

## Strategic utilization of social media in brand identity formation for aesthetic medicine services: Insights into digital influence and consumer perception

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### Abstract

This article explores the role of social media in shaping the brand identity of providers of aesthetic medicine services. The study draws on publicly available research published online. The analysis reveals that visual appeal, individuality, and the positive demeanor of influencers are key determinants in forming a favorable brand image. In contrast, factors such as popularity and general credibility appear to have a less pronounced impact. The findings help address an existing research gap in the field of digital branding for aesthetic services and offer practical insights for marketers aiming to optimize communication strategies amid the ongoing digital transformation of the market. The article is of interest to marketing researchers and brand management professionals studying the influence of digital communication on image formation within the aesthetic services industry. It also provides valuable perspectives for practitioners in strategic management and marketing communications who seek to integrate innovative social media approaches into brand development. The material presents a comprehensive analysis of current trends and mechanisms for engaging with target audiences.

**Keywords:** Social media; Branding; Aesthetic medicine services; Influencers; Digital marketing; Audience engagement

### 1. Introduction

In recent years, the role of social media in shaping brand perception in the aesthetic medicine industry has gained increasing significance. Advancements in technology and the rapid evolution of digital communication have opened up new opportunities for brands, enabling direct interaction with consumers through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook [1, 2]. Amid shifting consumer preferences and the growing influence of beauty influencers, it has become particularly relevant to examine how these digital channels contribute to the creation of a positive brand image in the field of aesthetic services.

The academic literature exploring the role of social media in building cosmetic service brands reveals a number of interconnected research directions. A central focus is placed on the direct impact of influencers and social engagement on consumer behavior within the beauty industry. Studies by Basalamah R.A.M., Umayah A., Wismiarsi T. [1], and Comicho A.K.V. et al. [2] demonstrate that active user participation on social media, combined with endorsements from beauty influencers, strengthens purchase intent and supports the development of a positive brand image. Similarly, Binwani K.J. and Ho J.S.Y. [3] highlight the influence of social media on brand perception, showing that visual and contextual elements of interaction can evolve into effective marketing tools. Jin S.V., Muqaddam A., and Ryu E. [5] analyze specific mechanisms through which influencers become integral to marketing communications, while Adhi H. et al. [6] contribute to understanding the role of digital brand ambassadors on Instagram, where aesthetic criteria and visual content serve as key drivers of brand trust. Masuda H., Han S.H., and Lee J. [7] further emphasize influencer

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characteristics that affect consumer intentions, identifying mediating effects of individual attributes such as credibility, expertise, and attractiveness.

A second group of studies focuses on the development of theoretical frameworks and strategic communication models that systematize the role of influencers in brand building. In this context, Enke N. and Borchers N.S. [4] propose a conceptual model for strategic communication in social media, integrating theoretical foundations with practical aspects of influencer impact, offering a structured understanding of how brand values are conveyed through digital platforms.

Another strand of research addresses the effect of social media engagement on relationship quality and brand performance across various sectors. For instance, Song B.L. et al. [8] examine how active interaction on social media fosters stronger relationships between educational institutions and their target audiences. Although this research focuses on a different domain, it provides valuable parallels applicable to the aesthetic services sector. Samat M.F. et al. [9] investigate the adoption of marketing innovations by small and medium-sized enterprises, illustrating that the integration of digital tools into marketing practices is a crucial factor in gaining competitive advantage—an insight equally relevant for evaluating strategic effectiveness in the cosmetic industry.

The methodological foundation of recent studies is presented in the work of Hair J.F. et al. [10], which outlines the principles of applying and interpreting results derived from PLS-SEM modeling. This approach offers a reliable statistical basis for testing hypotheses about the relationships between social media activity, influencer impact, and brand development dynamics, and is essential for a comprehensive assessment of marketing strategy effectiveness in this field.

Despite the abundance of available research, certain contradictions remain. While some authors emphasize the exclusively positive influence of influencers and social media on consumer behavior, others advocate for a more comprehensive approach that accounts for both strategic and tactical dimensions of communication. Moreover, the evaluation and methodological validation of effects remain insufficiently explored—particularly in terms of adapting PLS-SEM models to the specific context of cosmetic branding. As a result, the integration of digital strategies into traditional marketing communication and the development of universal methodological tools for cross-sector analysis of marketing innovation effectiveness are still underrepresented.

The objective of this study is to determine the role of social media in building a brand in the aesthetic medicine sector.

