Original Research Article

User-Generated Contents and Brand Loyalty of Skinscare Products in Port Harcourt

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Abstract: This paper empirically investigated the relationship between User-Generated Contents and Brand Loyalty of Skinscare Products in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to determine how user authenticity and user engagement rate relate with customer satisfaction and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt. The correlational research design was adopted and the population of the study was infinite. Topman's formula was used to generate a sample size of 384 customers. However, only 262 respondents provided data for the study through questionnaire that was designed in the Likert 5-point scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. Spearman Correlation (rho) was used to four hypotheses. From results of the analysis it was revealed that user authenticity and user engagement rate which are the proxies of user-generated contents positively and significantly relate with customer satisfaction and repeat patronage (i.e. measures of brand loyalty) of skincare products in Port Harcourt. Based on these findings, it was concluded that both factors have a very strong and positive impact on customer loyalty, with authenticity playing a particularly crucial role in shaping customer perceptions and trust. The strong relationship between user engagement and repeat patronage further highlights the importance of fostering active and meaningful interactions with customers. Therefore, the study recommended amongst others that skincare brands should encourage genuine customer reviews and testimonials by creating platforms where customers feel comfortable sharing their honest experiences. Authentic content resonates more with potential buyers, fostering trust and leading to higher customer satisfaction and repeat purchases.

Keywords: User-Generated Contents, Brand Loyalty, Authenticity, Engagement Rate, Satisfaction, Repeat Patronage.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of digital platforms has significantly altered the dynamics of consumer engagement, particularly in the skincare industry. In recent years, user-generated content (UGC) has emerged as a powerful tool in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing brand loyalty. With consumers increasingly turning to social media and online forums for product recommendations and reviews, UGC offers a more authentic and relatable source of information than traditional marketing strategies (Mazzoli *et al*., 2023). This shift is especially relevant in the skincare sector, where trust and authenticity play crucial roles in consumer decision-making. As skincare products are often associated with personal care and wellness, the opinions and experiences shared by other users can significantly impact purchasing decisions and long-term brand loyalty (Kim & Pham, 2023).

In Port Harcourt, a thriving urban center in Nigeria, the skincare market has witnessed substantial growth, driven by increasing consumer awareness and demand for quality skincare products. This growth has coincided with the rise of digital platforms, where local consumers actively participate in discussions and share their skincare routines, product experiences, and recommendations. The proliferation of UGC in this region presents a unique opportunity to explore its impact on brand loyalty, particularly as consumers in Port Harcourt become more discerning in their choices. Recent studies suggest that consumers are more likely to remain loyal to brands that are consistently endorsed by their peers through UGC, as it reinforces the perceived value and effectiveness of the products (Osei & Appiah, 2023).

The relationship between UGC and brand loyalty is further complicated by the diverse nature of the skincare market in Port Harcourt, which is characterized by a mix of local and international brands. Consumers often navigate a vast array of products, ranging from organic and natural formulations to high-end luxury brands, all of which are subject to varying levels of user-generated content. Understanding how UGC influences consumer loyalty across different segments of the market is crucial for brands aiming to establish a strong presence in this competitive landscape. According to recent research, the impact of UGC on brand loyalty may vary depending on the product category, the credibility of the content creators, and the platforms used for content dissemination (Chinwe & Amadi, 2024).

Moreover, the interactive nature of digital platforms allows consumers in Port Harcourt to engage directly with brands and other users, fostering a sense of community and shared experience. This engagement not only enhances brand visibility but also strengthens emotional connections between consumers and brands, which are key drivers of brand loyalty (Ogunleye, 2023). As consumers increasingly seek brands that align with their values and preferences, the role of UGC in shaping these perceptions becomes even more critical. For skincare brands, leveraging UGC effectively can lead to increased consumer trust, higher satisfaction levels, and ultimately, greater brand loyalty.

