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Abstract

Currently, billions of internet users around the world use social media. Skin-whitening product advertisements have become pervasive on social media platforms, particularly targeting young consumers like Thai university students. This research is designed to investigate the impact of these advertisements on students' beauty ideals, self-esteem, and purchasing decisions. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining online surveys with both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions, and focus group interviews with 368 university students from various Thai universities. Structural equation modeling and content analysis were utilized to analyze the data. The findings indicated that exposure to skin-whitening product advertisements on social media had a significant influence on students' perceptions of beauty standards and their self-esteem. The study also discovered that social media engagement with skin-whitening product advertisements positively correlated with students' intention to purchase or use these products. While exposure to advertisements had a positive impact on some students' self-esteem, participants also reported that visual communication and celebrities featured in the advertisements were influential in purchase decisions. Overall, this study highlights the substantial influence of skin-whitening product advertisements on Thai university students' beauty ideals, self-esteem, and purchasing behavior. Ultimately, this research can contribute to discussions on promoting healthy beauty standards and empowering consumer choices.

Keywords: Skin whitening product, Social media advertising, Social media marketing, Purchase intention, Self esteem