The scientific contribution lies in a comprehensive analysis of the influence of visual and behavioral attributes of beauty influencers on brand perception, with the aim of identifying correlations between influencer characteristics, audience engagement, and the formation of a positive brand image.

The working hypothesis posits that visual appeal, personality traits, and the behavior of influencers are key determinants in shaping a favorable brand image in the aesthetic services industry, while factors such as popularity and credibility exert a comparatively weaker influence.

To achieve this objective, the study applies an analytical review of existing research findings.

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## **2. The Role of Social Media and Influencers in Branding Aesthetic Services**

Social media has become central to marketing communications, offering brands a unique opportunity to engage directly with their audiences and shape a favorable image. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook serve not only as channels for information dissemination but also as spaces where emotional connections between consumers and brands are forged [1, 2]. This is particularly relevant in the context of aesthetic medicine services, where visual perception and emotional resonance play a defining role.

Through social media, brands can not only showcase their offerings but also present them through visually curated content that emphasizes both aesthetic appeal and service quality. In the era of digital transformation, traditional marketing approaches are giving way to interactive formats, where audience engagement becomes a key measure of campaign effectiveness. Social platforms enable brands to respond promptly to consumer inquiries, host interactive events, conduct live sessions, and use storytelling as a tool for crafting a distinct and memorable identity.

Influencers act as intermediaries between the brand and the consumer, fostering trust through their expertise, visual appeal, and personal attributes [4, 5]. It is precisely these traits—appearance, individuality, and behavior—that

significantly influence how a cosmetic brand is perceived [6]. While popularity and general credibility remain important, they do not consistently correlate with brand perception, underscoring the importance of analyzing specific influencer characteristics and their impact [2, 3].

Brand perception is shaped not only by the tangible qualities of a product or service but also by the emotional response to content delivered by influencers. The formation of parasocial relationships—where consumers begin to view influencers as familiar and trustworthy individuals—contributes to building brand trust [7]. Within this dynamic, the influencer’s aesthetic presence, personal charm, and behavior become defining factors in constructing the brand image of aesthetic services.

Table 1 below outlines the key influencer characteristics and their impact on brand perception in the context of aesthetic medicine services.

**Table 1** Influencer Characteristics and Their Impact on Brand Image in Aesthetic Services [2, 6]

Characteristic	Description	Impact on Brand Image
Appearance	High visual appeal aligned with contemporary aesthetic standards	Enhances the brand’s visual perception, reinforcing associations with quality and style
Personality Traits	Strong individuality, ability to build parasocial connections, charismatic presence	Strengthens emotional ties with the audience, fostering trust in the brand
Behavior	Positive and adaptive engagement with followers, ability to respond appropriately to feedback	Shapes the brand image by conveying professionalism and approachability, increasing brand attractiveness in the eyes of consumers

As illustrated in the table, visual appeal, distinct personal traits, and positive behavioral patterns of influencers play a significant role in shaping a favorable brand image. This approach enables brands not only to communicate their values but also to build emotional connections with their audience—an essential factor in the aesthetic services sector, where customer experience is closely linked to both visual and psychological dimensions.

Thus, social media, when paired with a well-structured influencer collaboration strategy, becomes a powerful branding tool in the cosmetic industry. It allows brands to adapt to the dynamics of digital communication and maintain a competitive edge in an evolving marketplace.

### 3. Mechanisms of Brand Formation Through Social Media

Amid digital transformation, aesthetic service brands are increasingly leveraging social media as a key tool for creating, maintaining, and evolving their brand image. The core mechanisms that drive brand formation through these channels include audience engagement, content strategy, and the strategic selection of communication platforms. These mechanisms serve not only to inform consumers about products and services but also to build emotional connections—an essential component in the aesthetic sector, where both visual appeal and emotional resonance play a central role.

Audience engagement refers to the active interaction of users with brand content—through likes, comments, shares, discussions, and content views. The higher the level of engagement, the stronger the emotional bond formed between the brand and its audience, directly influencing loyalty and trust [8]. Interactive content not only captures attention but also fosters positive associations that can lead to repeat purchases and word-of-mouth promotion.

Content plays a central role in brand development on social media. Visual and verbal elements—such as photos, videos, stories, infographics, and posts—work together to build a cohesive brand identity that reflects its values, aesthetic, and mission [5]. It is crucial that content remains both high-quality and consistent, enabling brands to establish a clear and coherent communication strategy. This, in turn, enhances consumer trust, as the brand becomes recognizable and associated with specific attributes such as innovation or service excellence.

