



The Influence of Content Marketing by Beauty E-Commerce Platforms on Customer Engagement among Female Students at Private Universities in Guntur District: A Pilot Study

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ABSTRACT

Beauty e-commerce platforms in India increasingly rely on tutorials, reviews, short videos, influencer collaborations and interactive posts, rather than price promotions alone, to attract and retain young customers. This pilot study examines how such content marketing influences customer engagement among female students of private universities in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh. Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire of five profile questions and twenty-five five-point Likert statements, answered by 40 respondents between August and October 2026 and analysed alongside secondary evidence from industry reports and published scholarship. The scale showed high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.97). Respondents agreed with the statements on average (grand mean = 3.99 out of 5), and 90.8 per cent of all ratings were Agree or Strongly Agree. Engagement behaviour (mean = 3.96) was significantly above the neutral point ($t = 9.96$, $p < 0.001$) and correlated strongly with interactive and creative content ($r = 0.96$), personalization ($r = 0.89$), content attraction ($r = 0.88$) and informational value ($r = 0.77$). Engagement differed by frequency of platform use ($F = 4.30$, $p = 0.021$), with daily and weekly users reporting higher engagement than occasional users. Product tutorials, short videos and product reviews were the most preferred formats. Because the sample is small and was chosen by convenience, the findings are indicative rather than conclusive and are intended to guide a larger, probability-based main study.

Key words: *content marketing, customer engagement, beauty e-commerce, female students, Guntur district, social media, pilot study*

1. INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

The way young Indians discover and buy beauty products has changed within a single decade. Where a shopper once relied on a neighbourhood store, a salon or a relative's advice, she now meets a product first as a thirty-second video, a 'get ready with me' reel, a shade-matching guide or a customer review that appears in her feed before she has searched for anything. Beauty e-commerce platforms have recognised this shift and have started

to behave like publishers as well as retailers. They produce and distribute educational and entertaining material in the hope that useful content will build attention, trust and, eventually, purchases. This approach is known as content marketing.

Industry estimates give a sense of the scale of the setting. Ken Research (2025) values the Indian beauty and personal care market at roughly USD 28 billion in 2025 and notes that the country had more than 270 million online shoppers in 2024, while IMARC Group (2025) places the 2025 market at about USD 31.2 billion and attributes part of its growth to improving e-commerce infrastructure and the spread of online delivery. A news report on the sector (Angel One, 2025) adds that the share of Indian consumers who bought beauty products online rose from 13 per cent to 17 per cent in a year and that beauty e-commerce is expected to grow faster than offline retail. Although the exact figures differ between sources, all of them point in the same direction: online channels are becoming a central route through which beauty products reach young women.

Female university students form an especially important audience. They are digitally active, comfortable with video-based platforms, sensitive to peer and influencer opinion, and at an age when brand preferences are still being formed. Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh has a growing number of private universities and professional colleges that draw students from nearby towns and villages as well as from the city itself. Such a student population is an interesting counterpart to the metropolitan consumers who dominate most Indian studies on digital marketing. The present pilot study therefore asks a simple but practical question: when beauty e-commerce platforms publish content, does it actually move these students to look, interact, follow, return and consider buying?

Customer engagement is treated here in the broad sense used in the marketing literature: a customer's cognitive attention to a brand, her emotional connection with it, and the behaviours that follow, such as liking, commenting, sharing, following, revisiting and recommending. The study measures how respondents perceive different qualities of content (attractiveness, usefulness, personalization, promotions, social proof and interactivity) and how these perceptions relate to such engagement behaviours. Because the number of responses is limited, the work is positioned as a pilot study whose purpose is to test the instrument, obtain preliminary estimates and sharpen the hypotheses for a larger investigation.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Content marketing as a communication strategy

Pulizzi (2012) describes content marketing as an approach in which a company earns attention by telling stories and supplying information that audiences value, rather than by interrupting them with conventional advertising. The idea fits well with the argument of Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan (2017) that, in a connected economy, customers increasingly trust the opinions of other customers and the usefulness of what a brand shares more than its direct sales messages. Mangold and Faulds (2009) had earlier observed that social media had become a hybrid element of the promotion mix because brands could now talk to consumers while consumers talked to each other, and Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) classified social media applications by the degree of self-presentation and media richness they allow. Together, these works establish that the content a brand publishes is itself a strategic asset and not merely a by-product of advertising.

