

Research on Impact of Female College Students' Beauty Consumption on Industry Marketing Strategies

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Abstract. This study examines the significant influence of female college students' beauty consumption behavior on the marketing strategies within the beauty industry. Recognizing the pivotal role this demographic plays in shaping beauty trends and driving market dynamics, the research delves into how brands can effectively engage with this influential group. Through case studies of successful brands like Fenty Beauty and Glossier, the paper illustrates the power of inclusivity, authenticity, and community-driven marketing in building strong brand loyalty and enhancing consumer engagement. The study also identifies key challenges that beauty brands face, such as the necessity of staying attuned to rapidly evolving trends and the potential pitfalls of an over-reliance on digital marketing channels. To address these challenges, the research proposes strategic approaches, including cultivating authenticity through meaningful influencer partnerships, innovating product offerings based on deep consumer insights, and striking a balance between digital and experiential marketing efforts. Ultimately, this study underscores the business value of adapting marketing strategies to the evolving preferences of female college students, offering practical guidance for brands seeking to strengthen their market relevance and maintain a competitive edge in the dynamic beauty industry.

1 Introduction

1.1 Research background

With the development of the social economy and the enhancement of consumers' aesthetic consciousness, the beauty industry has become a rapidly growing field. According to statistics, the size of the global beauty market has continued to grow over the past few years and is expected to reach \$756 billion by 2025 [1]. One of the key drivers of this growth is the beauty consumption behavior of female college students, who represent a large and influential group of consumers. Female college students are at a unique stage in their lives where they are beginning to develop long-term consumption patterns, often driven by social media, peer influence, and changing standards of beauty. Because of their buying power and

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role as trendsetters, this demographic is particularly critical to the beauty industry, and its influence even radiates to broader consumer behavior.

The beauty industry has significantly increased its focus on this demographic, as seen in the growing number of products and marketing campaigns aimed at young women. Brands such as Glossier, Fenty Beauty, and Colorpop have successfully captured the attention of female college students through strategic use of social media, influencer partnerships, and inclusive beauty campaigns. According to a Pulse survey, 67 percent of female college students consider beauty and personal care products a necessity and 57 percent of female college students are willing to pay more for products that align with their personal values, such as sustainability and inclusion.

This study will deeply explore the complex relationship between the beauty consumption behavior of female college students and the marketing strategy of the beauty industry. In order to optimize their marketing strategies, companies need to take the time to understand this relationship in order to better align with the values, preferences, and behaviors of this key consumer group. The commercial value of this research is that it has the potential to guide beauty brands in developing more effective marketing campaigns, increasing customer engagement, and ultimately increasing sales. From a social perspective, the study is significant because it sheds light on broader cultural and social trends that influence young women's beauty standards and consumption patterns.

1.2 Literature review

In the academic field, research has explored the dynamics of beauty consumer behavior and its impact on marketing strategies. For example, a study by Yoo and Lee investigated the role of social media influencers in shaping young women's beauty consumption behavior [2]. Research has found that influencers significantly influence buying decisions by creating an ideal image that resonates with their target audience. The study also highlights the importance of authenticity and relevance in influencer marketing, showing that consumers are more likely to engage with brands they perceive as authentic and transparent.

However, despite the important contributions provided by these studies, there are still gaps in the literature regarding the direct impact of beauty consumer behavior on beauty brand marketing strategies, especially in the context of female college students. Most scholars focus on the influence of psychology, culture, and social media on beauty consumption behavior and pay more attention to the influence of social media influencers and psychological factors such as self-esteem and body image. However, few scholars have directly investigated the relationship between female college students' beauty consumption behavior and beauty brand marketing strategies. Specifically, there is a lack of research on how to systematically leverage insights into consumer behavior to optimize marketing strategies in the beauty industry. This gap highlights the need for a more integrated approach that combines consumer behavior analysis with strategic marketing insights.

1.3 Research framework

This paper aims to comprehensively analyze the influence of female college students' beauty consumption behavior on beauty brand marketing strategy and put forward optimization strategies on this basis to fill the research gap. To this end, this paper will first explore the key factors that promote the beauty consumption behavior of female college students and draw on existing literature and empirical data to find out the most influential psychological, social, and cultural factors. Next, this paper will analyze the marketing strategies currently employed by beauty brands and examine how they align with identified patterns of consumer behavior.