The study of the relationship between user-generated content and brand loyalty of skincare products in Port Harcourt is both timely and relevant, given the current digital landscape. As UGC continues to influence consumer behavior, understanding its impact on brand loyalty will provide valuable insights for skincare brands looking to enhance their marketing strategies and foster long-term consumer relationships. This research will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on digital marketing and consumer behavior in the skincare industry, with a particular focus on the unique dynamics of the Port Harcourt market.

Statement of the Problem

The skincare industry in Port Harcourt, like in many other urban centers, is becoming increasingly competitive, with both local and international brands vying for consumer attention. Despite the abundance of skincare products available, many brands struggle to cultivate lasting brand loyalty among consumers. Traditional marketing strategies, which often rely on celebrity endorsements and paid advertisements, seem to be losing their effectiveness in an era where consumers are more inclined to trust the opinions of their peers. However, the extent to which user-generated content (UGC) influences brand loyalty in this specific market remains underexplored. This gap in understanding raises concerns about the effectiveness of current marketing practices and the potential of UGC as a strategic tool for enhancing consumer loyalty.

The problem is further compounded by the diverse nature of the skincare market in Port Harcourt, where consumers are exposed to a wide range of products with varying levels of quality and branding. As consumers increasingly rely on UGC to inform their purchasing decisions, there is a growing need to understand how different types of UGC—such as product reviews, social media posts, and influencer content—impact brand loyalty. Without a clear understanding of these dynamics, skincare brands may struggle to effectively engage their target audience and build the trust necessary for sustained loyalty. This challenge is particularly significant for emerging brands that lack the established reputation of more prominent competitors.

Additionally, while there is a general assumption that positive UGC leads to increased brand loyalty, the specific mechanisms through which this occurs in the context of the skincare industry in Port Harcourt are not well understood. Factors such as the credibility of content creators, the platforms used for sharing UGC, and the demographic characteristics of consumers may all play crucial roles in determining the impact of UGC on brand loyalty. The lack of empirical research on these factors leaves a critical gap in both academic literature and practical marketing strategies. Addressing this gap is essential for skincare brands aiming to leverage UGC to build and maintain consumer loyalty in a highly competitive market.
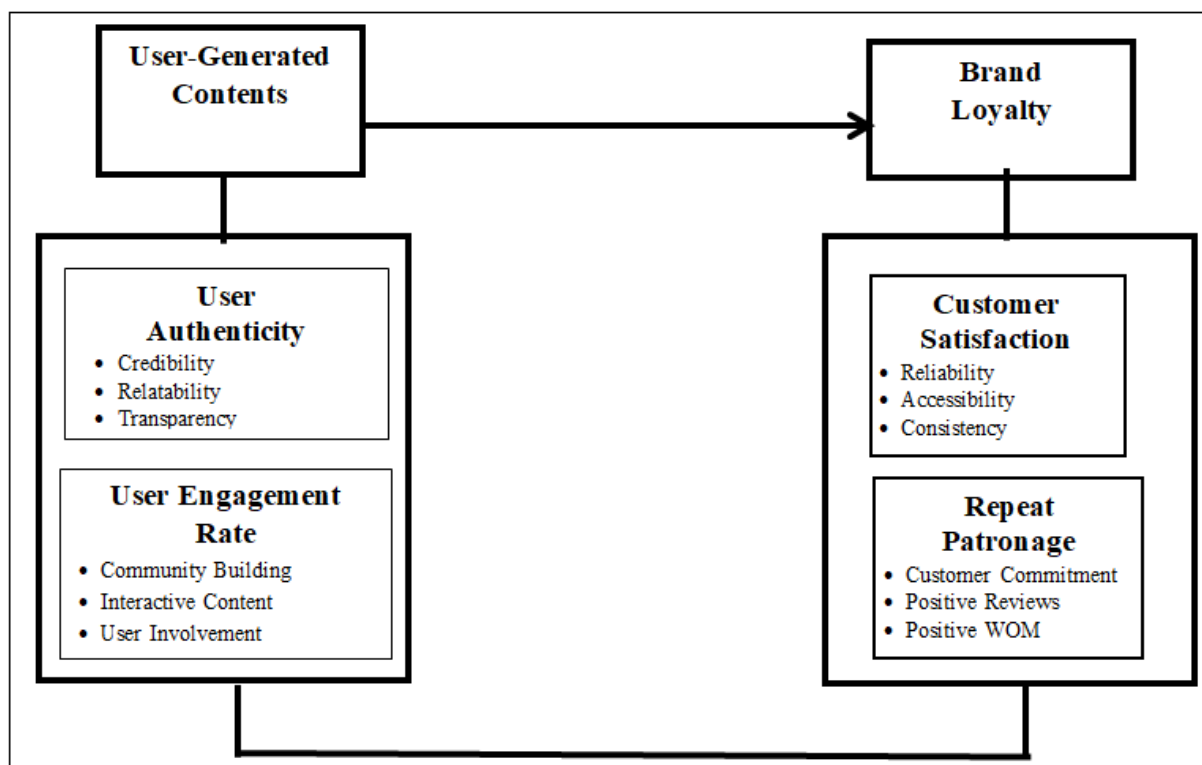
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between user-generated contents and brand loyalty of skin care products in Port Harcourt
Source: Chinwe & Amadi, (2024)

