

Skincare Endorsers' Influence on Gender-Neutral Purchase Intention

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history: Published: 26 May 2026</p> <p>Keywords: Skincare Endorsers Gender-Neutral Purchase Intention Expertise Trustworthiness Attractiveness Attitude Subjective Norms Perceived Behavioral Control</p>	<p>This study examined the influence of skincare endorsers on male students' gender-neutral purchase intention at Capiz State University Main Campus. Guided by the Source Credibility Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior, the research analyzed how expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness affect attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control towards gender-neutral skincare. The study used a quantitative, non-experimental cross-sectional survey design with 342 male college students selected through stratified sampling. Data were gathered using validated, reliable structured questionnaires and evaluated using means, Pearson's r, and regression analysis. Results indicate that skincare endorsers exert a high level of influence, with attractiveness emerging as the most impactful dimension. Respondents also demonstrated a high level of gender-neutral purchase intention, indicating a strong willingness among male students to use skincare products regardless of gender branding. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant positive relationship between endorser influence and purchase intention. Regression results further established that endorser influence significantly predicts purchase intention, with attractiveness being the strongest predictor. The study concludes that endorsers play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior in the emerging gender-neutral market. Recommendations include developing marketing strategies that balance visual appeal with transparency and expertise. Future research should expand the demographic scope to compare gender-based and gender-neutral intentions across broader populations. At the same time, educational institutions should promote media literacy to help students critically evaluate influencer marketing.</p>

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In recent years, skincare products have gained widespread popularity, making them one of the leading sectors of the global cosmetics industry. While skincare products are increasingly popular, most previous research has focused more on cosmetics. (Lee et al. 2019). According to Garje (2025), the global skincare market is experiencing rapid growth driven by rising consumer awareness of personal care, higher disposable incomes, and advancements in dermatological science. It is expected to reach USD 189.3 billion by 2031 with a CAGR of 4.8% from 2024 to 2031.

Furthermore, Castillo et al. (2022) stated that social media influencers have emerged as effective endorsers who promote beauty products and build their reputation on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. The growth of social media influencers has encouraged companies to adopt influencer marketing to promote their brands in the digital landscape. Lim et al (2022) note that social media influencers are effective in promoting brands, as social media strongly influences consumers' purchasing decisions. Research indicates that celebrity endorsements can greatly influence consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions (Adam & Hussain, 2017).

According to Nickel & Blijlevens (2025), while marketing traditionally distinguishes between male and female consumers, contemporary approaches increasingly favor gender-neutral visuals in advertising. Brands are increasingly embracing gender-neutral branding by offering inclusive products and authentic narratives that align with the cultural movement toward gender fluidity, especially among younger consumers (Murtell, 2019).

Moreover, the literature on skincare endorsements primarily examines how endorsers influence consumers' purchasing decisions in the beauty industry. However, many of these studies primarily focus on female consumers (Novilia et al., 2023) and do not address the influence of skincare endorsers on gender-neutral purchase intention, particularly among male students. The limited studies on this topic create research gaps in both knowledge and empirical evidence, and this study will focus on the influence of skincare endorsers on gender-neutral purchase intention.

Additionally, Aulia (2025) reported that celebrity endorsement primarily targets female consumers, leaving unexplored the influence of endorsers on male and gender-neutral audiences. In contrast, some studies focus on male consumers. For example, Ferry and Astuti (2021) examined the attitude and behavioral intention of urban male consumers toward skincare products, but their study did not consider a gender-neutral audience.

In the local context, Lim et al. (2022) found that social media influencers are more effective than celebrities in shaping the purchase intentions of female skincare consumers. However, their study focused solely on female consumers, leaving unexplored the influence of endorsers on gender-neutral purchase intentions locally.

Therefore, the influence of skincare endorsers on different sexes remains largely unexamined. This study will fill this gap by focusing on the influence of skincare endorsers on gender-neutral purchase intentions of male students, providing both empirical and practical insights for skincare brands.

This study utilized Source Credibility Theory developed by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley in 1953, and the Theory of Planned Behavior developed by Icek Ajzen in 1991. Source Credibility Theory explained how skincare endorsers' expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness influenced male students' gender-neutral purchase intentions, while the Theory of Planned Behavior examined how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control shaped these intentions. Together, the two theories provided a comprehensive view of how skincare endorsers influenced male students' purchase intention.

This study was unique because it examined how skincare endorsers influenced male students' gender-neutral purchase intentions for skincare products. While most studies have focused on females, this study will examine the influence of skincare endorsers on male students' gender-neutral purchase intention.

The purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional survey study was to test the Source Credibility Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior, which explained that skincare endorsers influenced gender-neutral purchase intention. This study aimed to recruit male students at Capiz State University Main Campus. The independent variables, expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, were defined as the perceived characteristics of skincare endorsers that influenced the gender-neutral purchase intention of male students. The dependent variables, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, were defined as the psychological determinants that together shaped male students' intention to purchase gender-neutral skincare products endorsed by skincare endorsers.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The main objective of this study was to examine how skincare endorsers influence male students' gender-neutral purchase intentions through the lenses of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. It explored how these perceptions shape purchase intention by analyzing the male students' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Specifically, the researchers aim to answer the following questions (1) the level of influence of skincare endorsers on gender-neutral purchase intention in terms of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness; (2) the level of gender-neutral purchase intention of male students in terms of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control; (3) is there a significant relationship between the level of influence of skincare endorsers as to expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness and the level of gender-neutral purchase intention as to attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control; (4) does the level of influence of skincare endorsers predict the gender-neutral purchase intention; and (5) what insights can be derived from the results of the study.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Hovland's Source Credibility Theory

Source Credibility Theory emphasizes that the effectiveness of a message largely depends on the perceived credibility of the source delivering it. Key elements of credibility include expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, which influence how persuasive a communicator is (Hovland et al., 1953). By applying this theory, it highlights how skincare endorsers' characteristics, such as their reputation, knowledge, and presentation, can significantly impact male students' purchase intention.

Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

TPB asserts that human behavior is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). By applying this theory, it explains how male students' intentions to purchase gender-neutral skincare products are shaped not only by their personal attitudes toward the product but also by social pressures and their perceived ability to make such purchases.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Expertise of Skincare Endorsers

According to Ericsson (2018), expertise is defined as a consistently high level of performance in a specific domain, distinguished by deep knowledge, specialized skills, and the intuitive ability to solve complex problems efficiently. Rather than being limited to the accumulation of information, expertise involves an organized knowledge structure that enables individuals to recognize meaningful patterns and make accurate decisions more quickly than non-experts. Its significance lies in its role as a cognitive shortcut in complex environments, serving as a heuristic for trust. In this way, expertise reduces the mental effort required for individuals to evaluate the quality of products, services, or information. By relying on expert judgment, consumers can reduce uncertainty, minimize risk, and achieve more effective outcomes in both professional and everyday decision-making contexts.

According to Ohanian (1990) and later supported by Pornpitakpan (2016), Source Credibility Theory holds that the effectiveness of a message largely depends on how the audience perceives the source's expertise and trustworthiness. Individuals who are recognized as experts tend to have greater persuasive power because their recommendations are assumed to be based on objective knowledge and professional experience. Supporting this view, Spry et al. (2017) found that expert endorsements significantly increase consumers' perceived product quality and purchase intention compared to endorsements from non-experts or celebrities alone. In addition, Komiak and Benbasat (2019) explain that audiences process information from experts more systematically, as expert sources are seen as more credible and reliable, thereby reducing the skepticism typically associated with advertising messages.

In the context of the skincare industry, Ladhari and Mathur (2020) argue that these theoretical perspectives help explain the increasing use of dermatologist- and aesthetician-led marketing strategies. Because skincare products involve complex biological and chemical processes that are often difficult for consumers to understand, individuals tend to rely on experts such as dermatologists

and cosmetic chemists when making product decisions. These experts act as interpretive intermediaries, translating scientific and technical information into practical consumer guidance. As a result, expert endorsements do more than promote products; they also validate claims regarding safety and effectiveness. Overall, existing research indicates that leveraging marketing expertise not only increases immediate sales but also strengthens long-term brand trust, enhances perceived value, and fosters consumer loyalty by reducing uncertainty and increasing confidence in purchasing decisions.

2.2 *Trustworthiness of Skincare Endorsers*

Source Credibility Theory provides the foundation for understanding trustworthiness in influencer marketing, positing that the persuasiveness of a marketing message relies mainly on the source's perceived expertise and honesty. Ohanian (1990) and Lou & Yuan (2019) define trustworthiness as the listener's level of confidence in and acceptance of the speaker's integrity and intent; this perspective is corroborated by Djafarova and Bowes (2021), who highlight the ongoing relevance of these attributes in modern digital landscapes. Within this domain, scholars suggest that perceived sincerity serves as a critical filter, allowing consumers to assess the authenticity of an endorsement before deciding to purchase.

In the skincare industry, the influencer's role has shifted from a mere promotional agent to a trusted advisor. Belanche et al. (2021) maintain that because skincare is a high-involvement category due to the direct impact of products on health, consumers view influencers as essential gatekeepers of product quality. Research indicates that when influencers prioritize transparency about ingredient safety and their personal use, they cultivate a parasocial relationship with their audience. This connection effectively lowers the consumer's perceived risk, which reinforces the influencer's reputation as a dependable source of beauty guidance.

