



## The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Skincare Purchase Intentions among Nepalese Consumers

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### Abstract

The rapid growth of social media platforms and the number of users has significantly changed the way marketing is conducted. This study focuses on the skincare industry and the purchasing behavior of skincare industry costumers in Nepal, who are becoming more discerning and demanding in terms of the information they seek, peer reviews and influencer promotions before making purchase decisions. The increased use of social media, especially by youth, in Nepal, is encouraging skincare businesses to embrace social media strategies that influence consumer behavior.

A quantitative research methodology was applied in this study, involving 414 survey respondents. Influencer credibility and the social media influence were analyzed, to determine the extent to which consumers tend to be attracted to promote a product based on these factors. The relationships between the study variables was investigated using Pearson correlation, and the descriptive statistics were used in describing the demographics of the respondents. The reliability of the measurement instruments was assessed to evaluate their internal consistency.

The findings indicated a strong positive correlation between the reputation of the influencer and promotional motivation and social media influence. Regression analysis showed that the consumers' propensity to promote skincare products was significantly and positively influenced on social media influence and influencer credibility, although social media influence proved to be the more significant predictor. Good internal consistency was observed with the help of reliability analysis being reflected by a Cronbach alpha coefficient (0.847).

**Keywords:** *Social Media Marketing, Influencer Trustworthiness, Recommendation Intention, Skincare Products, Nepal, Consumer Behavior*

### 1. Introduction

Digital platforms, technology, and the rapid growth of social media have transformed contemporary marketing, particularly in contexts where trust, credibility, and personalized feedback are essential for purchasing decisions. The skincare industry is one such sector. Consumers consistently evaluate product compatibility with their skin, the safety of ingredients, brand authenticity, and product efficacy prior to purchase. This is why Social Media Marketing (SMM) is emerging as one of the most effective strategies for skincare companies globally to promote their products. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are social media platforms that have significantly transformed how consumer communication with brands. They achieve this by disseminating information, demonstrating product use, and collaborating with influencers in ways that are not possible through traditional media. As global awareness of beauty, health, and self-care increases, the skincare industry has experienced rapid growth. Numerous studies indicate that social media significantly influences consumer decision-making processes in this domain. Research from Asia, Europe, and North America indicates that the quality of information on social media, review platforms, and influencers content significantly influences consumer trust in a brand and their likelihood of making a purchase (Cheung et al., 2008; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Singh et al., 2024).

The proliferation of short-video platforms such as TikTok, which facilitate the sharing of skincare routines, product demonstrations, and comparative images, has intensified this trend. Such content enables customers to interact with brands more efficiently. This study focuses on individuals aged 18 to 35, as they constitute the most active cohort of social media users in Nepal. This demographic cohort is referred to as



Generation Z and Millennials. Generation Z dedicates considerable time to social media, tracking beauty trends and influencers to acquire knowledge on skincare practices. In contrast, millennials tend to have greater disposable income and financial stability.

There is limited empirical research on the Nepalese skincare market, despite previous studies examining social media marketing and customer behavior. Most existing research focuses on other countries or the broader cosmetics industry. Thus, this study contributes by employing a quantitative approach to investigate the impact of social media marketing and influencer credibility on purchase intention among Nepalese consumers.

In conclusion, the rise in digital consumption in Nepal necessitates an examination of the impact of social media Marketing on consumers' purchase intentions regarding skincare products. As the skincare market expands, it is important to conduct empirical research to assess the efficacy of influencer-driven and engagement-focused marketing strategies among consumers in Nepal. This chapter provides the foundation for the subsequent analysis.

### ***Literature Review***

Nepal has experienced a digital revolution over the past two decades, characterized by increased mobile adoption, improved internet accessibility, and a growing number of young social media users. According to recent digital data, more than 13 million people in Nepal use social media, and most of them are between the ages of 18 and 35, which is the age group most likely to purchase skincare products (Statista, 2025). TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook are becoming increasingly important platforms for discovering new products and understanding consumer behavior. Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Lalitpur are examples of urban areas where users are more actively engaged. This is because affordable mobile data packages and localized content from influencers are driving a rapid increase in digital engagement (Statista, 2023).

