

# Exploring Self-Love as a Marketing Tool in the Cosmetics Industry

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## Abstract

This study considers how significant the concept of self-love is nowadays in the cosmetic industry for connecting with customers and creating brand image, persuading customers to buy their products. Through the survey of 150 respondents, the study tries to focus on the impact of personalisation and inclusivity in creating brand awareness and brand loyalty. Findings indicate significant support for advertising that empowers self-expression and celebrates diverse beauty ideals. The research adds to the body of knowledge on brand identity and emotional marketing, with implications for cosmetic firms to develop authentic and consumer-centric branding strategies.

**Keywords:** self-love, cosmetic industry, brand loyalty

## Introduction

Gen Z and Millennials have brought a drastic change in the entire thought process in the world. The remarkable one in the thought process is the concept of 'self-love'. It can be defined as accepting the way you are rather than wanting to be another one or comparing yourself with another one.

This thought has been reflected in many areas and has been popularised with social media influence. In the books also it is also getting reflected. Everyone embraces the quote "Your uniqueness is your beauty". This quote is a recent marketing tool for the Cosmetic Industry. The Cosmetic Industry started utilising the quote in a very different way and the catchy version is, that it is getting high attention among all.

All the customers are behind the self-care tips as well as the self-improvement tips. Companies started using 'self-love' as a campaign to attract more customers and retain the existing ones. The strategy of using fair, slim, and the top trending models in the field has changed. Instead, they started using common people of different complexion, sizes, and ages to create the feel that they could also try. Rather than looking for external beauty, the company advertised the importance of inner beauty, confidence, and self-expression.

The focus has been shifted from generalization to personalization of beauty. The pimples, hair on hand, dark complexion curly hair, no hairs, and baldness all become beauty in this era. So, the company chooses to bring different kinds of models that everyone can relate to.

The beauty concept has shifted from the traditional era to the modern era in all aspects. Instead of covering defects in our bodies or faces, makeup focuses on enhancing each person's uniqueness. They try to convey the message of "beauty is everyone" instead of focusing on some specificities of beauty.

This article focuses on the utilization of the concept of "self-love" by the cosmetic industry as a marketing tool and its acceptance from the customers side too.

**Review of literature:**

(**Meri, 2001**) focuses on the importance of brand attachment from the consumers' side for selecting the goods and services through a frame-based approach. 171 papers were reviewed to find the gap in the knowledge of brand attachment. The importance of a positive attitude and word-of-mouth marketing. The conceptualization of the brand attachment and future research gap are also mentioned in the article. The article covered four dimensions of brand attachment self-possession, connection automatic attachment, connection prominence attachment, and brand attachment borrows. They analyzed the relationship theory, self-determination theory, social identity theory, and self-congruence theories.

The article titled "All You Need is Love- A Review on Brand Love" mentions the importance of brand love for making the customer repeatedly purchase. The factors that contribute towards brand love as well as theories developed for the future implications. A critical review of the work done on brand love and its conceptualizations has been done in this article. (**Narissara Palusuk & Rajibul Hasan, 2019**)

(**Pranay Verma, 2020**) gives the insightful into the determinants of brand equities. Proposed a model that consists of the variables of brand love, brand experience, and brand equity. Along with that, they consider socio-demographic factors like gender and usage patterns for proposing the model. The model concluded that factors like gender and usage have the primary effect on brand love and brand engagement.

(**Martin Owusu-Ansah & Mohammed Majeed, 2021**) the role of social media on the purchase intention of Ghana's Fashion Industry has been studied in this article concerning to brand equity. The study's result was based on 500 fashion consumers through survey methodology. The findings postulate that social media penetration is too high in all the country and the concerned fashion industry should be active in social media to get the attention of the audience and its influence on the purchase decision is negligible according to the study. They proposed that social media should be used as a good tool of marketing to make customers happy by maintaining good relationships through Instagram. The study intended to find out the association between purchase decision factor and social media influence, and finally, its effect on creating brand equity

(**Mira Mayrhofer & Brigitte Naderer, 2019**) Find out that user-generated content leads to more purchase decisions compared to paid advertisements. In today's era, advertisements generate negative feelings. Customers feel that the company is showing something unrealistic, so they prefer user-generated content. Nowadays, user-generated content is a highly used marketing tool because of its influential capacity.

(**Hilde A. M. Voorveld 2018**) studied the customers aged above 13 years to identify how the usage of Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, Twitter, and LinkedIn has been influencing them in the form of advertising. The study explored that the advertising experience from each platform is entirely different and similarly, the expectation from the audience is also extremely different. Many big brands are now focusing more on digital marketing tools to reach a wider audience. The rate of social media influence among customers can be easily found out with the help of their engagement rate. Higher engagement on the social media page shows its high penetration rate among customers.