Current studies consistently link influencer transparency to increased consumer trust. De Veirman et al. (2019) contend that when influencers are perceived as unbiased and honest, their effectiveness in shaping consumer behavior rises significantly. This sentiment is echoed by Xiao et al. (2020), who argue that perceived sincerity acts as the most significant driver of trust in social media marketing environments. These findings suggest that when followers perceive an endorser as genuinely concerned for their well-being rather than merely incentivized by brand partnerships, both engagement levels and conversion rates tend to improve.

The measurement of trustworthiness involves a multifaceted approach, typically utilizing scales that evaluate an endorser's perceived truthfulness, honesty, and altruistic intent. Analysts identify specific indicators—such as the delivery of accurate product information and the alignment between an influencer's personal values and the products they endorse as vital components of this evaluation. Furthermore, Schouten et al. (2020) observe that because contemporary consumers are highly skilled at identifying scripted or "canned" advertisements, the assessment of "sincere advocacy" has become a necessary metric for brands. Establishing these measurable indicators enables researchers to translate the abstract concept of trust into concrete, actionable data.

2.3 *Attractiveness of Skincare Endorsers*

The construct of physical attractiveness within influencer marketing is frequently anchored in the "halo effect," a cognitive bias whereby individuals attribute favorable traits such as intelligence, kindness, or professional competence to those who are physically appealing. According to Patzer (2018), physical beauty functions as an initial heuristic, effectively capturing consumer attention amidst the density of today's digital media. Within the specific context of skincare, researchers observe that this effect is notably strong; findings suggest that when an endorser displays a radiant and healthy appearance, consumers intuitively equate those physical characteristics with the actual efficacy of the promoted skincare regimen.

In the modern digital landscape, scholars such as Khamis et al. (2017) emphasize that attractiveness encompasses far more than mere aesthetic appeal, extending to likability and personal charm. They maintain that influencers deliberately cultivate a "micro-celebrity" persona that is both aspirational and relatable. This duality of being physically striking yet personable enables influencers to generate substantial engagement. Furthermore, Jin and Muqaddam (2019) contend that consumers often transfer their positive associations with an attractive influencer to the associated brand, reinforcing the belief that the product serves as a vital tool for achieving a similar aesthetic standard.

Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that attractiveness exerts a significant influence on both visual attention and product perception. For instance, a study by Tantanatewin and Inkarojrit (2018) indicates that consumers are considerably more likely to interrupt their scrolling when they encounter aesthetically pleasing endorsers, providing a distinct competitive advantage for brands that use short-form video or image content. Additionally, researchers have identified that physical attractiveness operates as an "attentional magnet." When a product is paired with an appealing face, visual processing is enhanced; consequently, consumers report a higher perception of product quality, as they frequently presume the influencer's appearance is a direct consequence of the skincare products being showcased.

In measuring attractiveness, marketing research typically evaluates physical appeal, charm, and the perceived "fit" between an influencer's presentation and the brand's promise. Modern frameworks, such as those proposed by Lou and Yuan (2019), suggest that attractiveness should be evaluated as a core driver of purchase probability. As consumers grow increasingly visually literate, they tend to favor endorsers whose overall presentation signals reliability. By quantifying these indicators, researchers can demonstrate that physical appeal is not merely a superficial quality but a strategic asset that validates a brand's claims and bolsters consumer confidence.

2.4 *Attitude of Consumers Towards Skincare Endorsers*

Consumer attitude is a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by a blend of psychological frameworks, societal shifts, and strategic branding. At its core, Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior posits that an individual's internal beliefs and feelings serve as foundational predictors of future actions. Wardhana (2024) further clarifies this by positioning attitude as a central mediator that links a consumer's assessment of a product's value to their ultimate intention to buy, noting that this connection is particularly strong when consumers engage in deep, cognitive evaluation of a product (Petkowicz et al., 2024).

The skincare industry is currently navigating a significant cultural pivot toward inclusivity. Gogoi and Sinha (2024) observe that the movement toward gender-neutral branding is a vital adaptation to consumers who are increasingly moving away from traditional, binary stereotypes. This is mirrored in the way male grooming is being rebranded; as noted by LSPR Institute of Communication and Business (2026), men are increasingly prioritizing skincare as a fundamental health practice rather than a superficial luxury. Research indicates that when brands adopt inclusive messaging, they foster positive consumer attitudes that effectively mitigate traditional anxieties surrounding gendered grooming habits (Emerald, 2026).

Beyond internal motivations, attitude development is heavily influenced by social and external pressures. According to studies on influencer dynamics, the credibility of an endorser facilitates a "meaning transfer" that is essential for shaping consumers' perceptions of a brand (Atlantis Press, 2024). When an influencer is trusted and aligns with a consumer's values, particularly regarding inclusivity, they provide social validation that solidifies the consumer's positive attitude. This process is further bolstered by the perceived functional or social benefits of the product itself, such as improved skin health or a more professional appearance, which serve as core catalysts for these attitudes (GAS Publishers, 2026).

Ultimately, a strong brand-consumer relationship is built on a cycle of alignment. Srivastava et al. (2022) explain that when a brand's marketing and packaging effectively mirror the consumer's own values, it creates a sense of harmony between the consumer's pre-existing mindset and the brand's identity. This convergence of personal values, social endorsement, and clear functional utility forms a durable, positive attitude that serves as the essential groundwork for long-term brand loyalty.

2.5 Subjective Norms of Consumers Towards Skincare Endorsers

Subjective norms constitute a vital element of consumer behavior, as they characterize the perceived social pressure to adopt or avoid certain actions. According to the foundational Theory of Planned Behavior, Ajzen (1991) suggests that subjective norms, when combined with attitudes and perceived behavioral control, serve as fundamental predictors of one's behavioral intentions. More recent findings support this perspective; for instance, Azad et al. (2023) observe that "social approval mechanisms" remain a dominant influence on younger generations, especially as they navigate peer-driven digital spaces. In this setting, purchase intention is notably heightened when consumers believe that their "reference groups" or social circles value specific grooming behaviors, essentially transforming individual preferences into a socially validated commitment (Zhang & Chen, 2023).

The influence of social dynamics is further reflected in the changing perceptions of masculinity and grooming. Historically, the skincare industry relied on strict gender lines; however, according to LSPR (2026), contemporary observations indicate a rapid evolution in these social expectations. The long-standing belief that skincare is inconsistent with masculinity is diminishing, as men increasingly view personal care as an essential aspect of health and self-enhancement rather than a contradiction of their gender identity. This cultural transition is significantly propelled by social media, where, according to research on influencer credibility, content creators act as essential catalysts for change (Atlantis Press, 2024). When influencers incorporate these routines into their own lives, they provide the social validation needed to reduce psychological barriers for male consumers. As a result, these figures act as "normative anchors," proving that skincare is both socially acceptable and highly desirable among modern male peer groups (Emerald, 2026).

The relationship between these subjective norms and actual purchase intention is well established in the personal care market. According to research on marketing effectiveness, when brands prioritize social acceptance by partnering with diverse and credible endorsers, they effectively capitalize on the consumer's need for social alignment to stimulate purchasing (GAS Publishers, 2026). Furthermore, as noted by Srivastava et al. (2022), when firms align their value propositions with these shifting norms, they foster stronger purchase intentions because consumers feel peers endorse their buying choices. Ultimately, the high purchase intention often observed among groups such as male students provides evidence of successful integration, where personal interests are reinforced by external social support and the ongoing normalization of gender-neutral grooming.

2.6 Perceived Behavioral Control of Consumers Towards Skincare Endorsers

Perceived behavioral control, a fundamental pillar of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), refers to the degree to which a person feels they have the requisite resources, abilities, and opportunities to perform a specific action. According to the foundational framework proposed by Ajzen (1991), this construct is vital because it serves as a primary driver of both the formation of intention and the execution of the behavior. Expanding on this, Wardhana (2024) asserts that the concept is closely linked to Bandura's self-efficacy theory; as consumers gain confidence in their capacity to make knowledgeable decisions, their perceived behavioral control rises, which in turn elevates their purchase intention. The availability of quality information frequently nurtures this sense of confidence; as noted by Azad et al. (2023) in their research on digital consumer behavior, when endorsers provide clear and honest product insights, they significantly boost consumer self-efficacy, making the buying process feel both manageable and approachable. Financial independence and environmental circumstances are also critical in defining this sense of control. According to recent economic research, personal financial resources act as a key enabler; for instance, when young professionals or students believe they have the necessary budget, they view purchasing personal care products as a decision well within their own influence (Zhang & Chen, 2023). This feeling of empowerment is further strengthened when external obstacles such as high costs, limited access, or low product availability are removed. As suggested by Petkowicz et al. (2024), when shoppers face fewer barriers in the retail space, they experience higher perceived control, which reduces purchase anxiety and streamlines the path from curiosity to purchase.

Empirical research consistently highlights that perceived behavioral control is a major factor influencing purchase intention within the skincare and personal care industry. According to Srivastava et al. (2022), when brands succeed in streamlining the consumer experience by using intuitive product packaging and transparent, accessible pricing models, they cater to consumers' desire for autonomy, ultimately reinforcing the intention to buy. In summary, the literature indicates that the high purchase intention often observed among student populations is a direct outcome of feeling well educated, financially secure, and confident in their shopping environment. As stated by GAS Publishers (2026), this mastery of the decision-making process, combined with the absence of

significant situational constraints, creates a scenario in which the intention to purchase skincare becomes an almost inevitable, self-determined outcome.

2.7 Influence of Skincare Endorsers on Gender-Neutral Purchase Intention

The efficacy of endorsers in marketing is predominantly anchored in Source Credibility Theory, which argues that the persuasiveness of a message depends on how the audience views the source. Consequently, consumers are more likely to accept product claims when they find the endorser credible, leading to positive shifts in attitudes, social norms, and behavioral control (Mansur & Azizan, 2024). Within this framework, the specific dimensions of attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise serve as key drivers of consumer psychological engagement and decision-making.