2.2 Customer engagement: concepts and measurement

The marketing discipline has produced a substantial body of work on engagement. Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić and Ilić (2011) proposed that engagement is a multidimensional psychological state that emerges from interactive experiences with a brand, while van Doorn and colleagues (2010) emphasised customer engagement behaviours that go beyond purchase, such as word of mouth, recommendations and participation in brand communities. Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) went on to develop and validate a scale for consumer brand engagement in social media, separating cognitive processing, affection and activation. These contributions justify the way the present questionnaire separates what respondents notice and think about content from what they actually do, such as liking, sharing, following and revisiting.

2.3 Content characteristics and audience response

A number of studies have examined which features of brand posts attract responses. De Vries, Gensler and Leeflang (2012) analysed posts on brand fan pages and found that characteristics such as vividness and interactivity influenced the number of likes and comments, although the direction of the effect was not identical for every characteristic. The uses and gratifications tradition (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973) offers a complementary explanation: audiences select media because they expect to obtain information, entertainment, social interaction or personal identity benefits. In the case of beauty content, informational gratification arises from tutorials and ingredient guides, entertainment from reels and challenges, and social gratification from comments, polls and contests. The technology acceptance literature adds that perceived usefulness is a strong driver of continued use of an information system (Davis, 1989), which suggests that content judged useful is more likely to bring a customer back to a platform.

2.4 Beauty e-commerce and the Indian context

Secondary industry sources show why beauty is an appropriate category for studying content marketing. Purchases in this category depend heavily on visual demonstration, shade and texture, ingredient claims and the experience of other users, which are all things that content can supply and a bare product listing cannot. Industry reports reviewed for this study (IMARC Group, 2025; Ken Research, 2025) describe a market that is expanding steadily, with digital channels, premiumisation and rising awareness of skincare among the main drivers. The sector news report cited earlier (Angel One, 2025) similarly points to a strong shift of younger consumers towards online purchasing of beauty products. These sources are commercial and, in some cases, based on proprietary models, and they are therefore used here only to describe the market setting and not to test the hypotheses.

2.5 Synthesis

Taken together, the literature suggests four propositions that guide this study. First, content that is attractive and vivid captures attention. Second, content that is informative and relevant builds perceived usefulness and trust. Third, interactive and personalised content invites participation and repeat visits. Fourth, engagement is not uniform across customers; those who use a platform more often are likely to experience and respond to its content differently from occasional users. The primary survey in this pilot study examines each of these propositions in a specific population.

3. RESEARCH GAP

Although engagement and social media marketing have received considerable scholarly attention, three gaps remain relevant to this work. First, much of the published evidence treats social media marketing in general, while fewer studies look specifically at the content strategies of beauty e-commerce platforms, whose products depend unusually strongly on demonstration and peer proof. Second, most Indian studies draw their samples from metropolitan cities, so little is known about students in district-level educational hubs such as Guntur. Third, existing work often focuses on purchase intention alone, whereas the intermediate behaviours that precede a purchase, such as following a platform, interacting with its posts and revisiting it, are equally important for platform managers. The present pilot study addresses these gaps by concentrating on female students of private universities in Guntur district and by measuring a range of engagement behaviours rather than purchase intention alone.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To describe the demographic profile and platform usage pattern of female students of private universities in Guntur district who use beauty e-commerce platforms.
2. To identify the types of beauty content that attract these students the most.
3. To assess students' perception of the attractiveness, informational value, personalization, promotional appeal, social proof and interactivity of beauty content.
4. To examine the influence of content marketing on customer engagement behaviour, trust and purchase consideration.

5. To analyse whether engagement differs by the frequency of using beauty e-commerce platforms.
6. To offer suggestions to beauty e-commerce platforms and to outline the direction of a larger main study.

5. HYPOTHESES

Each hypothesis is stated in its alternative form (H1) together with the corresponding null hypothesis (H0).

H1: Content marketing by beauty e-commerce platforms has a significant positive influence on the engagement of female students (mean engagement score is significantly above the neutral value of 3). **H0:** the mean engagement score is not different from 3.

H2: Informational value of beauty content is significantly and positively related to customer engagement behaviour. **H0:** there is no relationship.

H3: Interactive and creative content is significantly and positively related to customer engagement behaviour. **H0:** there is no relationship.

H4: Customer engagement differs significantly across groups defined by frequency of use of beauty e-commerce platforms. **H0:** there is no difference between the groups.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research design

The study follows a descriptive and analytical research design based on a cross-sectional survey. It is a pilot study, designed to check the questionnaire, produce preliminary estimates and test the proposed relationships on a small group before a full-scale study is attempted.