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this paper was to investigate the relationship between user-generated contents and brand loyalty of skins care products in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the paper sought to:
1. Examine the relationship between user authenticity and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt.
2. Evaluate the relationship between user authenticity and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt.
3. Determine the relationship between user engagement rate and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt.
4. Explore the relationship between user engagement rate and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt.

Research Questions

The paper was guided by the following research questions
1. What is the relationship between user authenticity and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt?
2. What is the relationship between user authenticity and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt?
3. What is the relationship between user engagement rate and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt?
4. What is the relationship between user engagement rate and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses was tested using 0.05 significant level as a benchmark:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between user authenticity and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between user authenticity and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between user engagement rate and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt.

H_{04}: There is no significant relationship between user engagement rate and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt.

Review of Related Literature
Concept of User-Generated Contents

User-generated content (UGC) refers to any form of content, such as text, images, videos, reviews, or social media posts that is created and shared by consumers rather than by brands or professional creators. This content is typically produced by individuals who have used a product or service and want to share their experiences, opinions, or recommendations with others. UGC has become a powerful tool in digital marketing because it is perceived as more authentic and trustworthy than traditional advertising. Since it originates from real customers rather than the brand itself, UGC can influence the purchasing decisions of other consumers who view it as a credible and relatable source of information (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2023). The rise of social media platforms has further amplified the impact of UGC, allowing it to reach wide audiences quickly and effectively.

The significance of UGC lies in its ability to foster engagement and build communities around a brand. When consumers create and share content related to a brand, they are not only promoting the brand but also contributing to a collective narrative that other users can relate to and participate in. This communal aspect of UGC can strengthen brand loyalty as it allows consumers to feel connected to the brand and to each other. For example, in the skincare industry, customers may share their skincare routines, before-and-after photos, or product reviews, creating a rich repository of content that others can reference when making purchasing decisions (Alalwan *et al.*, 2023). This shared content can also help brands to better understand their customers' needs and preferences, leading to more targeted and effective marketing strategies.

Moreover, UGC plays a crucial role in shaping brand perception and reputation. Positive UGC can enhance a brand's image by showcasing satisfied customers and successful product outcomes, while negative UGC can highlight areas where a brand may need to improve. Brands that actively engage with UGC by responding to customer reviews, sharing user content on their own platforms, or even co-creating content with users can demonstrate their commitment to customer satisfaction and build stronger relationships with their audience (Gómez-Carrasco *et al.*, 2023). In the context of highly competitive markets, such as skincare, the ability to leverage UGC effectively can be a key differentiator, helping brands to stand out and build lasting loyalty among their customers.