Physical attractiveness remains a cornerstone of effective endorsements, often acting as a peripheral cue that significantly enhances consumer engagement, particularly in the beauty and skincare sector (Weismuller et al., 2020). When endorsers are perceived as visually appealing, consumers are more likely to experience "halo effects," in which the endorser's beauty is cognitively transferred to the product, leading to more favorable evaluations and a higher perceived ease of purchase (AlFarraj et al., 2021). In the context of gender-neutral marketing, physical attractiveness serves to reduce the psychological barrier to entry, as consumers often associate the endorser's aesthetic appeal with the potential for personal enhancement regardless of gender.

Complementing this is the role of trustworthiness, defined by the perceived honesty, reliability, and integrity of the endorser. Research by Baig et al. (2022) highlights that trustworthiness is a primary determinant of long-term brand loyalty and behavioral outcomes. Unlike attractiveness, which may capture initial consumer attention, trustworthiness fosters the confidence necessary for consumers to finalize a purchase (Utami & Praswati, 2023). In the specific sphere of gender-neutral skincare, where traditional gender marketing tropes are often challenged, a trustworthy endorser serves as a validation mechanism, mitigating potential consumer skepticism about new or inclusive product categories.

While trustworthiness and attractiveness drive emotional and psychological connection, the dimension of expertise concerns the perceived knowledge, skills, and experience an endorser has with skincare products. Hussain and Ali (2021) suggest that while expertise is a statistically significant factor in shaping purchase intention, its impact is often context-dependent. Studies indicate that while expertise provides a rational basis for product choice, it often exerts a less pronounced influence than the emotional drivers of attractiveness and trust (Liu, 2022). Consequently, while expertise is essential for establishing credibility, it appears to be most effective when integrated with other persuasive attributes rather than functioning as a standalone driver.

Ultimately, the shift toward gender-neutral skincare necessitates a deeper understanding of how these attributes influence self-concept and decision-making. Recent findings suggest that exposure to diverse endorsers influences consumers' self-evaluation and perceived behavioral control, allowing them to align their purchase preferences with broader, non-gendered ideals (Meng et al., 2024). When consumers perceive a strong connection with an endorser's attributes, they are more likely to overcome traditional social norms and develop positive intentions toward gender-neutral products (Chekima et al., 2020). As noted by McCormick (2016) and reaffirmed by recent research (Mansur & Azizan, 2024), brands that successfully balance these traits—moving beyond superficial appeal to incorporate authentic expertise—are better positioned to foster strong, gender-inclusive purchase intentions in an increasingly conscientious market.

2.8 Theoretical Predictors of Gender-Neutral Purchase Intention

This study is theoretically grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which argues that an individual's behavioral intentions are driven by the interaction of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991; Cabeza-Ramírez et al., 2022). As marketing shifts toward gender-neutral and socially progressive product categories, the role of source credibility, specifically expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, has become a central determinant of these psychological drivers.

Traditional persuasion theory previously prioritized expertise as the primary indicator of credibility. However, recent research indicates a paradigm shift in digital and influencer-led environments. Sokolova and Kefi (2020) and Schouten et al. (2020) argue that modern audiences increasingly prioritize relatability and aesthetic appeal over formal authority cues. This shift is particularly relevant to attitude formation, where attractiveness serves as a powerful peripheral cue. As observed by Djafarova et al. (2017) and Lou and Yuan (2019), physically attractive and relatable endorsers enhance affective evaluations and foster identification processes. Supporting this, De Veirman et al. (2017) and Audrezet et al. (2020) argue that visual symbolism and identity representation often outweigh traditional informational persuasion when consumers evaluate emerging or socially progressive product categories. This is further supported by Ki et al. (2020) and Jin and Ryu (2020), who demonstrate that consumers respond more positively when endorsers resemble their lifestyles or aspirational selves. Consequently, brands adopting inclusive and progressive identity messaging, as explored by Pounders and Mabry-Flynn (2016), Choi and Rifon (2020), and Appel et al. (2020), can significantly reduce psychological resistance, strengthen engagement, and normalize gender-neutral consumption, as noted by Åkestam et al. (2017) and Kates (2018).

Beyond personal attitudes, the influence of endorsers extends to subjective norms, which represent the perceived social pressure to adopt or reject certain behaviors. Trustworthiness, defined as the perceived honesty and integrity of the source, functions as a critical mechanism for social validation (Chekima et al., 2020; Mansur & Azizan, 2024). When an influencer is viewed as authentic and committed to social values, they effectively normalize non-traditional consumption patterns (Lou et al., 2024; Saima & Khan, 2021). Furthermore, parasocial interactions, which are the one-sided relationships consumers form with influencers, allow individuals to internalize the values and behavioral expectations of figures they admire (Hwang & Zhang, 2018; Lee & Watkins, 2016). This internalization shapes social norms, particularly within younger demographics (Rahim et al., 2023; Shoukat et al., 2023).

Finally, the construct of perceived behavioral control—a consumer's sense of capability in navigating a purchase—is heavily influenced by the functional aspects of communication. Expertise remains vital for providing clear information and technical guidance to demystify new or unfamiliar product categories (Saima & Khan, 2021). When endorsers demonstrate competence, they

reduce uncertainty about the product, thereby empowering consumers (Ajzen, 1991). While expertise provides the functional confidence to act, attractiveness often serves as a peripheral route that lowers the perceived psychological barriers to entry, making products feel more approachable (Chekima et al., 2020; Rahim et al., 2023). As summarized by Mansur and Azizan (2024), while trust creates social comfort, the combination of functional expertise and the emotional ease provided by attractiveness ultimately empowers the consumer to act. Together, these studies suggest that the effectiveness of source credibility depends on which TPB component the marketer intends to influence: expertise for behavioral control, and attractiveness and trustworthiness for attitude and social validation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional survey design to examine the influence of skincare endorsers on male students' gender-neutral purchase intention. A survey-based method was employed to gather data. A quantitative approach was used in this study to collect numerical data, which were analyzed to determine patterns and relationships among variables. This method allowed for generalization to a larger population of respondents.

The study was cross-sectional, with data collected at a single point in time to assess male students' perceptions. It aimed to determine the influence of the independent variables (expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness) on the dependent variables (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control), which, in turn, influenced the outcome variable (purchase intention).

3.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Capiz State University Main Campus, where respondents were more likely to be engaged with digital beauty advertisements and social media influencers across various advertising channels. This specific location was selected because respondents had high exposure to digital beauty advertisements, making it an ideal location for studying the influence of male makeup endorsers on the purchase intentions of male consumers.

Data collection was carried out using online and face-to-face surveys, allowing respondents from this location within the university to participate, ensuring a more diverse sample.

3.3 Sampling Design

A stratified sampling method was employed to ensure that male students from each college department are proportionally represented in the study.

3.4 Respondents of the Study

The target population consisted of respondents from each college department of Capiz State University Main Campus; stratified sampling methods were employed to ensure that male students from each college department were proportionally represented in the study.

The study involved 342 male students, distributed across different college departments through proportional allocation. Specifically, the sample included (56.1%) or 192 respondents from the Bachelor of Industrial Technology (BIT), (27.2%) or 93 respondents from the College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology (CEAT), 10.2% (or 35) respondents from the College of Education (COED), and 6.4% (or 22) respondents from the College of Management (CM). These respondents were chosen because they represented a demographic exposed to influencer marketing.

3.5 Research Instruments

The research instrument for this study was a researcher-developed survey questionnaire designed to measure how skincare endorsers influence male students' gender-neutral purchase intention. The questionnaire was divided into three main sections: Part I consisted of 15 statements that measured the level of influence of skincare endorsers among male students, focusing on expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Part II: This section consisted of 15 statements designed to measure respondents' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control related to the influence of skincare endorsers. Part III: This section aimed to determine the profile of the respondents, specifically focusing on age, monthly allowance, college department, and social media platform used. Each statement was rated by respondents on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strong agreement and 5 indicating strong disagreement. They were encouraged to respond freely based on their perceptions of the skincare endorsers.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

In this study, the reliability and validity of the research instruments were carefully evaluated to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the findings. The instrument was designed to measure the influence of skincare endorsers on male students' gender-neutral purchase intention.

The reliability of an instrument refers to its consistency in measuring a concept across different instances. The Cronbach's alpha score of 0.90 indicates that the survey items consistently measure the intended constructs and yield similar results when used with a different sample of young adults. A score of 0.90 is generally considered excellent, confirming that this instrument can accurately capture the influence of skincare endorsers on respondents and on their gender-neutral purchase intention.

Validity refers to how effectively an instrument measures what it is designed to measure. This survey was developed based on established theories—Source Credibility Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior—which provided a solid theoretical foundation. The instrument also underwent expert review, which yielded an overall validity score of 4.67. This score indicates excellent content validity, confirming that the questionnaire items are highly relevant and appropriate for measuring the intended variables in the study.

Furthermore, the instrument was piloted, and feedback was gathered to refine and improve clarity, ensuring that the survey effectively captures the nuanced relationship between skincare endorsers and gender-neutral purchase intention among male students.

With this high reliability and established validity, the research instrument is well-suited to investigating the study's core objectives, enabling the collection of data that is both reliable and representative of the target population.

3.7 Data Gathering Procedures

The researchers employed a systematic procedure to ensure the collected data were valid, consistent, and aligned with the study's objectives. This study utilized a quantitative research approach to examine the influence of skincare endorsers on the gender-neutral purchase intention of male students at Capiz State University Main Campus. Before data collection, approval was obtained from the University Ethics Committee and the relevant university authorities. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their rights as participants through an informed consent form. Confidentiality, anonymity, and data privacy were strictly observed throughout the study.