Finally, this paper will propose a set of optimized marketing strategies that take into account the subtle preferences and behaviors of female college students, with a focus on creating more personalized, inclusive, and sustainable marketing campaigns. By combining consumer behavior insights with strategic marketing analysis, this paper aims to provide practical recommendations for beauty brands to improve their market positioning and customer engagement in this key demographic.

2 Case description

Glossier is a good example of a beauty brand that has successfully targeted female college students through its marketing strategies. Founded in 2014 by Emily Weiss, Glossier has quickly become a cult favorite among young women, particularly those in college and early adulthood [3,4]. The brand's core philosophy is "skin first, makeup second," which resonates with a generation that values natural beauty, minimalism, and self-care. Glossier's product lineup includes skincare essentials, lightweight makeup products, and body care, all designed to enhance natural beauty rather than mask it.

Glossier's rise to prominence can be largely attributed to its innovative use of social media, particularly Instagram, where the brand engages with its audience through user-generated content, relatable influencer partnerships, and aesthetically pleasing visuals. The brand encourages customers to share their experiences with Glossier products using the hashtag #glossier, creating a community-driven marketing approach that fosters loyalty and engagement. This strategy aligns perfectly with the beauty consumption behavior of female college students, who are highly influenced by social media and peer recommendations.

Since its inception, Glossier has seen remarkable growth, expanding its product range and global presence while maintaining a good connection with its target audience. The brand's focus on inclusivity and accessibility has also played a significant role in its success. Glossier offers a wide range of shades to accommodate diverse skin tones, and its marketing campaigns often feature models of different ethnicities and body types, reflecting the brand's commitment to diversity. This approach has been particularly appealing to female college students, who increasingly prioritize brands that reflect their values of inclusivity and representation.

Glossier's direct-to-consumer model has also been a key factor in its growth. By selling products directly through its website and flagship stores, Glossier has been able to maintain a close relationship with its customers, gathering data that is important to their preferences and behaviors. This data-driven approach allows the brand to continually refine its product offerings and marketing strategies to satisfy the needs of its target audience better.

The brand's success among female college students can also be attributed to its pricing strategy. Glossier products are positioned at a mid-range price point, making them accessible to college students who are often budget-conscious but willing to invest in quality products that align with their personal values. The brand's commitment to sustainability, with initiatives like recyclable packaging and environmentally friendly production practices, further enhances its appeal to this demographic.

The case of Glossier illustrates how beauty brands can successfully tailor their marketing strategies to align with the beauty consumption behavior of female college students. By understanding the values, preferences, and social influences that drive this demographic's purchasing decisions, Glossier has been able to create a strong brand identity. Also, she has the ability to cultivate a loyal customer base. This study aims to build on such examples, exploring how other beauty brands can optimize their marketing strategies to better connect with and serve this influential consumer group.

3 Analysis on the problem

3.1 Impact identified

3.1.1 Impact on brand loyalty and consumer engagement

For example, Fenty Beauty, launched by Rihanna in 2017, represents a successful case of how addressing the specific beauty consumption behavior of female college students can significantly enhance brand loyalty and consumer engagement [5]. The brand's commitment to inclusivity, offering an extensive range of foundation shades, directly appealed to a diverse customer base, including female college students who have historically faced challenges in finding products that match their skin tones. Fenty Beauty's marketing strategy, which includes extensive social media campaigns and collaborations with influencers, has created a strong sense of community and belonging among its users.

The inclusivity and authenticity demonstrated by Fenty Beauty have resulted in high levels of brand loyalty and engagement from female college students. This demographic feels represented and valued, which translates to increased brand advocacy and repeat purchases. The brand's ability to connect with the target audience on a personal level has set a new standard in the beauty industry, showcasing the powerful impact of aligning marketing strategies with consumer values and needs.

3.1.2 Impact on market differentiation and competitive advantage

Glossier's rise to prominence in the beauty industry can be attributed to its effective market differentiation strategy, which leverages the beauty consumption behavior of female college students. The brand's focus on natural beauty, minimalism, and community-driven marketing has differentiated it from traditional beauty brands. By engaging with its audience through social media and emphasizing user-generated content, Glossier has created a unique brand identity that resonates strongly with young women.

This differentiation has provided Glossier with a competitive advantage in a crowded market. The brand's ability to carve out a distinct niche and build a loyal customer base among female college students has helped it maintain a strong market position. The insights gained from understanding this demographic's preferences have allowed Glossier to continuously refine its product offerings and marketing strategies, keeping it ahead of competitors who may not fully grasp the needs of this consumer group.