Mobile phones and affordable internet access have increased social media use increase across South Asia, particularly in Nepal. Increasingly Nepalese consumers, especially those aged between the years of 18 and 40, make use of social media for entertainment and learn about skincare, beauty routines, and product recommendations. In Nepal, both local and international skincare companies use influencers, marketing, online reviews, and interactive content to get more people to increase product awareness influencers such as Sabina Karki, Shrinkhala Khatiwada, and Princy Shrestha often promote skincare products to their large follower bases, whom consumers trust and look up to. As a result, social media platforms have become the primary source of product information for Nepalese consumers, replacing traditional channels such as television advertising and in-store consultations. This study employs three well-established theories to provide a solid theoretical foundation for understanding consumer purchase behavior. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence consumer intentions. (Ajzen, 1991). The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), proposed by Petty and Cacioppo, suggests that persuasion occurs through both central and peripheral information processing pathways. These routes depend on consumers' motivation and their ability to process information. The AIDA Model explains how marketing messages guide consumers through stages of attention, interest, desire, and action, ultimately leading to purchase decisions. The marketing approaches used in the skincare industry have evolved significantly. Instead of relying mass marketing, companies now adopt personalized digital engagement strategies. (Kim and Ko 2012) reported that in the past, skincare companies relied on print media, television, and in-store marketing to promote product features and idealized beauty standards. These approaches did not effectively engage consumers, as they were primarily one-way communication channels. In the early 2000s, with advancements in digital technology, online catalogs, static web advertisements, and email marketing became early channels through which consumers could purchase products. (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Research indicates that electronic word-of-mouth, influencer reputation, and social media influence have a significant impact on consumer purchase intentions and perceptions (LetterLabs, 2025). Research conducted across various countries shows that influencer credibility enhances consumer confidence; while engaging and informative social media content positively influences purchasing and referral behaviors. Although purchasing skincare products is often perceived as



risky, there is limited research on the skincare market in Nepal. To address this gap, this study empirically examines the role of social media advertising and influencer trustworthiness in shaping recommendation intention within the Nepalese skincare market (Pudasaini & Dangol, 2024; Shrestha et al., 2023; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

In South Asia, there has been considerable interest in how cultural and societal factors influence online behavior. In this region, collectivism, social norms, standards of attractiveness, and peer pressure tend to amplify the effects of digital marketing. Hakiki et al. investigated how short-form videos on TikTok influence skincare sales. They found that this effect is stronger when peripheral, such as influencer attractiveness and visual appeal, are prominent. Purvi and Shrivastava (2025) reported that in India influencer credibility and expertise play a key role in shaping consumers' decisions to purchase cosmetics. This finding aligns with the importance of social trust in close-knit societies.

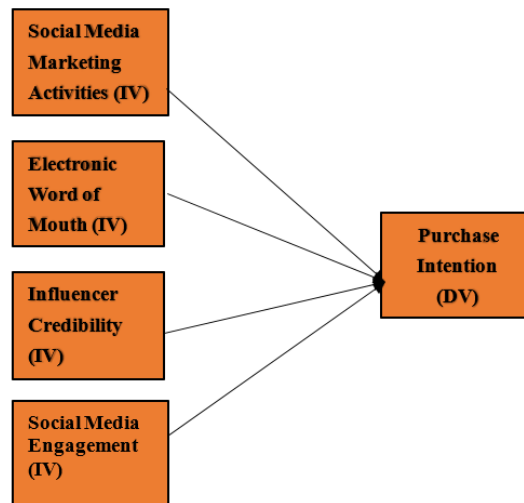
Although the research landscape in Nepal is still underdeveloped, it is gradually improving. Shrestha et al. (2023) found that social media marketing (SMM) activities, particularly user engagement, influencer promotion, and online brand interaction, have a significant impact on consumer purchasing behavior in Nepal. Pudasaini and Dangol (2024) also found that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), review credibility, and product information quality are closely associated with skincare consumers' purchase intentions in Nepal. However, many of these studies lack generalizability, do not have a strong theoretical foundation, and do not examine the effectiveness of SMM across different social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube.