To ensure the clarity, validity, and reliability of the research instrument, a pilot test was conducted with 30 male students who were similar to the actual respondents. The respondents who participated in the pilot test were excluded from the final sample to avoid bias. Feedback gathered from the pilot testing was used to revise and improve the questionnaire items for better comprehension and consistency. The instrument's reliability was further assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate internal consistency and ensure the questionnaire was suitable for data collection.

The actual data collection was conducted during the second semester of the academic year through both offline and online survey administration. Offline surveys were distributed personally to selected male students within Capiz State University Main Campus, while online surveys were administered using digital forms to increase accessibility and participation. The respondents were selected based on the study's inclusion criteria, specifically male students who were exposed to skincare endorsers and gender-neutral skincare content on social media platforms. Before completing the survey questionnaire, respondents were briefed on the study's objectives and asked to provide their voluntary consent to participate.

After retrieving the questionnaires, all responses were carefully checked, organized, and encoded. The researchers ensured that all collected data remained anonymous and accessible only to the research team. Data cleaning procedures were conducted to identify incomplete, inconsistent, or invalid responses, and questionnaires with significant missing data were excluded from the analysis. The final dataset was then encoded and processed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 for statistical analysis. These procedures ensured the collection of reliable and valid data to examine the influence of skincare endorsers on male students' gender-neutral purchase intention.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

The data gathered from respondents' responses underwent processing, including classification, organization, and presentation. It was then subjected to statistical analysis for detailed interpretation of the results. Statistical computations were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20, with the following statistical tools applied.

The researchers employed parametric tests, as the assumptions for these tests were met, including the normal distribution of the data (Pallant, 2016). Statistical tools, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, were used to examine the influence of skincare endorsers on gender-neutral purchase intention among male students.

For the first statement of the problem, regarding the level of influence of skincare endorsers on expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, descriptive statistics were used to assess these dimensions (Gray & Silver, 2014). Similarly, descriptive statistics were used to examine the level of gender-neutral purchase intention across attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

To examine the third statement of the problem, which focused on the relationship between skincare endorser characteristics and gender-neutral purchase intention, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) and its corresponding p -value were used to determine the strength and significance of the relationship (Pallant, 2016).

Finally, for the fourth statement of the problem, which aimed to identify the predictors of gender-neutral purchase intention, multiple regression analysis was conducted. The three independent variables—expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness—were tested to examine their predictive influence on attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Standardized coefficients (beta), t -values, and p -values were reported to assess the predictive power of each independent variable (Hair et al., 2019; Field, 2018).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This study required careful attention to ethical considerations to ensure the protection and well-being of respondents. First, informed consent is crucial, and respondents were provided with full details about the study's purpose, the procedures involved, and their rights, including the voluntary nature of participation and their right to withdraw. To maintain confidentiality and privacy, all personal information and respondents' responses were anonymized and securely stored, with access restricted to authorized personnel.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, with no form of coercion, and respondents will be free to skip any questions that make them uncomfortable. The survey was carefully designed to avoid triggering psychological discomfort, and respondents were provided with information on mental health resources in case they experienced any distress.

Additionally, after the survey, respondents were debriefed, offering further explanation of the study's goals and findings. Lastly, data integrity and reporting were upheld throughout the research process, ensuring that all findings are reported accurately and without any manipulation. These ethical practices ensure the study respects the rights, privacy, and well-being of all respondents.

During the preparation of this work, the researchers used AI-assisted tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini to support language refinement and presentation clarity. After using these tools, the manuscript was fact-checked, reviewed, and edited as needed. All citations and sources have been verified. The researchers take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

4. Findings

4.1 Level of Influence of Skincare Endorsers on Gender-Neutral Purchase Intention in Terms of Expertise, Trustworthiness, and Attractiveness

Table 3 presents the level of influence of skincare endorsers in terms of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, based on the mean scores of relevant statements. The grand mean for all three variables was 4.14, indicating a "high" level of influence of skincare endorsers.

Expertise. Based on the results, the mean scores range from 3.41 to 4.20 and are interpreted as "high." The results revealed a grand mean of 4.12 (SD = 0.42) for expertise, indicating that respondents generally perceive skincare endorsers as knowledgeable and capable of promoting gender-neutral skincare products across various social media platforms. This occurred because skincare products involve complex, technical information, prompting male students to rely on skincare endorsers who can simplify and explain these details. This suggested that brands should select endorsers who can effectively translate technical knowledge into clear and accessible content to enhance male students' confidence, as supported by Ladhari and Mathur (2020), who describe endorsers as "interpretive intermediaries," and by source credibility theory (Ohanian, 1990; Pornpitakpan, 2016), which explains that expertise increases message acceptance by lowering uncertainty.

Among the indicators, the item "skincare endorsers understand the features and benefits of the skincare products they endorse" had the highest mean score (M = 4.26, SD = 0.58), indicating "very high". This occurred because clearly explaining skincare product features and benefits helps male students more easily evaluate the product's effectiveness and relevance. This suggests that skincare endorsers who can clearly communicate product attributes are more effective in influencing purchase decisions, as they improve male students' understanding and trust. This is supported by Ericsson (2018), who emphasizes that expertise involves not only possessing knowledge but also the ability to apply and communicate it effectively, thereby strengthening persuasive impact.

The indicator "skincare endorsers provide useful, informative product information" (M = 4.18, SD = 0.58), interpreted as "high", indicating that respondents are strongly influenced by skincare endorsers who deliver clear and relevant product details because informative content reduces uncertainty and improves understanding, allowing male students to evaluate skincare products more easily and make quicker decisions. This suggests that brands should prioritize endorsers who clearly communicate product information, as this strengthens male students' confidence and reduces skepticism. This finding is supported by Komiak and Benbasat (2019), who explain that credible information is processed more systematically, leading to higher acceptance. This is supported by the Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990), which states that expertise enhances message effectiveness by improving clarity and reliability, confirming that informative content functions as a cognitive shortcut that supports consumer decision-making.

Similarly, the indicators "skincare endorsers have enough experience recommending skincare products" (M = 4.13, SD = 0.61) and "skincare endorsers are knowledgeable about the products they endorse" (M = 4.10, SD = 0.56) were also interpreted as "high", indicating that accumulated expertise strengthens male students' perception because experience and knowledge signal competence and reliability, allowing male students to trust the skincare endorser's recommendations more confidently. This suggests that brands should prioritize endorsers with proven experience and product knowledge, as these qualities help male students better understand skincare products, trust their quality, and feel more confident in purchasing them. This finding is supported by Spry et al. (2017), who found that expert endorsers improve consumer trust and evaluation by linking experience with credibility.

On the other hand, the indicator "skincare endorsers are credible sources of skincare information" had the lowest mean score (M = 3.93, SD = 0.63), although it still fell within the "high" category. This occurred because male students differentiate between general influencers and highly specialized experts, especially in a technical field like skincare. This suggested that endorsers need to strengthen their credibility by sharing clear, evidence-based information or working with skincare professionals, so that male students can better trust the information they provide. This is supported by Ladhari and Mathur (2020), who explain that in complex product categories, consumers rely more on sources that demonstrate the highest level of authority and validation.

Overall, these findings indicated that expertise plays a key role in helping male students understand and evaluate skincare products. This occurred because male students relied on clear explanations of product features, benefits, and usage to determine whether a product is suitable for their needs, making knowledgeable endorsers more influential in shaping their purchase decisions. This implies that effective endorsers must not only demonstrate expertise but also support their claims with evidence and consistent communication to strengthen both understanding and trust. These findings align with Source Credibility Theory, which explains that expertise enhances message acceptance by improving clarity and reducing uncertainty, making information more persuasive and actionable (Ohanian, 1990; Pornpitakpan, 2016).

Trustworthiness. Based on the results, the mean scores range from 3.41 to 4.20 and are interpreted as "high." The results revealed that the overall grand mean for trustworthiness was 3.99 (SD = 0.52), indicating that respondents generally perceive skincare endorsers as honest and reliable sources of information. This occurred because male students usually rely on endorsers who appear sincere when explaining product use, especially when deciding whether a skincare product is safe and suitable for their skin. This suggests that brands should choose endorsers who clearly explain their real experiences and avoid exaggerated claims, as this helps male students feel more certain in evaluating and using skincare products. This is supported by Djafarova and Bowes (2021), who emphasize that authenticity is essential in influencer marketing, as it determines whether consumers perceive endorsements as genuine.

The highest-rated indicator, "skincare endorsers are sincere when promoting skincare products" (M = 4.08, SD = 0.66), interpreted as "high", highlights the importance of authenticity. This occurred because sincerity signals genuine intent, leading male students to perceive endorsements as honest rather than purely commercial. This suggests that endorsers who share personal, realistic product

use are more effective at building trust among male students. This finding is supported by Xiao et al. (2020), who found that perceived concern for consumer well-being enhances credibility and strengthens consumer relationships.

The indicator “skincare endorsers prioritize consumers' well-being when endorsing skincare products” ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.65$), interpreted as “high”. This occurred because male students associated concern for well-being with safer and more responsible product recommendations, especially for products applied to the skin. This suggests that endorsers who explain both the benefits and the possible effects of products can strengthen trust and help male students make more careful decisions. This suggested that endorsers should emphasize consumer-centered messaging to reinforce trust and engagement (Xiao et al., 2020).