The consumer pattern of social media engagement like liking, and sharing is independent of anything and it doesn't have any effect on purchasing decisions. (**Syrdal & Briggs, 2018**). The engagement depends fully on the psychological mood of the social media user.

The influence of marketing has changed to influence marketing and companies started to spend too much on influencer marketing. The importance of doing influence marketing is the point of selection of influencers. (**Lou & Yuan, 2019**) The integrated model as well as the social media model developed under this article showed the power of influence marketing in today's world. The effect of the model was done

with the help of a survey among customers and the PLS model which considers factors such as the influencer-generated content, attractiveness, and trustworthiness of influencers. If they are too trustworthy, the audience will be influenced by them without fail and influencer marketing will work without too much effort.

**(Patterson & Hodgson, 2006)** The love-making strategies of recent eras have been utilized as marketing tools by many dating apps. The concept of self-love is the main theme they are projecting for the dating apps with the tagline – be the person who you are and find the match with your uniqueness. This line gives the idea that everyone is perfect in their ways, so they will be happy. This thought of self-love is being marketed in such a way as to adore them in their way and over-exploiting the term.

**(Self-Esteem Advertising: Journal of Advertising: Vol 15, No 4, )** how self-esteem values can affect the buying behavior of customers is covered in the article. The combination of psychiatry, sociology, and social psychology. An advertisement that has a positive effect can create a brand image. Self-esteem can be leveraged positively and their buying behavior can be influenced by good content in advertisements. The user-generated content on YouTube **(Feng et al., 2019)** by Dove company has been analyzed in this article through six steps. This can be an important tool for advertising and as well as the company for identifying how the user-generated content can influence the customers compared to traditional advertisement.

The use of pride and guilt in the field of Cause Related Marketing (CRM) has been studied in the article. Compared to the feeling of pride, guilt has come more forward and its effect is more in CRM. **(Pride, Guilt, and Self-Regulation in Cause-Related Marketing Advertisements)**

**(Stout & Leckenby, 1986)** The relation between emotional responses to advertisements has been considered in this study. The response from 1498 respondents who watch television has been considered for the study. The relationships among emotional response and attitude to the ad, attitude to the brand, purchase intent, brand recall, and ad content playback are reported.

**((41) Dove's "Real Beauty" Campaign: A Marketing Case Study | LinkedIn,)**

Dove has brought a change in traditional beauty standards by uplifting the "real beauty campaign" and the effect can also be seen in their self-esteem project. When we log in to that page, we see models of different ages, types, and categories. In 2004, they launched the concept. The real beauty campaign tries to spread the message of accepting natural beauty as it is. With the help of this campaign, the public's perception of the brand itself changed. The brand itself is emerging as a sign of body positivity and self-esteem among women.

They tried to broaden the definition of beauty by including all sizes, shapes, and colours too. The perception of beauty itself changed among the customers. This campaign helped to gain confidence among the women and start accepting their bodies as it is and stopped following unattainable examples that are portrayed by the media.

The target audience of the campaign is all women, irrespective of size, age, color, and shape.

This was the campaign's tagline: "You're more beautiful than you think." This powerful statement aimed to boost women's self-esteem and encourage them to see their true beauty. They redefined their marketing mixes, such as product, place, promotion, and price, to incorporate all the extremes of real beauty campaigns.

The marketing mix product was redefined to enhance customers' uniqueness rather than having celebrities act as their role models. The price was also a value-based price that everyone could afford.

The place marketing mix was ensured by making the products available at all the outlets and making efforts to reach the message of the 'real beauty campaign' to a broader audience.

The rule of thumb method in the promotional methods was broken by Dove by bringing the representation of all the faces to their advertisement. The narrow concept of beauty has been removed by Dove company. Irrespective of promoting their brand, they completely changed the concept of beauty among women and consequently, they grabbed the market. The unrealistic concept of beauty has shifted to an inclusive approach. Consumers accepted the campaign and their sales increased. They started tagging Dove as a symbol of their empowerment motivation and self-esteem status. Even though Dove which comes under Unilever promoted the real beauty campaign, fair and Lovely now turned to Glow and Lovely had to go through some controversies because of this. Inspired by Dove, and many other companies like Aerie and Cover Girl, Nike started focusing on the realistic beauty model. The company Dove was able to bring positive changes across society on the grounds of realistic beauty.

