The Role of Influencer Gender in Shaping Commenter's Perception of Their Skin

Diya Chilukuri,[1] Abby Hommer,[2] Queeneth Henshaw,[2] Gabby Hon[2]

[1]Middleton High School, [2]Department of Pediatrics, University of Wisconsin-Madison

SMAHRT — SOCIAL MEDIA & ADOLESCENT HEALTH RESEARCH TEAM

Department of Pediatrics — UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

UW Health Kids

Introduction

Background information
- Among adolescents as young as 12, 75% of them report feeling embarrassed by their appearance and 85% of teens have acne.
- Additionally, excessive skincare routines on social media promote anxiety in adolescents.

Gap
- Many skincare influencers are female-targeted, which suggests limited research comparing both male-targeted and female-targeted skincare content.
- Consequently, there is less research on how the gender-target of the influencer affects the viewers of the social media posts.

Purpose
- The purpose of this study was to examine how the comments under skincare content on TikTok made by male-targeted vs female-targeted influencers differ in the commenter's satisfaction with their own skin.
- Research question: How does the gender of influencers (male-targeted vs female-targeted) posting TikTok skincare videos under searches #mensskincare #acne and #girlsskincare #acne impact commenters' satisfaction with their own skin?

Methods

Design
- Content analysis and Linguistic Inquiry Word Count (LIWC) analysis of skincare videos and comments on TikTok with a gendered hashtag (ex. #mensskincare, #skincareforgirlies) and an acne-related hashtag (ex. #acne, #acneskincare).

Subjects
- TikTok videos with influencers either doing or describing a skincare routine with products.

Data Collection
- Videos were searched for using the hashtags #mensskincare and #acne or #girlsskincare and #acne. Videos had to include some variation of these hashtags in the caption and videos had to have at least 25 comments.
- Ten videos were selected per hashtag pair by choosing every other eligible video. From each video, five relevant comments were collected. Comments had to be in English, 5 or more words, related to skincare, and not just a question about products.

Measures

LIWC variables	Negative emotions - hurt,ugly, nasty	Positive emotions - love, nice, sweet	Quantifiers - few, many, much	1st person singular - I, me, mine	2nd person - You, your, thou
Content analysis variables	Number of products - no. of products used or described	Dermatologist recommended skin care	Dermatologist influencer - I'm a board certified dermatologist		

Analysis
- *Average number of likes and comments on male-targeted and female-targeted videos*
- *Percentage of positive emotions, negative emotions, first person language, and second person language on male-targeted and female-targeted videos.*
- *Average number of products, videos with dermatologist recommended skincare, and dermatologist influencers*

Results

Subject Information
- *20 videos, 10 male-targeted and 10 female-targeted*
- *100 comments total*

	Male	Female
Average likes	148,638	234,490
Average comments	650.7	678.9

Negative emotion comments

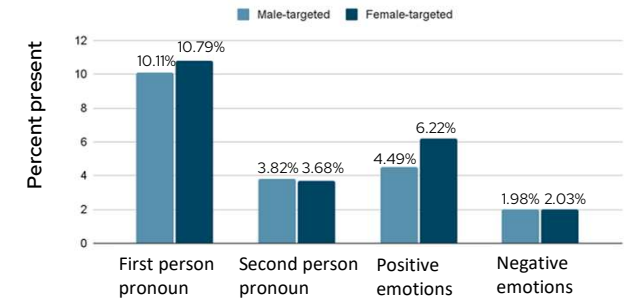cera ve is actually terrible for u
2024-8-3   Reply

K skincare ruined my face (I usually used French one so I'll go back to it)
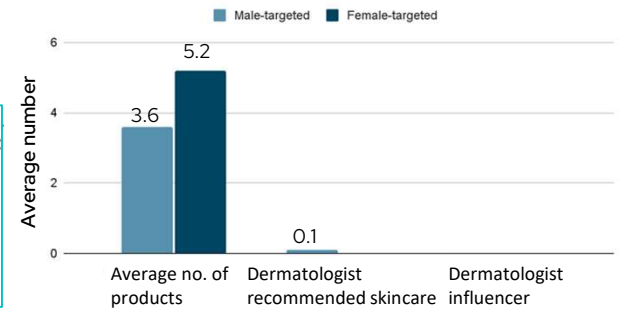3-28   Reply

Positive emotion comments

Love Korean skin care. Best thing for my skin
7-8   Reply

I love the laneige skincare line but their water bank moisturizer repaired my very broken skin barrier so I live by it 😊🥲
3-7   Reply

Comparison of LIWC variables between male-targeted and female-targeted videos

Male-targeted / Female-targeted

- First person pronoun: 10.11% / 10.79%
- Second person pronoun: 3.82% / 3.68%
- Positive emotions: 4.49% / 6.22%
- Negative emotions: 1.98% / 2.03%

Comparison of content analysis variables between male-targeted and female-targeted videos

Male-targeted / Female-targeted

- Average no. of products: 3.6 / 5.2
- Dermatologist recommended skincare: 0.1 / —
- Dermatologist influencer: — / —

Conclusions

Key findings
- *Female-targeted posts had **slightly more first person pronoun usage** than male-targeted posts.*
  - *This may indicate that commenters on female-targeted posts talked more about themselves.*
- *Female-targeted posts had **more positive emotion** than male-targeted posts had.*
  - *This may show that female-targeted posts had a more positive atmosphere, so commenters may have been more inclined to react positively.*
- *There was **only 1 video out of 10 male-targeted videos** that had dermatologist recommended skincare, and there were **no dermatologist influencers** in either male-targeted or female-targeted videos.*
  - *This suggests that the credibility of these influencers' skincare routines may not be high because they don't have the necessary credentials to give skincare advice.*

Limitations
- *LIWC can't detect positive or negative emotion in cultural comments or slang, so some comments may have had LIWC variables such as negative emotion but were overlooked due to this LIWC limitation.*
- *LIWC variables aren't mutually exclusive, so certain comments may have multiple variables (ex. including first person and second person).*

Implications
- *A future study done with statistical analysis could make a stronger correlation between the pronoun usage and emotion, which would better help answer the research question about commenter's satisfaction with their own skin.*

Acknowledgements

Contact us
Diya Chilukuri
diyachilukuri1@gmail.com