The indicators “skincare endorsers provide truthful information about skincare products” ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.65$) and “skincare endorsers can be trusted when giving skincare-related advice” ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.66$) were also interpreted as “high”. This occurred because male students relied on clear, accurate information to reduce uncertainty when choosing skincare products. This suggested that consistent and honest explanations help male students feel more confident in selecting and using products. This is supported by Belanche et al. (2021), who explain that trusted endorsers act as reliable guides, reducing consumer uncertainty and improving evaluation.

However, the indicator “skincare endorsers are honest in their product recommendations” obtained the lowest mean score ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.70$). This occurred because male students were aware that some endorsements were sponsored, which led them to question whether recommendations were genuine. This suggested that endorsers should avoid overly scripted content and instead show actual product use and honest opinions to maintain credibility. This finding is supported by Schouten et al. (2020), who note that modern consumers are increasingly critical of influencer marketing and require genuine advocacy to sustain trust.

Overall, these findings indicated that trustworthiness plays a crucial role in shaping how male students evaluate and accept skincare products, as it reduces skepticism and increases confidence in the information provided by endorsers. This implies that endorsers who consistently demonstrate genuine product use, provide balanced explanations, and communicate transparently are more effective at influencing purchase decisions. This finding supports the source credibility model, which holds that perceived honesty and sincerity strengthen persuasive communication by making messages more believable and easier to accept (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021; Ohanian, 1990).

Attractiveness. Based on the results, the mean scores ranging from 4.21 to 5.00 are verbally interpreted as “very high”. The results revealed a grand mean for attractiveness of 4.30 ($SD = 0.52$), indicating a very high level of influence.

This occurred because male students relied on the visible appearance of endorsers to judge whether a skincare product could produce noticeable results, especially when they had limited personal experience with such products. This suggested that brands should select endorsers whose skin condition and overall appearance clearly reflect the product's results, as this helps male students form quick, confident evaluations. This is supported by Jin and Muqaddam (2019), who explain that attractiveness enhances perceived credibility and effectiveness, especially for appearance-related products such as skincare.

The item “skincare endorsers' overall appearance makes the product look more effective” ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.68$), interpreted as “very high”, obtained the highest mean score. This occurred because male students directly associated the endorser's skin condition with the product's performance, making the product appear more reliable. This suggests that endorsers who visibly display clear, healthy skin are more convincing to male students when promoting skincare products. This is supported by Patzer (2018), who notes that a healthy appearance functions as a heuristic that leads consumers to trust product outcomes intuitively.

The indicator “the physical appearance of the skincare endorsers is appealing” ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.68$), also interpreted as “very high”. This occurred because male students formed initial judgments based on visual appeal, which influenced their perceptions of both the endorser and the product. This suggested that an appealing appearance helps create a positive impression, which in turn supports product evaluation. This is supported by Lou and Yuan (2019), who explain that attractiveness validates brand claims and enhances consumer confidence.

Similarly, the indicator “I am more likely to notice skincare products endorsed by attractive skincare endorsers” ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.75$), interpreted as “very high”. This occurred because male students paid more attention to visually appealing content while browsing social media, making attractive endorsers more noticeable than others. This suggests that attractiveness helps skincare products stand out and increases the chance that male students will consider them. This is supported by Tantanatewin and Inkarojrit (2018), who found that aesthetically pleasing content significantly increases user attention and interaction.

On the other hand, the indicators “skincare endorsers possess a high degree of charm that catches my attention” ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.66$) and “the personality of the skincare endorsers is likable” ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.59$) obtained the lowest mean scores, though still within the “high” category. This occurred because male students focused more on visible skin results than on personality when evaluating skincare effectiveness. This suggested that while personality may help maintain interest, it was less important than physical appearance in influencing initial product evaluation. This is aligned with Khamis et al. (2017), who note that although influencers rely on relatability, visual standards dominate attention and engagement in beauty-related industries.

Overall, the findings showed that attractiveness strongly influences male students by helping them quickly judge whether a skincare product is effective based on the endorser's appearance. This occurred because visible skin results serve as immediate proof, especially for those with limited skincare experience. This suggested that endorsers should combine appealing appearance with honest and informative content to be more effective. This is supported by Jin and Muqaddam (2019), who explain that attractiveness enhances perceived effectiveness, and by Khamis et al. (2017), who note that visual appeal attracts attention but must be supported by authenticity to sustain influence.

Table 3. Level of influence of skincare endorsers on gender-neutral purchase intention in terms of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness.

Statements	Std. Deviation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Expertise			
1. Skincare endorsers are knowledgeable about the products they endorse.	0.56	4.10	High
2. Skincare endorsers have enough experience recommending skincare products.	0.61	4.13	High
3. Skincare endorsers understand the features and benefits of the skincare products they endorse.	0.58	4.26	Very High
4. Skincare endorsers provide useful, informative product information.	0.58	4.18	High
5. Skincare endorsers are credible sources of skincare information.	0.63	3.93	High
Total	0.42	4.12	High
Trustworthiness			
1. Skincare endorsers are honest in their product recommendations.	0.70	3.87	High
2. Skincare endorsers provide truthful information about skincare products.	0.65	3.99	High
3. Skincare endorsers are sincere when promoting skincare products.	0.66	4.08	High
4. Skincare endorsers can be trusted when giving skincare-related advice.	0.66	3.95	High
5. Skincare endorsers prioritize consumers' well-being when endorsing skincare products.	0.65	4.06	High
Total	0.52	3.99	High
Attractiveness			
1. The physical appearance of the skincare endorsers is appealing.	0.68	4.40	Very High
2. Skincare endorsers possess a high degree of charm that catches my attention.	0.66	4.18	High
3. The personality of the skincare endorsers is likable.	0.59	4.14	High
4. I am more likely to notice skincare products endorsed by attractive skincare endorsers.	0.75	4.35	Very High
5. Skincare endorsers' overall appearance makes the product look more effective.	0.68	4.44	Very High
Total	0.52	4.30	Very High
GRAND MEAN		4.14	High

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 = Very High, 3.41 – 4.20 = High, 2.61 – 3.40 = Moderate, 1.81 – 2.60 = Low, 1.00 – 1.80 = Very Low

Source: Data from researchers

4.2 Level of Gender-Neutral Purchase Intention of Male Students in terms of Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control

Table 4 presents the level of gender-neutral purchase intention of male students in terms of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, based on the mean scores of relevant statements. The grand mean for all three variables was 4.12, indicating a "high" level of gender-neutral purchase intention of male students.

Attitude. Based on the results, the mean scores ranging from 3.41 to 4.20 were verbally interpreted as "high." The results revealed that the grand mean for respondents' attitudes was 4.23 (SD = 0.51), interpreted as "high", indicating that male students generally held a positive evaluation toward skincare products and endorsers. This indicated that male students already viewed skincare as beneficial for their skin and personal care, which influenced how they evaluated its importance and relevance. This suggested that brands targeting male students should highlight the practical benefits and everyday use of skincare products to sustain and strengthen positive attitudes. This was supported by (1991), who identified attitude as a key predictor of behavior, and Wardhana (2024), who explained that attitude mediates the relationship between perceived value and purchase intention.

The statement "skincare endorsers make the use of skincare products appear socially acceptable" (M = 4.30, SD = 0.71) obtained the highest mean score, interpreted as "very high". This indicated that male students perceived skincare as more acceptable when endorsers presented it in a normal, relatable way, and that seeing endorsers openly use skincare reduced hesitation. This suggested that endorsers should present skincare use as normal and relatable to male students to increase acceptance further. This was supported by the Atlantis Press (2024) and Emerald (2026), who explained that influencers reshape social norms through representation.

The indicators "purchasing skincare products is a beneficial choice for me" (M = 4.29, SD = 0.76) and "using skincare products represents a positive practice for men" (M = 4.27, SD = 0.65), both interpreted as "very high". This indicated that male students evaluated skincare positively because they associated it with personal benefits and well-being, often expecting visible improvements in their skin condition. This suggested that brands should clearly communicate the functional and wellness benefits of skincare products to maintain positive evaluation among male students. This was supported by LSPR Institute of Communication and Business (2026), which explained that male grooming is increasingly viewed as a health-related practice rather than a luxury.

Furthermore, the indicators "The inclusive skincare endorsers are unique and different from others" (M = 4.12, SD = 0.51) and "Buying skincare products without gender-specific labels is a good idea" (M = 4.08, SD = 0.77), interpreted as "high", reflected evolving consumer preferences. This indicated that male students were open to gender-neutral skincare and preferred inclusive product positioning, as they were less influenced by traditional gender norms and more focused on product relevance. This suggested that brands should adopt gender-neutral and inclusive strategies to better align with male students' preferences. This was supported by Gogoi and Sinha (2024), who noted that consumers increasingly favor brands that reflect modern, inclusive identities.

Overall, the findings indicated that attitude was strengthened through a combination of personal evaluation, social normalization, and value alignment. This indicated that male students developed stronger gender-neutral purchase intentions when skincare was seen as beneficial, socially accepted, and aligned with their beliefs. This suggested that brands should consistently combine benefit-focused messaging, relatable endorsement, and inclusive positioning to strengthen gender-neutral purchase intention among male students. This was supported by Srivastava et al. (2022), who emphasized that value congruence enhances consumer decision-making.

Subjective Norms. Based on the results, the mean scores ranged from 3.41 to 4.20 and were verbally interpreted as "high". The results revealed a grand mean for subjective norms of 4.03 (SD = 0.53), which was interpreted as "high", indicating that social and external pressures influenced the behavioral intention of male students. This indicated that male students considered the approval of peers, family, and skincare endorsers when deciding whether to use skincare products, as their decisions were shaped by what they perceived as acceptable within their social environment. This suggested that brands should normalize skincare use for male students by making it more visible and socially accepted through endorsers and peer representation. This was supported by Ajzen (1991), who explained that subjective norms influence intention through perceived social approval.