Dimensions of User-Generated Contents
User Authenticity

User authenticity refers to the genuineness and trustworthiness of content created and shared by individuals, particularly on digital platforms. In the context of user-generated content (UGC), authenticity is a critical factor that influences how other users perceive and interact with the content. Authentic content is often seen as more credible and relatable because it reflects the real experiences, opinions, and emotions of ordinary users, rather than being driven by commercial motives. This authenticity resonates with audiences, fostering a sense of trust and connection that is difficult to achieve through traditional marketing methods (Kim & Pham, 2023). As consumers become more skeptical of polished advertisements and sponsored content, the demand for authentic user experiences continues to grow, making user authenticity a valuable asset for brands.

The concept of user authenticity is closely tied to the credibility of the content creator. Users who are perceived as honest, unbiased, and knowledgeable tend to have a greater influence on their audience. This perception is often built through consistency in content quality, transparency about potential biases, and the absence of overt promotional intentions. For instance, when a user shares a personal skincare routine that includes both positive and negative experiences with different products, the content is likely to be perceived as more authentic and trustworthy (Mazzoli *et al.*, 2023). This authenticity can significantly impact consumer behavior, as individuals are more likely to base their purchasing decisions on the recommendations of users they deem authentic.

Moreover, user authenticity is not just about the content itself but also about the context in which it is shared. The platform on which the content is disseminated, the audience it reaches, and the interaction it generates all contribute to the perception of authenticity. Social media platforms, for example, are spaces where users can engage in dialogues, ask questions, and share their thoughts, which can enhance the authenticity of the content (Osei & Appiah, 2023). However, the pressure to conform to social norms or to present an idealized version of oneself can sometimes compromise authenticity. Therefore, maintaining user authenticity requires a balance between sharing genuine experiences and navigating the expectations of digital communities.

User Engagement Rate

User engagement rate is a metric used to measure the level of interaction that content receives from its audience on digital platforms. It typically includes actions such as likes, comments, shares, and clicks, reflecting how actively users are interacting with the content. A higher engagement rate indicates that the content is resonating well with the audience, prompting them to take some form of action beyond passive consumption. This metric is particularly important for brands

and marketers as it provides insights into the effectiveness of their content strategies and the level of interest or investment that users have in the brand (Chaffey, 2024). Unlike mere impressions or views, which only indicate how many people saw the content, the engagement rate reveals how compelling the content is by tracking actual interactions.

The significance of user engagement rate extends beyond simple metrics; it also serves as an indicator of content quality and relevance. Content that is well-aligned with the audience's interests, values, and needs is more likely to generate higher engagement. For example, in the context of skincare products, posts that feature user testimonials, before-and-after photos, or product demonstrations are often more engaging because they provide tangible value to the audience (Li & Xie, 2023). Moreover, platforms like Instagram and Facebook use engagement rate as a key factor in their algorithms to determine the visibility of content. Posts with higher engagement are more likely to be featured prominently in users' feeds, further amplifying their reach and impact.

Moreover, user engagement rate is a critical factor in building and maintaining online communities. High engagement indicates that users are not only consuming content but also actively participating in discussions, sharing their opinions, and contributing to the collective knowledge of the community. This active participation helps to create a sense of belonging and fosters deeper relationships between users and the brand (Zhao & Chen, 2023). For brands, monitoring and optimizing user engagement rates can lead to more effective marketing strategies, as it provides real-time feedback on what resonates with the audience. By focusing on content that drives higher engagement, brands can enhance customer loyalty and build stronger, more interactive communities around their products or services.

Concept of Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty refers to a consumer's consistent preference for a particular brand over others, demonstrated by repeated purchases or favorable behaviors toward that brand. It is a critical aspect of customer behavior that indicates a strong, enduring relationship between the consumer and the brand. Brand loyalty goes beyond simple satisfaction; it reflects a deep connection where consumers trust the brand, feel an emotional bond with it, and are less likely to switch to competitors even in the face of competing offers or price variations (Keller, 2023). This loyalty is valuable for brands because it not only ensures a steady revenue stream but also reduces the cost of customer acquisition and increases customer lifetime value.