3.2 Problem identified analysis

3.2.1 Inconsistent alignment with emerging beauty trends

Many beauty brands have successfully targeted female college students, but some struggle to stay current with rapidly changing beauty trends and preferences [6]. For instance, brands that rely heavily on traditional marketing approaches may fail to capture the attention of this demographic, which is highly influenced by social media trends and influencer recommendations. An example of this problem is seen with certain legacy beauty brands that have been slow to adapt their marketing strategies to align with the values and interests of younger consumers.

This misalignment can result in decreased relevance and engagement among female college students. Brands that do not keep pace with emerging trends or fail to address the

evolving preferences of this demographic risk losing market share to more agile competitors. To address this problem, beauty brands need to implement agile marketing strategies that allow them to quickly adapt to changing consumer preferences and stay connected with their target audience.

3.2.2 *Overemphasis on digital marketing channels*

While digital marketing channels, particularly social media, play a crucial role in reaching female college students, an overreliance on these platforms can be problematic. For example, brands that focus solely on digital marketing may neglect other important touchpoints, such as in-store experiences or experiential marketing events, which can also influence consumer behavior.

This overemphasis on digital channels can lead to missed opportunities for engagement and brand-building in other contexts. Female college students, while highly active online, also value in-person interactions and tangible experiences that reinforce their connection with a brand. Brands that fail to balance their digital marketing efforts with other forms of engagement may struggle to create a comprehensive and impactful brand experience.

4 Suggestions

4.1 Enhancing brand loyalty and consumer engagement

One of the most effective ways to build brand loyalty among female college students is through strategic partnerships with influencers who resonate with this demographic. However, the key to successful influencer marketing lies in authenticity. Brands should collaborate with influencers who genuinely align with their values and who can create relatable content that reflects the brand's ethos. For example, Fenty Beauty's collaboration with a diverse range of micro-influencers who use the brand's products in their daily lives has proven effective [7]. These influencers are not just endorsing products but are part of the brand's community, which strengthens the connection with their audience. To replicate this success, beauty brands should seek out influencers who are not only popular but also trusted by their followers, ensuring that their endorsements feel genuine and relatable.

Another approach to enhancing consumer engagement is by fostering a sense of community around the brand. Female college students are drawn to brands that offer more than just products; they seek brands that provide a platform for connection and self-expression. Glossier's success can be largely attributed to its community-driven marketing strategy, which encourages customers to share their experiences and feedback [8]. This creates a two-way dialogue between the brand and its consumers, making them feel valued and heard. Beauty brands should consider implementing similar initiatives, such as user-generated content campaigns, online forums, or even virtual events where consumers can interact directly with the brand and each other. By creating a strong community, brands can increase customer loyalty and turn satisfied customers into brand advocates.

Personalization is crucial in today's beauty market, especially for a demographic that values individualism and tailored solutions. Female college students are more likely to engage with brands that offer personalized experiences, whether it's through customized product recommendations, personalized content, or tailored marketing messages. Brands can leverage data analytics and AI technology better to understand the preferences and behaviors of their customers, enabling them to create personalized marketing strategies. For example, by analyzing purchasing data and social media activity, a brand could recommend products that are likely to appeal to specific segments of female college students. This approach not

only improves customers' shopping experience but also increases the possibility of repeated purchases and long-term brand loyalty for enterprises.

4.2 Achieving market differentiation and competitive advantage

To stand out in a crowded market, beauty brands must innovate with products that meet the specific needs and desires of female college students. This demographic is constantly seeking new and unique beauty solutions, which means that brands must stay ahead of trends and anticipate their consumers' evolving preferences. This can be achieved by conducting regular market research, including surveys and focus groups, to gather insights directly from the target audience [9]. Additionally, brands can monitor social media trends and online beauty communities to identify emerging preferences. For instance, the rise of clean beauty and skincare-first routines among young consumers has led to the development of products that focus on health-conscious and minimalistic beauty. By staying attuned to these shifts and quickly adapting product offerings, brands can maintain a competitive edge and keep their products relevant to the needs of female college students.

While digital marketing is crucial for reaching female college students, brands should also explore experiential marketing strategies to create memorable and impactful experiences. In-person events, pop-up shops, and interactive installations can provide opportunities for consumers to engage with the brand in a tangible way [10]. These experiences help to build emotional connections with the brand, which can be more impactful than online interactions alone. For example, a brand could host a campus tour with beauty workshops, where students can try out products, receive personalized beauty consultations, and interact with influencers in a live setting. This not only enhances brand visibility but also creates a lasting impression that can drive loyalty and word-of-mouth promotion. Combining digital and experiential marketing ensures that the brand is engaging with consumers on multiple levels, both online and offline.