The statement "the skincare endorsers I follow make me feel that using skincare products is socially acceptable for men" obtained the highest mean score (M = 4.24, SD = 0.73), interpreted as "very high". This indicated that male students were more likely to accept skincare use when endorsers presented it as normal and inclusive. This occurred because endorsers helped reshape perceptions by demonstrating that skincare use was appropriate for men, thereby reducing hesitation. This suggested that brands should use endorsers who consistently present skincare as inclusive and relatable to male students. This was supported by Emerald (2026), which explained that influencers reshape social norms and increase acceptance.

Similarly, the indicators "people who are important to me would approve of me using skincare products endorsed for all genders" (M = 4.13, SD = 0.70) and "people whose opinions I value would not perceive it 'unmasculine' if I used skincare products" (M = 4.06, SD = 0.73), interpreted as "high", indicated that male students' intention was reinforced by expected approval from people they valued. This indicated that male students felt more comfortable using skincare when they believed that significant others would not judge them negatively. This suggested that brands should position skincare as acceptable within male peer groups and social circles to reduce concerns about masculinity. This was supported by LSPR Institute of Communication and Business (2026), which noted that male grooming is increasingly accepted as part of personal care.

Furthermore, the indicators "people who are important to me (family, friends) think I should use skincare products" (M = 3.97, SD = 0.75) and "it is expected of male students in my social circle to maintain a skincare routine" (M = 3.78, SD = 0.76), interpreted as "high", indicated that male students were influenced by repeated exposure to expectations from their social groups. This indicated that when skincare use was commonly encouraged within their environment, male students were more likely to consider it as a normal behavior. This suggested that brands should reinforce consistent social messaging and visibility of skincare use among male students to strengthen adoption. This was supported by Sinha (2024), who noted that social norms shape behavior through shared expectations.

Overall, the findings indicated that subjective norms influenced gender-neutral purchase intention by shaping male students' perceptions of social acceptance. This indicated that, while male students considered social approval, their decisions were not solely dependent on it; they were also influenced by personal evaluation. This suggests that brands should combine social normalization strategies with messages that support individual choice to influence male students' purchase intentions effectively. This was supported by Srivastava (2022), who explained that social support reduces resistance and strengthens decision-making.

Perceived Behavioral Control. Based on the results, the mean scores ranging from 3.41 to 4.20 were verbally interpreted as "high". The results revealed a grand mean of 4.11 (SD = 0.49), indicating "high" perceived behavioral control. This indicated that male students' purchase intention toward skincare products endorsed by endorsers was influenced by their perception of their own capability to perform the behavior, which operated through their evaluation of available resources, knowledge, and control over decision-making. This suggested that when male students felt empowered and experienced minimal constraints, their intention to purchase increased (Ajzen, 1991).

Among the indicators, the statement "the decision to purchase skincare products promoted by an endorser is entirely under my control" had the highest mean score (M = 4.27, SD = 0.68), indicating "very high". This indicated that male students' purchase intention strengthened when they prioritized personal autonomy in their skincare decisions, believing they had full control over their choices and were not restricted by external pressure. This suggested that their decision-making was internally driven, reinforcing confidence in purchasing behavior (Zhang & Chen, 2023).

Similarly, the indicators "there are a few situational barriers (such as limited availability or high price) that would prevent me from buying endorsed skincare products" (M = 4.12, SD = 0.63) and "i feel confident in my ability to choose the right skincare products for my skin type" (M = 4.08, SD = 0.75), interpreted as "high", indicate that male students' gender-neutral purchase intention increased because they perceived fewer barriers and believed they were capable of making appropriate skincare choices. This operated through reduced perceived risk and increased self-confidence in evaluating products. This suggested that when barriers were minimal, and male students felt competent, the path to purchase became easier and more direct (Petkowicz et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the indicators "i have the financial resources necessary to purchase the skincare products I see endorsed" (M = 4.04, SD = 0.76) and "i have enough information (from endorsers) to make an informed purchase decision" (M = 4.02, SD = 0.67), interpreted as "high", indicated that male students' behavior was influenced because access to financial resources and endorsement-based information enhanced their ability to act. This occurred through increased self-efficacy, where they felt financially capable and well-informed in making skincare decisions. This suggested that sufficient information from endorsers, combined with adequate resources, made the purchasing process more manageable and attainable for male students (Azad et al., 2023).

Overall, the findings indicated that perceived behavioral control influenced male students' gender-neutral purchase intention by reinforcing autonomy, reducing barriers, and enhancing confidence. It occurred because male students felt that purchasing skincare products was within their control, supported by sufficient resources, information, and minimal barriers; their intention to purchase became stronger and more likely to result in actual buying behavior. This suggested that brands should combine social normalization strategies with messages that support individual choice to influence male students' purchase intentions effectively. This was supported by Srivastava et al. (2022), who explained that social support reduces resistance and strengthens decision-making.

Table 4. Level of influence of gender-neutral purchase intention of male students in terms of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

Statements	Std. Deviation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Attitude			
1. Using skincare products represents a positive practice for men.	0.65	4.23	Very High
2. Buying skincare products without gender-specific labels is a good idea.	0.77	4.08	High
3. Purchasing skincare products is a beneficial choice for me.	0.76	4.29	Very High
4. Skincare endorsers make the use of skincare products appear socially acceptable.	0.71	4.30	Very High
5. The inclusive skincare endorsers are unique and different from others.	0.63	4.12	High
Total	0.51	4.21	High
Subjective Norms			
1. People who are important to me would approve of me using skincare products endorsed for all genders.	0.70	4.13	High
2. People who are important to me (family, friends) think I should use skincare products.	0.75	3.97	High
3. People whose opinions I value would not perceive it "unmasculine" if I used skincare products.	0.73	4.06	High
4. It is expected of male students in my social circle to maintain a skincare routine.	0.76	3.78	High
5. The skincare endorsers I follow make me feel that using skincare products is socially acceptable for men.	0.73	4.24	Very High
Total	0.53	4.03	High

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Perceived Behavioral Control			
1. I have the financial resources necessary to purchase the skincare products I see endorsed.	0.76	4.04	High
2. I have enough information (from endorsers) to make an informed purchase decision.	0.67	4.02	High
3. I feel confident in my ability to choose the right skincare products for my skin type.	0.75	4.08	High
4. The decision to purchase skincare products promoted by an endorser is entirely under my control.	0.68	4.27	Very High
5. There are a few situational barriers (such as limited availability or high price) that would prevent me from buying endorsed skincare products.	0.63	4.12	High
Total	0.49	4.11	
GRAND MEAN		4.12	High
<i>Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 = Very High, 3.41 – 4.20 = High, 2.61 – 3.40 = Moderate, 1.81 – 2.60 = Low, 1.00 – 1.80 = Very Low</i> <i>Source: Data from researchers</i>			

4.3 Relationship Between Skincare Endorsers and Gender-Neutral Purchase Intention

The results revealed that the independent variables—expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness—had statistically significant relationships with the dependent variables attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, as evidenced by the positive correlation coefficients and significance values ($p = .000$). This relationship occurred because skincare endorsers influenced how male students understood product use, evaluated its benefits, and perceived whether using skincare products was acceptable and manageable. This implied that endorser characteristics directly shaped male students' gender-neutral purchase intention, as supported by Mansur and Azizan (2024) and Liu (2022).

For expertise and attitude ($r = 0.316$, $p = .000$), the results showed a weak positive relationship, which indicated that knowledgeable endorsers helped male students form more positive evaluations of skincare products. This occurred because clear explanations of product features, usage, and benefits reduced confusion, especially for male students who were still exploring skincare. This suggested that male students developed favorable attitudes when endorsers made skincare easier to understand. This was supported by Hussain and Ali (2021) and Source Credibility Theory, which explained that knowledge improves message acceptance.

For expertise and subjective norms ($r = 0.330$, $p = .000$), the results showed a weak positive relationship, which indicated that expertise slightly influenced how male students perceived social approval. This occurred because endorsers who appeared knowledgeable were seen as reliable sources, but social acceptance was still more influenced by visibility and relatability rather than technical knowledge. This suggested that while expertise helped, it was not the main factor in shaping whether male students. It's felt that skincare use was socially acceptable, consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior.

For expertise and perceived behavioral control ($r = 0.398$, $p = .000$), the results showed a weak positive relationship, which indicated that expertise helped male students feel more capable of choosing and using skincare products. This occurred because detailed explanations reduced uncertainty and helped them select suitable products for their skin. This suggested that knowledge increased confidence in decision-making. This was supported by Ladhari and Mathur (2020), who described endorsers as “interpretive intermediaries” that simplified complex information.

For trustworthiness and attitude ($r = 0.384$, $p = .000$), the results showed a weak positive relationship, which indicated that credible endorsers helped male students form more positive evaluations of skincare products. This occurred because honest and transparent communication reduced doubts about product claims. This was supported by Baig et al. (2022), who emphasized that trust enhances positive perception and reduces perceived risk. This suggested that male students were more comfortable accepting skincare recommendations when they trusted the endorser. This was supported by Baig et al. (2022), who emphasized that trust enhances positive perception and reduces perceived risk.

For trustworthiness and subjective norms ($r = 0.428$, $p = .000$), the results showed a moderate positive relationship, which indicated that credible endorsers influenced how male students perceived social acceptance. This occurred because trustworthy endorsers were seen as reliable figures whose opinions reflected acceptable behavior. This suggested that when endorsers appeared honest, male students were more likely to believe that using skincare was socially acceptable, consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior.