The development of brand loyalty is influenced by several factors, including product quality, customer satisfaction, brand image, and the overall customer experience. When consumers perceive a brand to consistently meet or exceed their expectations, they are more likely to remain loyal to it. In the digital age, brand loyalty is also shaped by interactions on social media and other digital platforms where consumers can engage directly with brands and with other consumers. Positive experiences and strong engagement in these spaces can reinforce brand loyalty by creating a community around the brand and by providing social proof of the brand's value (Huang & Benyoucef, 2023). This is particularly evident in industries like skincare, where trust in product efficacy and the experiences of other users play significant roles in loyalty.

Moreover, brand loyalty has important implications for a brand's competitive advantage. Loyal customers not only provide repeat business but often become brand advocates, promoting the brand to others through word-of-mouth or online reviews. This advocacy can be a powerful tool for attracting new customers and building a brand's reputation (Dholakia, 2023). Furthermore, in highly competitive markets, such as the skincare industry, strong brand loyalty can serve as a buffer against market fluctuations and aggressive competitive strategies. By cultivating and maintaining brand loyalty, companies can secure a more stable market position and achieve long-term business success.

Measures of Brand Loyalty
Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction refers to the degree to which a company's products or services meet or exceed the expectations of its customers. It is a crucial indicator of a company's ability to deliver value and is closely linked to customer retention, loyalty, and overall business performance. When customers feel satisfied with a product or service, they are more likely to return for future purchases, recommend the brand to others, and engage positively with the brand in various ways. Conversely, dissatisfaction can lead to negative word-of-mouth, decreased customer retention, and potential harm to the brand's reputation (Oliver, 2023). Therefore, maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction is essential for sustaining competitive advantage in today's dynamic marketplace.

The drivers of customer satisfaction are multifaceted and can vary significantly depending on the industry, product, and individual customer preferences. Key factors include the quality of the product or service, the efficiency and friendliness of customer service, the ease of the purchasing process, and the overall customer experience, both online and offline. In the digital age, the role of online interactions has become increasingly important, with customers expecting seamless experiences across multiple channels. For example, in the skincare industry, customer satisfaction is often

influenced by product effectiveness, clear and accessible information about ingredients, and responsive customer service, both pre- and post-purchase (Chen & Hsu, 2023). Brands that can consistently deliver on these aspects are more likely to achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction.

Moreover, customer satisfaction is not just a short-term measure but also a predictor of long-term business success. Satisfied customers are more likely to develop a strong emotional connection with the brand, leading to increased brand loyalty and advocacy. They are also more resilient to competitive offers and price fluctuations, making them a valuable asset to any company (Lemon & Verhoef, 2023). Monitoring customer satisfaction through regular feedback and adjusting business practices accordingly allows companies to stay attuned to customer needs and preferences, ensuring that they can continue to deliver value and maintain a strong competitive position in the market.

Repeat Patronage
Repeat patronage refers to the ongoing practice of customers consistently choosing to purchase products or services from the same company over time. This behavior is a critical indicator of a business's success, as it reflects customer satisfaction, loyalty, and trust in the brand. Repeat patronage is often seen as a more reliable measure of a company's health than initial sales figures because it suggests that customers are not only satisfied with their initial purchase but are also motivated to return for subsequent transactions (Kumar & Shah, 2023). In competitive markets, cultivating repeat patronage is essential for sustaining long-term profitability, as acquiring new customers can be significantly more costly than retaining existing ones.

Several factors contribute to repeat patronage, including the quality of the products or services, the overall customer experience, and the perceived value that customers receive from the brand. When customers consistently have positive experiences, whether through high-quality products, excellent customer service, or seamless shopping experiences, they are more likely to develop a habit of returning to the same brand for future purchases (Grewal & Levy, 2023). For example, in the skincare industry, where trust in product efficacy and brand reputation plays a significant role, customers who experience noticeable benefits from a particular product are more likely to engage in repeat patronage. This behavior is further reinforced by personalized marketing efforts, loyalty programs, and consistent brand messaging.