6.2 Sample design

The population of interest consists of female students of private universities in Guntur district who use beauty e-commerce platforms. Respondents were reached through a convenience sampling approach by circulating an online form among students. The usable sample consists of 40 respondents. Convenience sampling does not allow results to be generalised statistically to the entire student population, and this limitation is discussed in Section 11. The sample size is consistent with the purpose of a pilot study, in which a small number of respondents is used to examine the working of the instrument.

6.3 Data collection

Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire administered between 24 August 2026 and 9 October 2026. **Secondary data** were drawn from industry market reports, a sector news report and peer-reviewed literature on content marketing and customer engagement, as listed in the References. Secondary sources were used to describe the market setting and to build the conceptual framework; they were not merged with the survey scores for statistical testing.

6.4 Questionnaire preparation

The questionnaire (Annexure I) was prepared after reviewing the literature in Section 2. Part A has five questions on age, level of education, type of university, frequency of using beauty e-commerce platforms and most attractive content type. Part B has twenty-five statements, numbered 6 to 30, measured on a five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932) from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). For analysis the statements were grouped into seven themes: content attraction (Q6–Q8), informational value (Q9–Q12), personalization (Q13 and Q19), promotions and social proof (Q14–Q17), interactivity and creativity (Q18, Q20 and Q21), engagement behaviour (Q22–Q26) and trust and purchase intent (Q27–Q30). The grouping is the researchers' thematic classification and has not yet been confirmed by factor analysis.

6.5 Tools of analysis

Responses were coded and analysed with spreadsheet and statistical software. The tools used were frequency and percentage analysis, mean and standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) for reliability, one-sample t-test against the neutral value of 3, Pearson's correlation coefficient, one-way analysis of variance (with the Kruskal–Wallis test as a non-parametric check) and pie and bar charts for presentation. Mean scores were

interpreted as follows: 1.00–1.79 Strongly Disagree, 1.80–2.59 Disagree, 2.60–3.39 Neutral, 3.40–4.19 Agree and 4.20–5.00 Strongly Agree.

7. DATA ANALYSIS

7.1 Profile of the respondents

Table 1 summarises the profile of the 40 respondents, and Figures 1 to 5 present the same information graphically.

Table 1: Profile of the respondents (n = 40)

Variable	Category	Number	Percentage
Age	Below 18	5	12.5
	18–20	15	37.5
	21–23	5	12.5
	24–26	7	17.5
	Above 26	8	20.0
Level of education	Undergraduate	20	50.0
	Postgraduate	4	10.0
	Other	16	40.0
University type	Management/Business	16	40.0
	Engineering/Technology	8	20.0
	Arts and Science	3	7.5
	Other	13	32.5
Frequency of use	Daily	18	45.0
	Weekly	10	25.0
	Monthly	6	15.0
	Rarely	5	12.5
	Never	1	2.5
Most attractive content	Product tutorials	13	32.5
	Videos/Reels	10	25.0
	Product reviews	8	20.0
	Beauty tips and advice	5	12.5
	Offers and discounts	4	10.0

Source: Primary survey data, 2026.

Age. The largest group of respondents (37.5 per cent) is aged 18–20, followed by those above 26 years (20.0 per cent) and those aged 24–26 (17.5 per cent). Respondents aged 21–23 and below 18 account for 12.5 per cent each. The presence of respondents above 26 suggests that the sample includes postgraduate, research and other non-traditional students, which is consistent with the 40 per cent who chose the ‘Other’ education category.

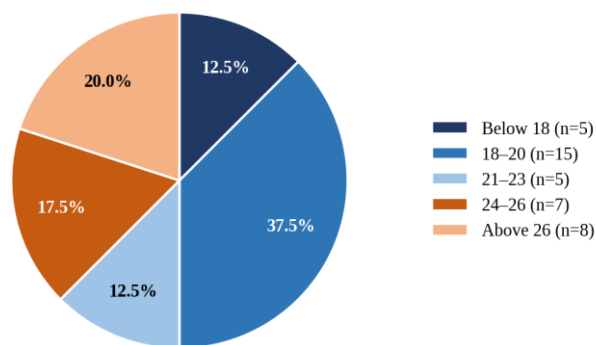


Figure 1: Age distribution of respondents

Education and university type. Half of the respondents are undergraduates (50.0 per cent), 10.0 per cent are postgraduates and 40.0 per cent belong to other categories. By discipline, management and business students form the largest group (40.0 per cent), followed by engineering and technology (20.0 per cent) and arts and science (7.5 per cent), while 32.5 per cent selected 'Other'.