In today's beauty market, sustainability and ethical practices are not just buzzwords; they are essential components of a brand's identity, particularly for female college students who are increasingly concerned about the environmental and social impact of their purchases. Brands that prioritize sustainability, such as using eco-friendly packaging, sourcing ingredients responsibly, and committing to cruelty-free practices, can differentiate themselves from competitors. Moreover, transparency about these practices is key. Brands should clearly communicate their sustainability initiatives through all marketing channels, ensuring that consumers are aware of the brand's commitment to ethical practices. For example, brands like Lush and The Body Shop have successfully integrated sustainability into their core business models, which has resonated well with younger consumers. By embracing and promoting ethical practices, beauty brands can not only attract conscientious consumers but also build a strong and positive brand reputation.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Key findings

This study explored the influence of female college students' beauty consumption behavior on the marketing strategies of the beauty industry and provided strategies for optimizing these marketing approaches. The research identified significant impacts and challenges within the beauty industry related to targeting this demographic.

Firstly, it was found that female college students' beauty consumption behaviors significantly influence brand loyalty and consumer engagement. Case studies such as Fenty

Beauty and Glossier demonstrated that brands that authentically connect with this demographic through inclusivity and community-driven marketing are more likely to foster strong brand loyalty and advocacy.

Secondly, the analysis highlighted the importance of market differentiation and competitive advantage. Brands like Glossier have successfully differentiated themselves by focusing on minimalism and community engagement, which aligns with the values and preferences of female college students. This strategic differentiation is crucial for maintaining a competitive edge in a crowded market.

The identified problems included the difficulty some brands face in staying aligned with rapidly changing beauty trends and the overemphasis on digital marketing at the expense of experiential engagement. These challenges can lead to decreased relevance and missed opportunities for consumer interaction.

To address these issues, the paper provided two key suggestions. The first focused on enhancing brand loyalty and consumer engagement through authenticity in influencer partnerships, community-driven marketing, and personalization of customer experiences. The second suggestion emphasized achieving market differentiation and competitive advantage by innovating product offerings based on consumer insights, balancing digital and experiential marketing, and embracing sustainability and ethical practices.

5.2 Research significance

The findings of this study have significant implications for both the beauty industry and individual beauty brands. Understanding the consumption behaviors of female college students is crucial for the development of targeted marketing strategies that resonate with this influential demographic. As this group continues to shape beauty trends and consumer preferences, brands that effectively engage with them can secure long-term loyalty and market relevance.

From a business perspective, this research provides valuable insights that can help beauty brands refine their marketing strategies, improve product offerings, and enhance customer engagement. The suggested strategies offer practical guidance for brands looking to differentiate themselves in a competitive market, ensuring they remain attuned to the evolving needs and values of female college students.

Moreover, this research contributes to the broader understanding of consumer behavior in the beauty industry, highlighting the importance of aligning marketing strategies with consumer values such as authenticity, inclusivity, and sustainability. By addressing these aspects, brands can not only improve their market position but also contribute to the overall development of the industry by setting new standards for ethical and consumer-focused practices.

5.3 Limitations

While this study offers valuable insights, it is not without limitations. One significant limitation is the reliance on secondary data, which, while informative, may not capture the most current trends and behaviors of female college students. The lack of primary data, such as surveys or interviews, limits the depth of understanding of the specific motivations and attitudes driving this demographic's beauty consumption behavior.

In the future, the studies should address these limitations by incorporating primary data collection methods, such as surveys, focus groups, or interviews with female college students. This would provide a more nuanced understanding of their beauty consumption patterns and how these influence their perceptions of beauty brands. Additionally, longitudinal studies

could offer insights into how these behaviors evolve over time and in response to changing social and cultural dynamics.

Furthermore, future research could explore the impact of emerging technologies, such as augmented reality (AR) and artificial intelligence (AI), on beauty consumption behaviors and marketing strategies. As these technologies become more integrated into the beauty industry, understanding their influence on consumer behavior will be critical for brands looking to stay ahead of the curve.

In conclusion, while this paper provides a solid foundation for understanding the influence of female college students' beauty consumption behavior on marketing strategies, there is ample room for further exploration and refinement. By addressing the identified limitations and pursuing additional lines of inquiry, future research can continue to build on these findings and contribute to the ongoing development of effective, consumer-centric marketing strategies in the beauty industry.

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