helps marketers engage with their consumers meaningfully and drives sales. With the addition of TikTok's new Shopify interface, capturing sales opportunities and guiding viewers down the sales funnel is now more dynamic and smoother. Glow Recipe met both campaign goals thanks to TikTok's Shopify integration by successfully driving discovery and increasing purchases. Glow Recipe reported a +600% increase in daily sales and website sales when their Watermelon Glow Dew Drops and Watermelon Glow Pore-Tight Toner went viral on TikTok earlier this year. Using Tik Tok as their primary marketing platform was smart because it encouraged more impulsive purchases, kept viewers engaged with short and transparent reviews, and helped build trust. After realizing the app's tendencies, Glow Recipe capitalized on this development by working with and promoting these new influencers. Chang revealed, "We reposted customers' videos, created our tutorial with Glamzilla's tips, and shared how the products work individually and together" (Karin, 2021). After reaching \$60 million in sales during the 2020 pandemic, the brand was projected to reach \$100 million in revenues in 2021.

1.6 Charlotte Tilbury

While most beauty brands take years to compete with the industry's behemoths, Charlotte Tilbury's "eponymous" makeup line has distinguished itself from competitors ever since its launch in 2013. Her products are made simple to use, and many have formulations that can perform multiple tasks. She has always focused on empowerment as a partner and ambassador of Women for Women U.K. and a female-run business. Her audience can see the cause the brand is passionate about, which creates a deeper connection and loyalty toward the brand. Tilbury's use of social media to promote her brand has been credited with creating a new model for beauty marketing that focuses on engaging directly with consumers. Millennials are three times more likely than the older generation to assume that newer brands are better or more innovative. They are also likely to believe in the learning experiences via Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube which can build a brand community and help to enhance its perceived quality (McKinsey, 2018). As a result, competitive brands have developed a new form of marketing by engaging with people directly through social media rather than traditional advertising, forging ties with other people instead of just a transaction. Charlotte Tilbury has followed this theory and developed a real narrative based on its creator's persona and makeup skills to enforce a connection between the consumers and her brand.

2. Conclusion

The influence of social media has had a profound impact on the beauty industry and one's perception of beauty. While the emergence of social media platforms, particularly Instagram and Facebook, has intensified the emphasis on physical beauty leading to increased adverse effects on individuals' self-image, it has also paved the way for the rise of influential brands that have reshaped the industry by addressing the need for inclusivity, diversity, and representation. Fenty Beauty, Glow Recipe, and Charlotte Tilbury are among the many brands that have responded to changing cultural and societal values that align with consumer values, for example, the shift towards natural makeup, clean products, and increased self-expression to form a better connection with consumers. This research study provides insight into the recent evolution of beauty brands that have thrived in the presence of social media and their impact on the beauty industry. With the increasing use and popularization of social media and A.I., the industry has undergone a significant transformation, with personalized product development and virtual try-ons using augmented reality being just a few examples. The implications of new technologies continue to shape the beauty industry and may redefine beauty standards in a more inclusive way and representative of all individuals.

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