(Breaking Barriers, .) The beauty industry had a sudden change in the marketing strategies of **Fenty Beauty by Rihanna** during the year 2017. They set a new standard for the cosmetic brand by breaking all the traditional beliefs in cosmetics. They brought 40 shades of foundation by including almost all skin tones rather than persuading all the skin tones to limit to any 5 skin shades. This shows the inclusivity in the beauty field. It became the symbol of empowerment. They market themselves by showing their diversity in the cosmetic brand which is an exclusive model during that time. The brand was sincere in its acceptance of all people and embraced diversity both in its product offerings and its marketing campaigns. They try to get brand reach through social media applications. Through these marketing strategies, they tried to bring the 'Fenty effect' to the cosmetic industry. Fenty Beauty's approach to marketing will undoubtedly be remembered as a groundbreaking moment in the history of the beauty industry. Rather than showcasing the sharp, polished, and clean face as the model of their brand, they showcased authentic as well as realistic models to their company. The company's online presence as well as the launching strategies of products created a brand image among consumers. They used social media as a leverage tool for positioning their product in the market wisely through proper audience engagement. The company made this as a luxury accessible product so that everyone can at least try the product. They tried to bring individuality in everything they launched to the market. The collaboration with influencers and beauty helped the company gain more acceptance for the mission very fast. Fenty Beauty partnered with major retailers like Sephora and Ulta Beauty, leveraging their existing customer base and in-store presence to increase brand visibility and accessibility. They are the best in the beauty world as they give what customers demand.

### **Objective of the study**

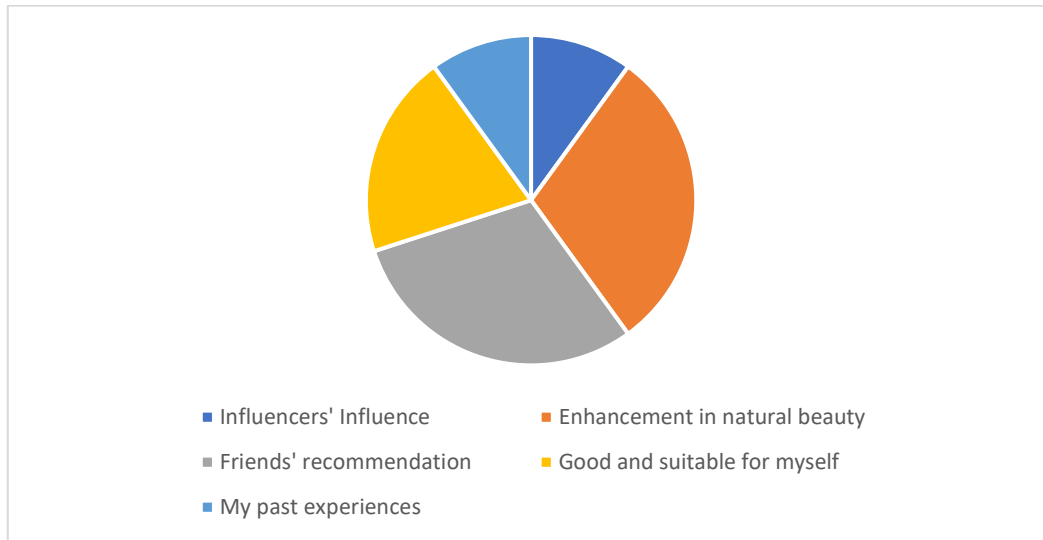
To examine the extent to which cosmetic brands use self-love narratives as a marketing strategy and to evaluate consumer perceptions and brand loyalty outcomes associated with such campaigns.

### **Methodology of the study**

The study adopted an exploratory method with the help of a survey of 150 respondents to find out the effect of the idea of self-love in the cosmetic industry. The case study of cosmetic industries like Dove and Fenty Beauty by Rihanna, which brought the idea of real beauty, is also considered in this study. With the use of Microsoft Excel, basic analyses such as the standard deviation and arithmetic mean were completed for the study, and infographics such as pie and bar diagrams were used for the analytical portion.