For trustworthiness and perceived behavioral control ($r = 0.402$, $p = .000$), the results showed a moderate positive relationship, which indicated that trust helped male students feel more confident in purchasing skincare products. This occurred because reliable information reduced perceived risk, making the decision process feel safer. This suggested that trust supported confidence and ease of action. This aligned with Utami and Praswati (2023), who noted that trust reinforces decision confidence.

For attractiveness and attitude ($r = 0.562$, $p = .000$), the results showed a moderate positive relationship, which indicated that attractiveness had the strongest influence on how male students evaluated skincare products. This occurred because male students

associated the endorser’s clear, healthy skin with the product's effectiveness. This suggested that visual results strongly shaped positive attitudes, as supported by Weismuller et al. (2020) and AlFarraj et al. (2021).

For attractiveness and subjective norms ($r = 0.488, p = .000$), the findings showed a moderate positive relationship, which indicated that attractive endorsers influenced how male students perceived social acceptance. This occurred because visually appealing endorsers were more visible and widely followed, leading people to perceive skincare use as more common and acceptable. This suggested that attractiveness helped normalize skincare use among male students. This aligned with Tantanatewin and Inkarojrit (2018), who highlighted the role of visual appeal in shaping social engagement.

For attractiveness and perceived behavioral control ($r = 0.523, p = .000$), the results showed a moderate positive relationship, which indicated that attractiveness increased male students’ confidence in trying skincare products. This occurred because appealing presentations made products seem easier to use and more suitable for them. This suggested that attractiveness reduced hesitation and encouraged action, as supported by Jin and Muqaddam (2019), who explained that attractiveness increases perceived effectiveness and usability.

Overall, the findings showed that skincare endorsers correlated with gender-neutral purchase intention among male students in different ways. Attractiveness helped them quickly judge product effectiveness based on visible results, trustworthiness made them feel more confident in the information provided, and expertise helped them better understand how to use and choose skincare products. This suggested that male students did not rely on a single factor, but on a combination of appearance, honesty, and knowledge when deciding to use skincare products (Mansur and Azizan, 2024).

The hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between the level of influence of skincare endorsers as to expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, and the level of gender-neutral purchase intention as to attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control" was rejected, as all variables showed statistically significant relationships ($p = .000$). This occurred because male students relied on skincare endorsers when learning about product use, evaluating product effectiveness, and deciding whether skincare is acceptable for them to use. This suggested that repeated exposure to endorsers led male students to align their perceptions and skincare choices with what endorsers presented. This is supported by Chekima et al. (2020), who explain that these factors work together in shaping consumer decisions, and by Meng et al. (2024), who note that consumers internalize the behaviors and standards shown by endorsers.

From a marketing perspective, the findings indicated that endorsement effectiveness depends on the integration of multiple credibility dimensions. This occurred because male students' gender-neutral purchase intention is influenced by a combination of emotional, cognitive, and social factors that operate through the simultaneous impact of attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. This suggests that relying on a single attribute is insufficient, and a balanced approach strengthens both engagement and trust, as supported by Schouten et al. (2020) and McCormick (2016).

Table 5 Relationship Between Skincare Endorsers and Gender-Neutral Purchase Intention

Variable	Pearson-r	P-value	Degree of Relationship	Remarks
Expertise - Attitude	0.316	.000	Weak Positive	s
Expertise - Subjective Norms	0.330	.000	Weak Positive	s
Expertise - Perceived Behavioral Control	0.398	.000	Weak Positive	s
Trustworthiness - Attitude	0.384	.000	Weak Positive	s
Trustworthiness - Subjective Norms	0.428	.000	Moderate Positive	s
Trustworthiness - Perceived Behavioral Control	0.402	.000	Moderate Positive	s
Attractiveness - Attitude	0.562	.000	Moderate Positive	s
Attractiveness - Subjective Norms	0.488	.000	Moderate Positive	s
Attractiveness - Perceived Behavioral Control	0.523	.000	Moderate Positive	s

Legend: $p > 0.05$, not significant at 5% level; $p < .05$, significant at 5% level; Pearson $r = 0.80 - 1.00 =$ Very Strong Positive Relationship; $0.60 - 0.79 =$ Strong Positive Relationship; $0.40 - 0.59 =$ Moderate Positive Relationship; $0.20 - 0.39 =$ Weak Positive Relationship; $0.00 - 0.19 =$ Very Weak or No Relationship

Source: Data from Researchers

4.4 Predictors of Gender-Neutral Purchase Intention

The results revealed that source credibility dimensions significantly predicted gender-neutral purchase intention among male students, but the effects varied in strength and significance across variables. Overall, attractiveness consistently showed the strongest influence, while expertise and trustworthiness showed limited or non-significant effects in some areas. This indicated that male students were more influenced by how skincare endorsers looked and presented themselves rather than by how knowledgeable or

trustworthy they appeared. This occurred because many male students relied on visible results and a relatable appearance when evaluating skincare products, especially when they had limited experience with them. This implied that brands targeting male students should focus more on visual appeal and relatability when selecting endorsers. This supports the findings of Djafarova et al. (2017) and Lou and Yuan (2019), who explain that emotional and visual cues lead to faster engagement than purely informational content.

For attitude, attractiveness showed a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.483, p = 0.000$), indicating a moderate effect. This indicated that visually appealing endorsers strongly influenced how male students evaluated gender-neutral skincare products. This occurred because male students associated clear and healthy skin with product effectiveness, making the product appear more reliable and desirable. In contrast, expertise ($\beta = 0.076, p = 0.193$) and trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.119, p = 0.051$) did not show significant effects, indicating a very weak influence. This occurred because knowledge and honesty alone were not enough to shape positive attitudes, as male students relied more on visible appearance than on information. This suggested that brands should use endorsers who visibly show skincare results to improve positive product evaluation among male students. This is supported by Ki et al. and Jin and Ryu, who explain that attractiveness increases emotional engagement and positive evaluation.

For subjective norms, attractiveness ($\beta \approx 0.367, p = 0.000$) and trustworthiness ($\beta \approx 0.226, p = 0.000$) both showed significant effects, indicating a weak but significant influence. This means that male students were more likely to perceive skincare use as socially acceptable when endorsers were appealing and credible. This occurred because attractive endorsers were more visible, while trustworthy endorsers made the behavior appear acceptable and legitimate. In contrast, expertise ($\beta \approx 0.061, p = 0.314$) did not show a significant effect, indicating a very weak influence, meaning that technical knowledge did not strongly influence perceived social approval. This suggested that brands should select endorsers who are both relatable and believable to strengthen social acceptance of skincare among male students. This aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior and is supported by Rahim et al. (2023) and Shoukat et al. (2023), who found that attractiveness increases engagement while trustworthiness strengthens perceived social legitimacy.

Perceived behavioral control: expertise ($\beta \approx 0.25, p = 0.001$) showed a significant effect, indicating a weak influence. This means that male students felt more capable of purchasing skincare products when endorsers provided clear information. This occurred because knowledge reduced confusion and helped them choose suitable products. Attractiveness ($\beta \approx 0.28, p = 0.000$) also showed a significant effect, indicating a weak influence: visually appealing endorsers made products appear easier to use. However, trustworthiness ($\beta \approx 0.12, p = 0.160$) did not show a significant effect, indicating a very weak influence, meaning that honesty alone did not increase confidence in purchasing. This suggested that brands should combine clear explanations with appealing presentations to help male students feel more confident in using skincare products. This is supported by Chekima et al. (2020) and Saima & Khan (2021), who explain that expertise reduces uncertainty while attractiveness lowers psychological barriers.

Overall, the findings showed that attractiveness had the most consistent influence across all components of gender-neutral purchase intention among male students. This means that visible appearance played a key role in how male students evaluated, accepted, and felt confident about using skincare products. Expertise helped by improving understanding and reducing uncertainty, while trustworthiness mainly influenced social acceptance. This suggested that an effective endorsement strategy should prioritize visible results first, then back them up with clear information and credible messaging.

The hypothesis stating that “the level of influence of skincare endorsers does not significantly predict gender-neutral purchase intention among male students” was rejected. This occurred because attractiveness significantly influenced attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, while expertise and trustworthiness influenced selected components. This indicated that skincare endorsers played a clear role in shaping how male students evaluated products, perceived social acceptance, and assessed their ability to use skincare. This suggested that endorsement strategies should emphasize visual appeal and relatability as primary drivers of influence among male students. This finding is supported by previous studies, which indicate that attractiveness and relatability are more influential than traditional credibility dimensions in shaping consumer behavior (De Veirman et al., 2017; Audrezet et al., 2020).

From a marketing perspective, the findings indicated that brands targeting male students should prioritize endorsers who clearly demonstrate visible skincare results and a relatable appearance, as these factors directly influence evaluation and engagement. At the same time, providing simple, clear explanations remains important to build confidence in product use. While trustworthiness is still relevant, it is more effective when combined with visible results and clear information rather than presented alone.

Table 6. Predictors of the Level of Gender-Neutral Purchase Intention

Dependent Variables	Attitude			Subjective Norm			Perceived Behavioral Control		
	Beta	Sig. Value	Remarks	Beta	Sig. Value	Remarks	Beta	Sig. Value	Remarks
Expertise	.076	.193	ns	.061	.314	ns	.201	.001	s
Trustworthiness	.119	.051	s	.226	.000	s	.087	.160	ns
Attractiveness	.483	.000	s	.367	.000	s	.417	.000	s

Legend: $p > 0.05$, not significant at 5% level; $p < 0.05$, significant at 5% level; β indicates the magnitude of influence: 0.80–1.00 = Very Strong; 0.60–0.79 = Strong; 0.40–0.59 = Moderate; 0.20–0.39 = Weak; 0.00–0.19 = Very Weak; sign (+/–) indicates whether the relationship is positive or negative.