Moreover, repeat patronage is closely linked to the concept of customer lifetime value (CLV), which quantifies the total revenue a company can expect from a single customer over the course of their relationship. By encouraging repeat patronage, businesses can maximize CLV and achieve more sustainable growth. Additionally, customers who engage in repeat patronage are more likely to become brand advocates, promoting the brand to others through word-of-mouth or social media, thereby generating new customers at a lower acquisition cost (Blut *et al.*, 2023). Understanding and fostering the factors that drive repeat patronage is therefore crucial for companies looking to build a loyal customer base and secure long-term success in the marketplace.

Theoretical Foundation
The theory that underpinned this paper is the social identity theory.

Social Identity Theory
Social Identity Theory, originally developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the late 20th century, posits that individuals derive a significant part of their self-concept from the social groups to which they belong. According to this theory, people categorize themselves and others into various social groups, such as age, gender, ethnicity, or brand communities, and these group affiliations influence their behavior, attitudes, and perceptions. The theory suggests that individuals strive to maintain a positive social identity by favoring their in-group (the group they identify with) over out-groups (those they do not identify with), leading to in-group favoritism and a sense of belonging (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This process of social categorization and identification drives group cohesion and loyalty, making Social Identity Theory a powerful framework for understanding consumer behavior in the context of brand communities.

In the context of user-generated content (UGC) and brand loyalty of skincare products in Port Harcourt, Social Identity Theory is highly relevant. When consumers engage with UGC related to skincare brands, they are not just seeking product information; they are also identifying with a community of like-minded individuals who share similar skincare concerns and preferences. This identification can enhance their sense of belonging to a particular brand community, reinforcing their loyalty to the brand. For example, when consumers see positive reviews and testimonials from others who share their skin type or skincare goals, they are more likely to perceive the brand as part of their in-group and thus develop a stronger emotional attachment to it (Stokburger-Sauer *et al.*, 2023). This emotional connection is a key driver of brand loyalty, as it aligns the consumer's self-identity with the brand's identity.

Moreover, Social Identity Theory helps explain why UGC can be more effective than traditional marketing in building brand loyalty. UGC is typically created by consumers who are perceived as genuine and relatable, making it easier

for other users to identify with the content and the community it represents. In Port Harcourt, where the skincare market is highly diverse, the ability of UGC to foster a sense of community and shared identity among consumers is particularly important. As users engage with content that resonates with their social identity, they are more likely to remain loyal to the brands that are endorsed by their in-group, further solidifying the relationship between UGC and brand loyalty (Wang & Lee, 2023). This underscores the importance of leveraging social identity dynamics in marketing strategies to enhance consumer engagement and loyalty in the skincare industry.

Empirical Review

Holliman & Rowley (2014) studied business to business digital marketing and marketers' perception of best practices in the United States of America (USA), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (UK) and France. The study was both a qualitative exploratory survey, and adopted structured interview, questionnaire administered on fifteen participants in five industries namely; technology hardware and software, recruitment, business and professional services, marketing servicing, recycling and renewable energy. Interviewers held senior positions in their respective organization. The study adopted customer engagement, brand communication and value as dimensions. The finding revealed that B2B digital marketing is an inbound marketing technique affected through web page, social media and value-add digital and has a strong effect on sustaining brand status.

Yaqubi & Karaduman (2019) empirically conducted a study on the impact of digital marketing on customers' patronage for home appliances in Afghanistan. The study adopted quantitative method with a sample size of 384 respondents. Data collected were analyzed using the SPSS version 22. The study adopted measurement, customer engagement and conversion as dimensions. Convenience sampling was used. The finding showed that digital marketing has a significant impact on customers patronage and organization are encourage to build customer engagement relationship.