In addition, much international research focused on emerging concepts such as emotional marketing (Marliya and Tafiprios, 2023), strategies and storytelling (Crespo et al., 2023), and community-driven engagement strategy (LetterLabs, 2025). These concepts have not been extensively explored in the Nepalese skincare industry. Statista (2025) and Digitalin (2025) are data-driven sources that indicate significant growth in the skincare market in Nepal, particularly among Generation Z and Millennials. This presents a valuable opportunity for social media marketing-driven purchase behavior to develop.

This is a developing body of literature; however, significant gaps remain. First, there is a lack of research in Nepal comparing the effects of different social media platforms (such as TikTok and Instagram) on consumers' purchase intentions for skincare products (Molenaar, 2025). Second, there is limited research on influencer credibility in Nepal, particularly regarding authenticity and relational trust. Third, many studies treat cosmetics as a homogeneous category and do not distinguish skincare products from other cosmetic categories. Different skincare product serves distinct purposes, including health, self-care, long term use. Finally, much of the research in Nepal relies on cross-sectional methodology, resulting in a limited number of longitudinal or in-depth studies.

## 2. Objectives

- 1) To determine the influence of social media marketing (content, promotion, interactions) on Nepalese consumers' perceptions of skincare product.
- 2) To analyze the influence of influencer endorsement strategies on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

This study employs three theoretical models to explain the relationship between social media Marketing and consumer purchase intentions. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is used as a framework to analyze the impact of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on purchase intention. In the skincare context, product demonstrations, expert evaluations, and visual content can significantly influence consumer perceptions. Influencers, peers, and online communities can shape individuals' subjective norms. The mechanisms through which individuals process persuasive communications can be explained by the Elaboration Likelihood Models (ELM). It distinguishes between central route processing, in which individuals carefully evaluate product attributes, and peripheral route processing, in which individuals are influenced by external cues such as an influencer's attractiveness or popularity. The AIDA Model illustrates the progression of persuasive communication from capturing attention to prompting action. This framework how skincare advertisements capture attention, generate interest, stimulate desire, and prompt action.

The study's conceptual framework integrates these theories by incorporating key variables, including electronic word- of- mouth, attitudes, purchase intention, influencer credibility, and social media marketing activities.

#### **Hypothesis:**

**H1:** Social media engagement positively influences recommendation intention (Word-of-Mouth).

(H<sub>01</sub>): Social media engagement does not significantly influence recommendation intention.

(H<sub>11</sub>): Social media engagement positively influences recommendation intention.

**H2:** Influencer credibility positively influences recommendation intention (Word- of- Mouth).

(H<sub>02</sub>): Influencer credibility does not significantly influence recommendation intention.

(H<sub>12</sub>): Influencer credibility positively influences recommendation intention.

**H3:** Social media engagement is associated with influencer credibility

(H<sub>03</sub>): Social media engagement is not significantly associated with influencer credibility.

(H<sub>13</sub>): Social media engagement is positively associated with influencer credibility.

### **3. Methodology**

The study used a structured questionnaire to determine the role of social media marketing in shaping the attitude of Nepalese consumers toward promote skincare products (Kim & Ko, 2012; Shrestha



et al., 2023). Using a quantitative research design, primary data were collected through an online survey distributed across various social media platforms (Pudasaini & Dangol, 2024). The questionnaire was distributed through Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok using Google form. A total of 414 valid responses were analyzed and subsequently tabulated. The most active demographic engaging with skincare-related content on social media consists of Nepalese users aged 18–35 years; therefore, this group was selected as the target population (Shrestha et al., 2023; Statista, 2025). Three key constructs were examined in the survey: (1) the extent to which individuals are influenced by social media interactions (e.g., likes, comments and shares) (2) perceived trustworthiness, and (3) recommendation intention (Chu & Kim, 2011; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated “strongly disagree” and 5 indicated “strongly agree” (Pudasaini & Dangol, 2024; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