The choice of communication channels is also critical for effective branding. Each social platform has distinct characteristics, requiring content strategies to be adapted accordingly. For instance, Instagram and TikTok, with their

strong visual orientation, are ideal for showcasing the aesthetic elements of cosmetic services and engaging audiences through video content and storytelling [2, 9]. In contrast, Facebook and YouTube are better suited for delivering more in-depth information, educational materials, and testimonials, which help strengthen credibility and trust [7]. This differentiated approach enables brands to tailor messaging to the unique strengths of each platform and maximize their communication impact.

The table below outlines the key mechanisms of brand formation through social media:

**Table 2** Mechanisms of Brand Formation Through the Use of Social Networks [2, 5, 7, 8]

Mechanism	Description	Impact on Brand Image
Audience Engagement	Active user interaction with content (likes, comments, shares, discussions), fostering emotional connection	Increases consumer loyalty and trust; generates positive brand associations
Content Strategy	Creation of high-quality visual and verbal content reflecting brand values—using photos, videos, storytelling, infographics	Enhances brand recognition, ensures a consistent image, and boosts brand appeal and credibility
Choice of Communication Channels	Adapting content strategy to the specific features of each platform (Instagram, TikTok for visual content; Facebook, YouTube for educational and long-form content)	Optimizes audience reach, maximizes platform potential, and improves communication effectiveness

In sum, the mechanisms of brand formation via social media represent a multifaceted process that encompasses active audience engagement, strategically crafted content, and careful platform selection. These elements not only help inform consumers but also facilitate the development of deep emotional connections—crucial for building a strong brand image in the competitive landscape of aesthetic services. Moreover, research findings indicate that the synergy among these mechanisms supports sustainable brand growth and increases market share, making them indispensable components of contemporary marketing strategies in the cosmetic industry.

#### 4. Empirical Approach and Methodological Aspects of the Study

To analyze the impact of social media and influencers on brand perception in the aesthetic services sector, this study draws on research conducted in [2] using a correlational design. This approach enables the identification of relationships between influencer characteristics—namely appearance, personality traits, and behavior—and the degree of audience engagement, all of which collectively shape brand perception.

The study focuses on members of Generation Z (aged 18–26) as the primary target audience, given their active use of social media and influence on consumer behavior in the beauty and cosmetic services industry [2]. A purposive sampling method was employed to ensure the inclusion of users with active social media accounts who follow beauty influencers and have experience purchasing aesthetic services [9]. Data were collected through an online survey comprising standardized Likert-scale questions, allowing for the objective measurement of perceptions toward influencers and levels of user engagement. The demographic and behavioral characteristics of the respondents are summarized in figure 1.