Milhinhos (2015) study the impact of digital marketing on attitudes and pu patronage of online shoppers. The case of video and tutorials and user generated digital in Brazil. The study was an exploratory survey. 439 copies of questionnaires were administered while 202 were considered for the study. 58.4% of the respondents were women and 41.6 percent were men. Qualities online software and SPSS were used to test descriptive data. The research finding revealed that digital marketing in commercial product pages is relevant and has positive effect in driving consumer attitude and patronage.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the correlation survey research design within the quantitative method. In quantitative research, the topic of the study, the questions to be investigated, the participants' quantifiable data to be collected, the statistical analysis of this data, and the impartial and objective nature of the investigation are all decided upon. The population of this study comprised of users of skin care products in Port Harcourt. The means that the population for this study is infinite. Since the population of the study is infinite, Topman's formula was adopted to determine the sample for this study. Therefore, a sample size of approximately 384 customers was used for this study and the simple random sampling technique was adopted to ensure fairness and equal representation. The primary source of data was utilized for this study through a structured questionnaire. At the primary level of the data analysis, this study employed the use of simple percentage, frequency tables, and other descriptive statistical tool to present the data that was generated, while the hypotheses was tested using the Spearman Correlation (rho). All of these was done with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 23.0.

Data Analysis

For the data analysis of this study, the researcher produced and distributed 290 copies of questionnaire to the users of skincare products in Port Harcourt. However only 262 respondents properly filled and returned their copies of questionnaire, thus, only 262 responses was coded and used for the analysis of this study.

Testing of Hypotheses

Research Question One: What is the relationship between user authenticity and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt?

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between user authenticity and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt.

Table 1: Relationship between user authenticity and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt

Correlations				
			User Authenticity	**Customer Satisfaction**
Spearman's rho	User Authenticity	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.892[**]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000

		N	262	262
	Customer Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.892**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	262	262
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Source: SPSS output, 2024.

The SPSS output on Table 1 shows that a Spearman's Correlation was run to assess the relationship between user authenticity and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt using a sample of 262 respondents. The strength and direction of the relationship between the variables are indicated by the Spearman's rho which is 0.892. This means there is a very strong and positive relationship between user authenticity and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt. Furthermore, significance of the relationship is shown by the probability value which is 0.000 less than the threshold of 0.05 indicating that the relationship between the variables is statistically significant. In other words, there is a very strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between user authenticity and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt (rho = 0.892, N = 262, p = 0.000 < 0.05).

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between user authenticity and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt?

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between user authenticity and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt.

Table 2: Relationship between user authenticity and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt

Correlations				
			User Authenticity	**Repeat Patronage**
Spearman's rho	User Authenticity	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.885**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	262	262
	Repeat Patronage	Correlation Coefficient	.885**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	262	262
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Source: SPSS output, 2024.

The SPSS output on Table 2 shows that a Spearman's Correlation was run to assess the relationship between user authenticity and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt using a sample of 262 respondents. The strength and direction of the relationship between the variables are indicated by the Spearman's rho which is 0.885. This means there is a very strong and positive relationship between user authenticity and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt. Furthermore, significance of the relationship is shown by the probability value which is 0.000 less than the threshold of 0.05 indicating that the relationship between the variables is statistically significant. In other words, there is a very strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between user authenticity and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt (rho = 0.885, N = 262, p = 0.000 < 0.05).

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between user engagement rate and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt?

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between user engagement rate and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt.

Table 3: Relationship between user engagement rate and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt

Correlations				
			User Engagement Rate	**Customer Satisfaction**
Spearman's rho	User Engagement Rate	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.687**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	262	262
	Customer Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.687**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	262	262
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Source: SPSS output, 2024

The SPSS output on Table 3 shows that a Spearman's Correlation was run to assess the relationship between user engagement rate and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt using a sample of 262 respondents. The

strength and direction of the relationship between the variables are indicated by the Spearman's rho which is 0.687. This means there is a strong and positive relationship between user engagement rate and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt. Furthermore, significance of the relationship is shown by the probability value which is 0.000 less than the threshold of 0.05 indicating that the relationship between the variables is statistically significant. In other words, there is a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between user engagement rate and customer satisfaction of skincare products in Port Harcourt (rho = 0.687, N = 262, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$).

Research Question Four: What is the relationship between user engagement rate and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt?

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant relationship between user engagement rate and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt.