The collected data were analyzed using PSPP. Descriptive statistics was calculated to describe the demographic characteristics and overall perceptions of the participants. The reliability of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha (Cheung et al., 2008; Pudasaini & Dangol, 2024). The questionnaire items were adapted from previous studies and tested for reliability using Cronbach’s alpha (Cheung et al., 2008; Chu & Kim, 2011). Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine relationship among variables, while multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the conceptual framework and hypotheses (Pudasaini & Dangol, 2024). Thus, each construct was measured using multiple items on a five-point Likert scale (Chu & Kim, 2011; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

#### 4. Results and Discussion

This section presents and interprets the data analyzed using PSPP. A total 414 valid responses were analyzed. The results are organized into subsections and supported by three tables. All tables are described within the text to highlight key findings.

##### 4.1 Demographic Traits of Participants

The demographic characteristics of the participants are represented in Table 1. This study analyzed 414 valid responses. The majority of respondents were aged 22 - 25 years (50.5%), followed by those aged 26 - 30 years (26.1%). The sample included 17.9% of participants aged 18–21 years, while the smallest group consisted of respondents aged 31–35 years (5.5%).

The sample consisted of a slightly higher proportion of female respondents (54.3%) than male respondents (45.7%). The predominance of young adults in the sample suggests their significant engagement with skincare content and social media, making them a suitable target population for this study.

**Table 1** Demographic Traits of Participants (N = 414)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18-21 years	74	17.9
	22-25 years	209	50.5
	26-30 years	108	26.1
	31-35 years	23	5.5
Gender	Male	189	45.7
	Female	225	54.3

##### 4.2 Key Variables of Descriptive Statistics

The study analyzed responses from 414 active social media users. The descriptive findings indicate that a significant proportion of respondents exhibit high engagement with social media platforms, with most reporting several hours of daily usage. This underscores the importance of social media as a primary source of skincare-related information and decision-making. Social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook have emerged as primary sources of skincare product information, reflecting contemporary digital consumption trends in Nepal.

A strong inclination toward product promotion was observed among respondents as indicated by the high mean score for consumers’ recommendation intention regarding skincare products ( $M = 4.61$ ,  $SD =$

[514]



0.697). Similarly, the mean score for social media influence was high ( $M = 4.43$ ,  $SD = 0.953$ ), indicating that consumer decisions are significantly influenced by interactive elements such as likes, comments, and shares. The mean score for influencer credibility was also high ( $M = 4.37$ ,  $SD = 0.990$ ), suggesting that Nepali skincare influencers are generally perceived as reliable. The consistently high mean values across all variables indicate that respondents generally agree on the importance of social media and influencer-related factors in shaping their skincare recommendation behavior.

**Table 2** Key Variables of Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Recommendation intention for skincare products	413	1	5	4.61	0.697
Influence of social media interactions (likes, comments, and shares) on purchase decisions	414	1	5	4.43	0.953
Perceived trustworthiness of Nepali skincare influencers	414	1	5	4.37	0.990

#### 4.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among consumers' recommendation intention for skincare products, influencer credibility, and social media impact. The results indicated that all variables exhibited strong and positive correlations. Consumers' recommendation intention for skincare products was strongly correlated with social media influence ( $r = 0.660$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), while influencer credibility also showed a strong positive correlation with recommendation intention ( $r = 0.640$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). A strong positive correlation was found between influencer credibility and social media influence ( $r = 0.698$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that credible influencers tend to enhance the effects of social media interactions.

These findings align with prior research in the digital marketing domain, highlighting the synergistic effect of social media engagement and source trustworthiness on consumer behavior, particularly in high involvement product categories such as skincare.