Source: Data from Researchers

4.5 Insights on the Influence of Skincare Endorsers on Gender-Neutral Purchase Intention of Male Students

The study found that skincare endorsers significantly influence male students' gender-neutral purchase intention by shaping their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of skincare endorsers contributed to how male students evaluated skincare products, perceived social acceptance, and felt confident in purchasing gender-neutral skincare products. The findings indicated that skincare endorsers play an important role in influencing how male students understand skincare, accept its use regardless of gender, and develop intention to purchase endorsed products. Skincare endorsers influence attitude by helping male students form positive evaluations toward gender-neutral skincare products. When endorsers demonstrate clear skin results, provide product explanations, and share personal skincare experiences, male students perceive skincare products as beneficial and relevant to their needs. Attractive endorsers were found to have the greatest influence on attitudes, as male students associated visible skin improvements with product effectiveness. Expertise further supported attitude formation by simplifying product information, while trustworthiness strengthened acceptance by reducing doubts regarding product claims.

Regarding subjective norms, skincare endorsers contributed to the normalization of skincare use among male students. The presence of endorsers who openly promote skincare products helped reshape perceptions that skincare is appropriate for all genders. Male students reported feeling that important people in their social environment would approve of skincare use when skincare routines were presented as common and socially acceptable behavior. Trustworthiness played a significant role in strengthening subjective norms, as credible endorsers were seen as reliable sources whose recommendations reflected acceptable social practices.

Skincare endorsers also influenced perceived behavioral control by increasing male students' confidence in their ability to purchase and use skincare products. Expertise helped reduce uncertainty by providing knowledge about product selection, application, and benefits. Attractiveness made skincare seem easier and more suitable for male students, thereby lowering psychological barriers to trying skincare products. When endorsers provided clear information and relatable demonstrations, male students felt more capable of making informed purchasing decisions and believed they could control their skincare purchases.

The findings further revealed that attractiveness emerged as the strongest predictor of gender-neutral purchase intention among male students. Visual appeal captured attention, strengthened engagement, and influenced all components of the Theory of Planned Behavior. Expertise supported decision-making by improving understanding, while trustworthiness mainly reinforced social acceptance and confidence. This combination confirmed that male students rely on multiple dimensions of skincare endorser credibility when developing purchase intention.

From a marketing perspective, the results suggest that skincare brands targeting male students should prioritize skincare endorsers who demonstrate visible skincare results, relatable presentation, and clear product knowledge. While attractiveness attracts initial interest, expertise and trustworthiness remain necessary to sustain confidence and encourage long-term engagement with gender-neutral skincare products. Effective endorsement strategies should therefore integrate visual appeal, informative communication, and authentic messaging.

To strengthen endorsement strategies, the researchers developed a comprehensive, step-by-step guide for skincare brands and marketers, titled "Step-by-Step Guide to Utilizing Skincare Endorsers to Enhance Gender-Neutral Purchase Intention of Male Students." This guide provides practical procedures for effectively applying skincare endorsers in marketing campaigns.

The first step emphasizes identifying the target audience. Brands should understand male students' skincare concerns, level of skincare knowledge, and exposure to social media content. Understanding audience characteristics allows marketers to select skincare endorsers who reflect the lifestyle and preferences of male students.

The second step involves selecting skincare endorsers based on expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Endorsers should demonstrate knowledge of skincare products, offer honest recommendations, and maintain an appealing yet relatable appearance to influence gender-neutral purchase intention effectively.

The third step focuses on presenting clear and informative skincare content. Endorsers should explain product benefits, usage procedures, and expected results to reduce confusion and increase perceived behavioral control among male students.

Step four highlights the importance of emphasizing gender-neutral positioning. Marketing messages should present skincare as suitable for all genders, reinforcing inclusive consumption and reducing hesitation related to masculinity perceptions.

The fifth step involves creating engaging captions and discussions that encourage interaction. Endorsers may invite male students to share experiences, ask questions, or discuss skincare routines, strengthening subjective norms through social participation.

The sixth step recommends publishing endorsed content at optimal times on digital platforms to maximize engagement. Consistent exposure to skincare endorsers reinforces familiarity, strengthens attitude formation, and sustains interest in gender-neutral skincare products.

The seventh step emphasizes monitoring engagement and evaluating campaign effectiveness. Brands should analyze reactions, comments, shares, and purchasing responses to determine how skincare endorsers influence gender-neutral purchase intention. Continuous evaluation enables marketers to refine endorsement strategies and improve future campaigns.

By following these steps, skincare brands can systematically utilize skincare endorsers to influence male students' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control toward gender-neutral skincare products. Strategic endorsement strengthens acceptance, increases confidence, and supports inclusive skincare consumption among male students.

Overall, skincare endorsers serve as significant drivers of gender-neutral purchase intention by shaping psychological determinants of behavior consistent with the Source Credibility Theory and Theory of Planned Behavior. When expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness are effectively integrated, skincare endorsers can create meaningful engagement, normalize skincare use among male students, and encourage sustained purchasing behavior in the evolving gender-neutral skincare market.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on data gathered from male students, the study concluded that skincare endorsers exerted a high level of influence on this demographic. While expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness all contributed to this influence, attractiveness emerged as the primary driver in capturing the male students' attention and sparking interest. However, the relatively lower rating for trustworthiness compared to the other dimensions indicated that, while male students perceived endorsers as influential, they still demanded greater honesty and authenticity before fully committing to these endorsements.

Regarding male students' gender-neutral purchase intention, the findings confirmed that respondents had a high level of openness to purchasing and using skincare products. This high level of intention reflected a shift in perspective, which suggested that these male students were increasingly moving beyond traditional gender norms. The results showed that the male students had developed a positive personal attitude toward skincare, felt supported by their social environment, and possessed the necessary resources and perceived control to integrate these products into their personal grooming routines.

The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between the level of influence of skincare endorsers (expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness) and the level of gender-neutral purchase intention (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control). The positive relationship indicates that as the perceived credibility and appeal of skincare endorsers increase, the male students' psychological determinants of purchase intention also increase.

The study established that the influence of skincare endorsers was a significant predictor of male students' gender-neutral purchase intention. Statistical evidence demonstrated a clear, positive relationship between the characteristics of the endorsers and the behavioral outcomes of these male students. Specifically, as the perceived attractiveness and credibility of an endorser increased, the likelihood of a positive purchase intention among male students rose concurrently. Consequently, it was concluded that skincare endorsers played a critical role in shaping the specific attitudes, social perceptions, and actual purchasing decisions of the male students involved in this study.

Finally, the study shows that skincare endorsers play an important role in shaping male students' gender-neutral purchase intention. Their influence works through attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior. At the same time, expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness support the Source Credibility Theory in explaining consumer behavior. These insights highlight that endorsers not only affect how male students perceive skincare products but also influence their decision-making and willingness to purchase gender-neutral skincare products.

5.2 Recommendations

In line with the study's conclusions, the researchers recommend that skincare brands and marketers continue to use endorsers who demonstrate strong expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, as these factors significantly influence male students' perceptions of gender-neutral skincare products. However, it is recommended that endorsers not be selected solely based on attractiveness. Instead, brands may implement a screening process that evaluates endorsers' knowledge, credibility, and authenticity, such as reviewing past content, conducting product knowledge checks, and requiring trial use of products before promotion, to strengthen consumer trust and improve the effectiveness of marketing strategies.

Furthermore, male students may continue engaging with skincare content and skincare endorsers while practicing critical evaluation of the information presented to them. In doing so, they may assess product claims by checking ingredient lists, comparing reviews from multiple sources, and identifying whether the content is sponsored or unbiased before making purchasing decisions. By developing more informed attitudes, stronger awareness of subjective norms, and greater perceived behavioral control, students may make more responsible and confident decisions about gender-neutral skincare products.

In addition, since the study found a significant relationship between the influence of skincare endorsers and gender-neutral purchase intention, skincare endorsers may maintain honesty, transparency, and professionalism in their content. They may consistently provide accurate, experience-based, and informative discussions of skincare products by sharing real usage results, disclosing paid partnerships, and avoiding exaggerated or misleading claims. Through this, they may strengthen trustworthiness and positively influence consumers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

Moreover, given that the influence of skincare endorsers was found to predict gender-neutral purchase intention, skincare brands may carefully select endorsers who are not only physically appealing but also credible and knowledgeable. Marketing teams may use evaluation criteria or scoring systems to balance expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness when choosing endorsers to enhance consumer confidence and foster long-term brand loyalty in the skincare industry.

Lastly, in terms of the insights derived from the study, educational institutions may strengthen media literacy and consumer awareness among students. Schools and universities may incorporate discussions, case studies, or workshops on influencer credibility, digital marketing, and gender-neutral skincare into their curriculum. Faculty members may guide students in analyzing real-life advertisements and social media campaigns to help them become more critical, informed, and responsible consumers.

Finally, future researchers may expand this study by including a broader range of respondents across different age groups, locations, and educational backgrounds to improve the generalizability of the findings. They may also examine additional variables, such as social media platforms, cultural influences, and brand loyalty, to gain deeper insights into gender-neutral purchase intention. Furthermore, they may conduct experimental or longitudinal studies to examine how the credibility of skincare endorsers affects consumer behavior over time.

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