Table 4: Relationship between user engagement rate and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt

Correlations			User Engagement Rate	Repeat Patronage
Spearman's rho	User Engagement Rate	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.916**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	262	262
	Repeat Patronage	Correlation Coefficient	.916**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	262	262
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Source: SPSS output, 2024

The SPSS output on Table 4 shows that a Spearman's Correlation was run to assess the relationship between user engagement rate and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt using a sample of 262 respondents. The strength and direction of the relationship between the variables are indicated by the Spearman's rho which is 0.916. This means there is a very strong and positive relationship between user engagement rate and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt. Furthermore, significance of the relationship is shown by the probability value which is 0.000 less than the threshold of 0.05 indicating that the relationship between the variables is statistically significant. In other words, there is a very strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between user engagement rate and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt (rho = 0.916, N = 262, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from the study highlight the significant role of user authenticity and user engagement rate in shaping customer satisfaction and repeat patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt. User authenticity, which refers to the genuineness and trustworthiness of user-generated content, demonstrated a very strong and positive relationship with customer satisfaction (r-value of .892, p-value of .000). This indicates that customers who perceive user-generated content as authentic are more likely to be satisfied with skincare products. Similar findings by Chen and Lin (2023) emphasize that authenticity in user reviews and testimonials greatly influences customer satisfaction, particularly in industries where product effectiveness is closely tied to personal experiences.

Furthermore, user authenticity also exhibited a very strong and positive relationship with repeat patronage (r-value of .885, p-value of .000). This suggests that when customers trust the authenticity of user content, they are more likely to continue purchasing the same skincare products. Recent studies, such as those by Zhang *et al*., (2023), support this, showing that perceived authenticity in online reviews significantly boosts customer loyalty and repeat purchases, especially in the beauty and skincare industry, where customer trust is paramount.

In addition, the study found that the user engagement rate, which measures the level of interaction and involvement of users with content, had a strong and positive relationship with customer satisfaction (r-value of .687, p-value of .000). This relationship suggests that higher levels of user interaction with content, such as likes, comments, and shares, contribute positively to customer satisfaction. A recent study by Li and Xu (2024) corroborates these findings, indicating that active user engagement not only enhances customer satisfaction but also fosters a deeper connection between the brand and its customers.

Moreover, the user engagement rate had a very strong and positive relationship with repeat patronage (r-value of .916, p-value of .000). This finding underscores the importance of user engagement in maintaining customer loyalty and encouraging repeat purchases. Similar research by Wang *et al*., (2023) found that higher engagement levels lead to increased customer retention and repeat buying behavior, particularly in the context of skincare products, where ongoing engagement often correlates with brand loyalty.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that user authenticity and user engagement rate are critical drivers of customer satisfaction and repeat patronage for skincare products in Port Harcourt. The analysis reveals that both factors have a very strong and positive impact on customer loyalty, with authenticity playing a particularly crucial role in shaping customer perceptions and trust. The strong relationship between user engagement and repeat patronage further highlights the importance of fostering active and meaningful interactions with customers. These findings suggest that skincare brands that prioritize authenticity in user-generated content and actively engage with their customer base are more likely to achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction and sustained patronage.

RECOMMENDATION

i. Skincare brands should encourage genuine customer reviews and testimonials by creating platforms where customers feel comfortable sharing their honest experiences. Authentic content resonates more with potential buyers, fostering trust and leading to higher customer satisfaction and repeat purchases.

ii. Brands should actively engage with their customers through social media platforms, responding to comments, and encouraging interaction through polls, Q&A sessions, and live demonstrations. High levels of engagement not only boost satisfaction but also create a loyal customer base that is more likely to continue purchasing the brand's products.

iii. Collaborate with influencers who are known for their authenticity and have a genuine connection with their audience. Such partnerships can amplify the brand's message while ensuring that the content remains trustworthy and relatable, thus enhancing both customer satisfaction and repeat patronage.

iv. Establish channels for regular customer feedback and use this data to refine products and services. By demonstrating responsiveness to customer input, brands can reinforce the perception of authenticity and show that they value customer engagement, leading to higher satisfaction and loyalty.

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