**Table 3** Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3
1. Likelihood to recommend skincare products	1		
2. Social Media influence	0.660**	1	
3. Influencer trustworthiness	0.640**	0.698**	1

#### 4.4 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the predictive relationship among influencer credibility, social media influence, and consumers' recommendation behavior for skincare products. The results indicate that these two variables collectively explained approximately 50% of the variance in s' recommendation behavior, with a  $R^2$  value of 0.498 and an adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.495, demonstrating the model's robust explanatory power. The ANOVA results indicated that the regression model was statistically significant ( $F = 203.151$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Social media influence was identified as the primary predictor of consumers' recommendation behavior ( $\beta = 0.416$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), followed by influencer credibility ( $\beta = 0.349$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that the interactive features of social media platforms—such as likes, comments, and content sharing—play more significant role in influencing skincare recommendation behavior than influencer credibility alone. Nonetheless, the significant effect of influencer credibility highlights the importance of authentic, trustworthy, and credible communication in encouraging consumers to recommend skincare products. The regression results support the proposed hypotheses, demonstrating that both social media influence and influencer credibility have a positive and statistically significant effect on recommendation intention for skincare products.

**Table 4** Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Predictor Variables	B	Std. Error	b	t	Sig
Constant	2.190	0.123	-	17.849	0.000
Social media influence	0.304	0.036	0.416	8.496	0.000
Influencer credibility	0.245	0.034	0.349	7.129	0.000

**Table 4.1** Model Summary of the Regression Analysis

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.706	0.498	0.495	0.495

**Table 4.2** ANOVA Results of the regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom (DF)	Mean Square	F-value	Significance value
Regression	99.554	2	49.777	203.151	0.000
Residual	100.460	410	0.245		
Total	200.015	412			

The ANOVA results confirm that the regression model is statistically significant. The regression degrees of freedom ( $df = 2$ ) represent the two predictor variables included in the model, whereas the residual degrees of freedom ( $df = 410$ ) reflect the unexplained variance. The large F-value ( $F = 203.151$ ) indicates that the independent variables collectively explain a significant portion of the variation in customers' recommendation intention for skincare products. The highly significant p-value ( $p < 0.001$ ) indicates that the observed relationships are unlikely to have occurred by chance, thereby reinforcing the validity of the findings.

**Table 4.3** Reliability Analysis of Measurement Scales

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Social media influence, influencer credibility, and recommendation intention	3	0.847

To assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales, Cronbach alpha was used. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.847 for the three-item scales exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7, thus, indicating satisfactory internal consistency and reliability and confirming the suitability of the instrument for further statistical analysis.

The survey findings indicate that Nepalese consumers show strong interest in skincare-related social media content. The high mean scores for recommendation intention, social media influence, and influencer credibility indicates that the respondents are inclined to recommend skincare products based on their online engagement and trust in credible influencers. These findings strongly highlight the importance of peer interactions, experience sharing, and interactive elements in shaping consumer decision-making in the skincare segment.

The correlation analysis showed that social media influence has a significant positive correlation with influencer credibility, as well as with consumers' recommendation intention for skincare products. This finding is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which posits that attitudes and subjective norm significantly influences behavioral intentions. The positive correlation between influencer credibility and recommendation intention supports the Elaboration Likelihood Model, which suggests that credible influencers act as effective peripheral cues in high-involvement product categories such as skincare.

The regression findings indicate that social media influence and influencer credibility have a significant impact on consumers' recommendation behavior, with social media influence demonstrating stronger predictive power. This suggests that interactive features of social media platforms such as likes,



comments, shares, and user- generate content - play a more influential role than influencer credibility alone. These findings contribute to the existing literature, which highlights the synergistic effects of social media engagement and influencers credibility on consumer behavior, and provide empirical evidence within the Nepalese skincare market.

**Table 5** Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Statement	Result	p-value	Decision
H1	Social media engagement positively influences recommendation intention (WOM)	Supported	$p < 0.001$	Accepted
H2	Influencer credibility positively influences recommendation intention (WOM)	Supported	$p < 0.001$	Accepted
H3	Social media engagement is positively associated with influencer credibility	Supported	$p < 0.001$	Accepted

All hypotheses were supported, as the relationships were statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), indicating strong positive relationships among the variables.