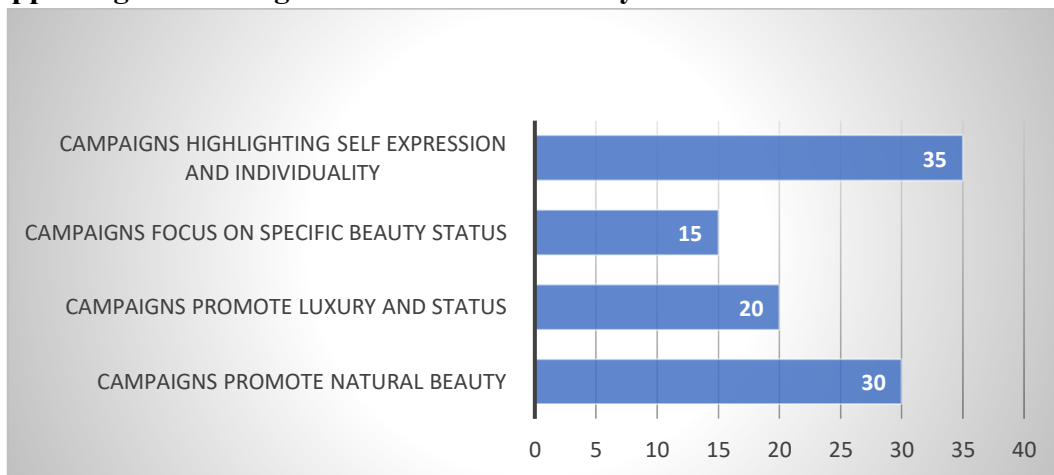
**Results and Discussions:**

**1. Factors influencing cosmetic purchases by Consumers:**



The results showed the respondents tried the cosmetics out of the belief that it enhanced their natural beauty rather than pushing them to unrealistic and impossible beauty standards. Past experiences and friend’s recommendations also affect the purchase decision of consumers.

**2. Most Appealing advertising in the Cosmetic Industry:**



People consider advertisement that highlights self-expression and individuality as the best advertising where they can relate themselves with the advertisements. Along with that, advertisement that promotes or enhance the message of natural beauty also has a good kind of attraction among consumers. Brands that promote the beauty status are least bothered by the customers. Nowadays more customers are behind the organic version of everything even cosmetics. They don’t want the chemical toxicity to their body but need the instant result.

The most important advertising message selection by customers while selecting cosmetics		
Messages	Mean	Standard Deviation
Be confident in your skin	3.55	0.7
Look flawless with our products	1.21	1.3
Everyone deserves luxury beauty	2.1	1.8

Enhance your uniqueness	3.89	0.4
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As the same graphs expressed, the above table also shows the inclination of customers towards the idea of self-love while selecting the advertising message. The thought of luxury, and flawless skin has less effect on the customers. The idea of self-confidence and uniqueness in each promotion kind of advertising has a huge impact on customers. The idea of acceptance is getting great acceptance from the audience.

<b>Most Important influencing factors in Cosmetic Brands on Self-love Campaign</b>		
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Transparency about product ingredients	4.78	1.88
Representation of diverse beauty	5.66	.88
Celebrity Endorsement	3.57	1.47
Social Media hype	5.01	1.07
Empowers individuality	5.60	.78
Genuinity of the concept by the company	5.33	.89

On the ground of self-love, the representation of diverse beauty has a significant impact on the customers. Because they want to be treated uniquely as well as differently by the brands. Everyone needs personalization from their company. Whichever company they find their representation in their advertisement, they feel belongingness and become so loyal with the brand. The customers will use it to test the brand whatever type of cosmetic it belongs to. If it suits them, of course, they will be so happy and refer the same to their friends as well as other well-wishers too. That is the happy face of quality products that focus on the enhancement of each one’s uniqueness. Everyone wants their identity to be praised and accepted by all.

<b>Effect of self-love campaign on the selection of cosmetic brands:</b>		
<b>Effect of Self-love Campaign</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Make feel more connected to the brand	5.88	0.78
Seems insincere and profit-driven	3.55	1.33
No impact on perception	3.22	1.38
Avoid the brand that uses self-love as a marketing strategy.	3.55	1.48
Gives me a feeling of uniqueness	5.51	0.88
Help me not to follow societal beauty standards	5.43	0.43

From the concept of self-love, people have chosen the idea of being themselves as well as projecting their uniqueness as the best one. In today’s era, everyone values the self-esteem. From the idea of impressing others, the perception moved to do what suits themselves. So, they love all the brands that help them to be themselves. The self-love effect with a mean value of 5.88 shows the brand that gives them their representation will be their favorite one always.

## Conclusion

‘Be yourself,’ ‘Accept the way you are,’ and ‘You can be yourself’ are different words that pop up in social media with varying forms of content. The theme behind this idea is to stop the comparison and bring up the real and unique talent inside each person rather than following the herd.

The harsh reality is that organizations around the world have started exploiting the concept differently by bringing the personalization effect into everything we choose, especially in the case of cosmetics, on the grounds of inclusivity of everyone. During the initial days, it was trying to bring. The rise of self-love, authenticity, and inclusivity in society is driving a revolution in the cosmetics industry. Customers favor companies that value uniqueness and reject unattainable beauty standards. Although self-love narratives are being adopted by brands more frequently, their success hinges on how genuine and consistent these messages are. Brand loyalty is significantly increased by emotional branding based on empowerment and representation, but attempts that are performative or profit-driven run the risk of backlash. In the end, self-love has enormous potential as a marketing strategy—when used with integrity and customer-focused principles.

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