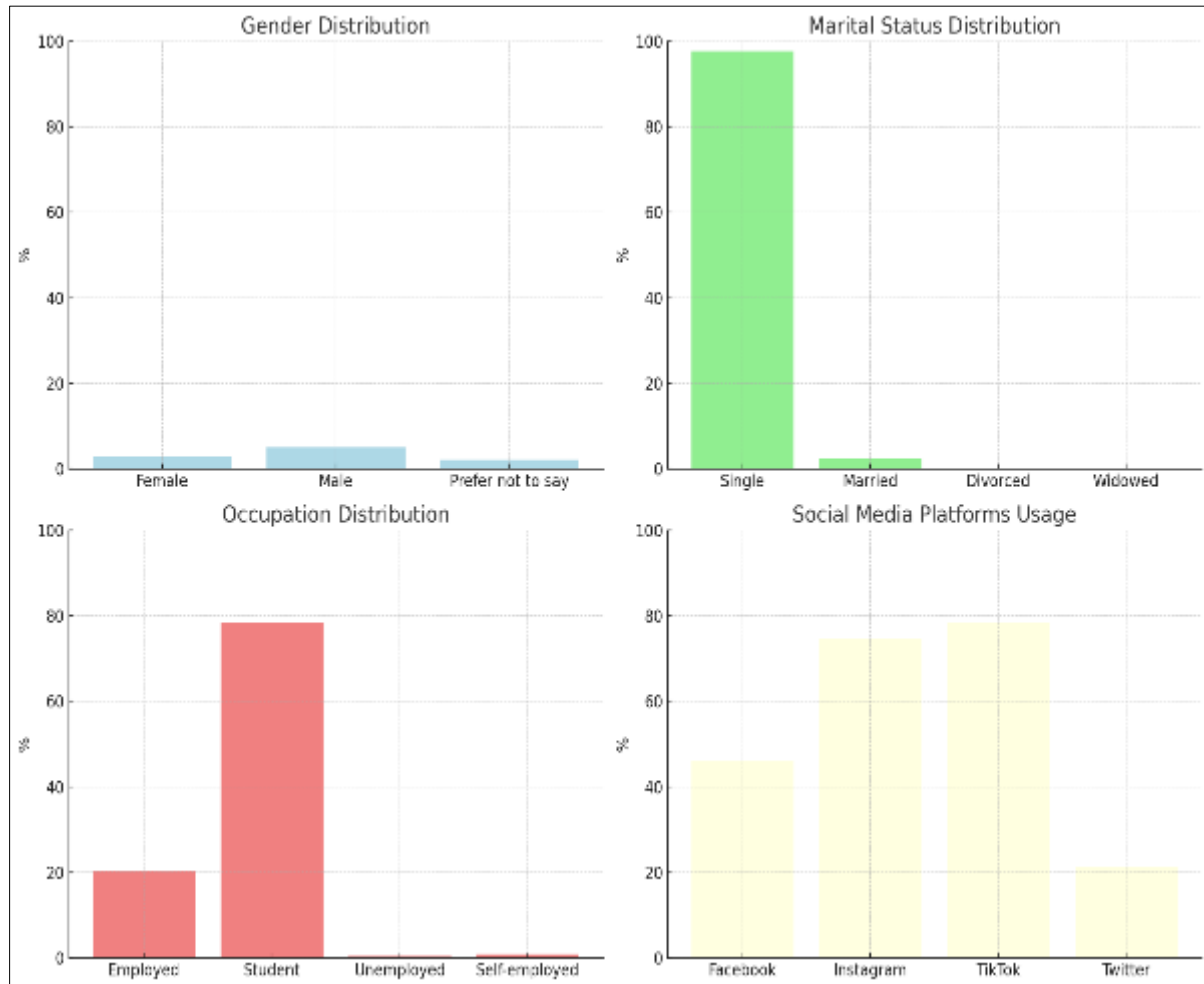
Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), a method that allows for the assessment of both direct and indirect relationships between observed variables. SEM also enabled the validation of the hypothesis that influencer appearance, personality, and behavior serve as key determinants in shaping a positive brand image [10]. The statistical evaluation included assessments of reliability and validity of the measurement scales, verified through Cronbach's alpha coefficients, standard deviations, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values.

Based on a sample of 380 participants, the study revealed a diverse demographic profile. Gender distribution was notably skewed: the majority identified as female (72.9%), with male respondents comprising only 15.0%, and 12.1% choosing not to disclose their gender identity.

Analysis of marital status indicated that nearly all participants were unmarried (97.6%), reflecting the prevalence of non-formalized relationships among the sample, while only a small portion (2.4%) were married.

Employment status further emphasized segmentation within the sample: students represented the dominant group (78.4%), reflecting the study's focus on younger users, while employed individuals accounted for 20.3%. A small portion (1.3%) were either self-employed or unemployed, adding to the sample's representativeness.

When asked about the influence of social media on their aesthetic preferences and perceptions of cosmetic products, respondents emphasized the importance of digital media content and personalities. Particular attention was given to platforms such as TikTok (78.4%), Instagram (74.7%), and Facebook (46.1%), highlighting their relevance for followers of beauty brands.



**Figure 1** Demographic and Behavioral Characteristics of the Respondents [2]

Overall, the integrated methodological approach yielded reliable results that contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of branding strategies in the evolving landscape of the aesthetic services market.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, social media plays a vital role in shaping the brand image of aesthetic service providers by enabling active audience engagement and the use of high-quality content. Collaboration with influencers who possess strong visual appeal, distinctive personality traits, and positive behavior enhances the emotional connection between the brand and its audience, ultimately fostering greater loyalty and trust. At the same time, factors such as influencer popularity and general credibility did not demonstrate a significant effect on brand perception within the scope of this study, highlighting the need for further examination of specific influencer attributes in future research.

The findings have practical relevance for marketers working with aesthetic brands, as they offer a framework for developing communication strategies that align more closely with the expectations of the target audience in a digitally transforming market.

Future research could expand the sample to include other age groups and cultural contexts and adopt mixed-method approaches to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which influencers shape consumer behavior. Thus, the present study contributes not only to the theoretical advancement of digital branding but also offers actionable insights for strategic application in the competitive landscape of the aesthetic services industry

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