## 5. Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the impact of social media Marketing and influencer credibility on consumers' purchase intentions for skincare products in Nepal. The findings demonstrate that both social media influence and influencer credibility significantly enhance consumers' intentions to recommend and purchase skincare products. These findings support the research objectives and confirm the proposed hypotheses.

The regression analysis revealed that social media influence is the strongest predictor of consumer recommendation behavior, followed by influencer credibility. This suggests that interactions on social media platforms, including product reviews, shares, comments, and likes, play a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes toward skincare products. This finding corroborates with prior research, which indicates that social media engagement enhances consumer trust and purchase intention.

The findings align with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which posits that behavioral intention is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This study demonstrates how social media interactions and influencer endorsements act as social and informational influences that shape consumers' decisions to purchase skincare products. In addition, the results support the Elaboration the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). According to this theory, consumers can be influenced through both central and peripheral processing routes. In the skincare sector, consumers often rely on peripheral cues, such as influencer credibility, attractiveness, and popularity, when making purchasing decisions. The positive relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention indicates that consumers place trust in influencers when evaluating skincare products.

Furthermore, the results can be interpreted using the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action). social media marketing has the potential to attract attention through visual content, generate interest through product demonstrations, stimulate desire through influencer recommendations, and ultimately lead to action in the form of product purchase or recommendation. This demonstrates the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies in guiding consumers during each stage of the decision-making process. (Yadav et al., 2025).



The results of this study are consistent with prior research on consumer behavior and digital marketing, which indicates that purchase intention is significantly influenced by electronic word-of-mouth and social media marketing, particularly for high-involvement products such as cosmetics. However, this study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence from Nepal, where research on the cosmetics industry remains limited.

In conclusion, the findings confirm that Nepalese consumers rely significantly on influencer recommendations and social media platforms when making skincare purchase decisions. Consequently, to enhance consumer trust and product promotion, skincare companies should focus on developing effective social media marketing strategies and the collaboration with reputable influencers.

## 6. Conclusion

The primary aim of this research was to examine the relationship between social media marketing influencer credibility, and the purchase decisions of Nepali consumers regarding skincare products. A qualitative research design was employed, and data were collected from a sample of 414 active social media users to provide insights into online platforms influence consumer behavior in the developing skincare sector in Nepal. These results indicate that social media influence and influencer credibility significantly increase the likelihood of product recommendation, with social media influence emerging as the strongest predictor. These findings highlight the importance of interactive communication, information sharing of information and engaging content in influencing consumers' recommendation behavior. The strong influence of influencer credibility suggests that consumers are more likely to rely influencers when making purchasing decisions. The study contributes to scholarly literature by applying the Theory of Planned Behavior, the Elaboration Likelihood Model, and the AIDA model to the Nepalese skincare context, thereby addressing a significant gap by providing empirical evidence from a rapidly developing region where social media usage is growing. From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that the Nepalese skincare firms should focus on developing strong social media content and collaborating with the reputable influencers o build consumer trust and encourage recommendation behavior.

his study has several limitations, despite providing important insights. The primarily focused on individuals aged 18 to 35, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other age groups. The study also examined only two key predictors; therefore, future research can explore additional variables as mediators or moderators, such as electronic word-of-mouth, brand loyalty, perceived risk, and trust. Future research could employ qualitative or mixed method approaches to gain a deeper understanding of consumers preferences.

These findings suggest that cosmetics companies in Nepal should focus on interactive social media content that enhances user engagement, rather than relying solely on traditional advertising. Collaborating with trustworthy influencers can help build consumer trust and encourage product recommendations. Brands should focus on fostering authentic communication, providing clear product information, and delivering targeted content to build strong customer relationships and encourage advocacy.

This study concludes by affirming the substantial influence of social media marketing on the formulation of skincare recommendation intentions in Nepal. Understanding these dynamics is essential for researchers and practitioners seeking to develop effective marketing strategies in the skincare industry, as digital platforms continue to shape consumer purchasing behavior.

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