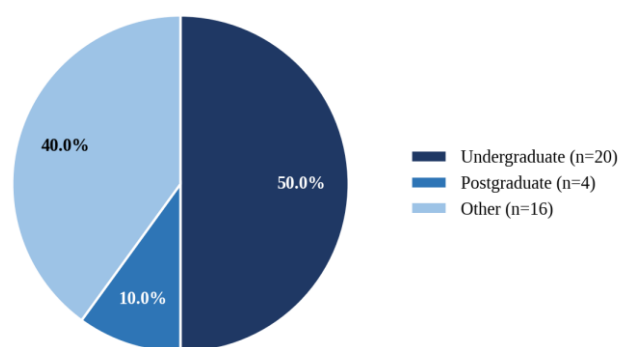


Figure 2: Level of education of respondents

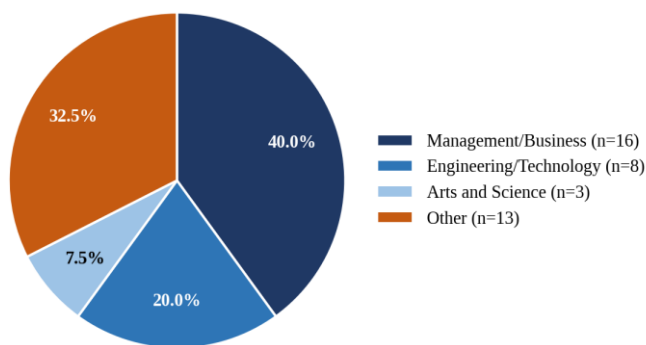


Figure 3: Type of private university programme

Frequency of use. Beauty e-commerce platforms are part of the routine of most respondents: 45.0 per cent use them daily and a further 25.0 per cent weekly, so that seven in ten respondents (70.0 per cent) use them at least once a week. Monthly users account for 15.0 per cent, rare users for 12.5 per cent and one respondent (2.5 per cent) reported never using them.

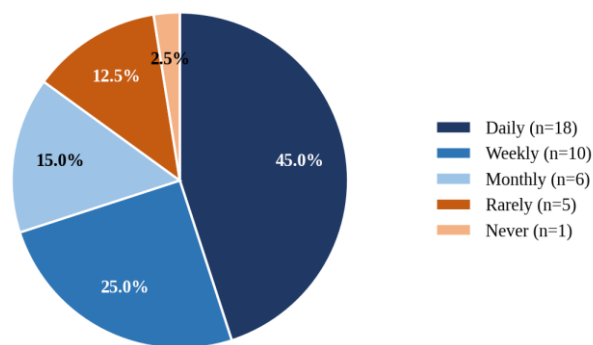


Figure 4: Frequency of using beauty e-commerce platforms

Preferred content type. Product tutorials attract the largest share of respondents (32.5 per cent), followed by videos and reels (25.0 per cent) and product reviews (20.0 per cent). Beauty tips and advice (12.5 per cent) and offers and discounts (10.0 per cent) are chosen least often. Visual and demonstrative formats together (tutorials and videos or reels) account for 57.5 per cent of first preferences, which supports the premise that beauty products are sold best when customers can see them in use.

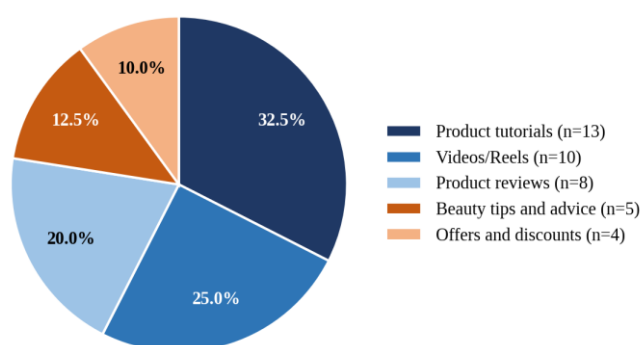


Figure 5: Beauty content type that attracts respondents the most

7.2 Respondents' perception of beauty content marketing

Respondents rated twenty-five statements on the five-point scale. The complete item-wise distribution is given in Annexure II. Across all 1,000 individual ratings (40 respondents × 25 statements), 76.0 per cent were 'Agree' and 14.8 per cent were 'Strongly Agree', so that 90.8 per cent of the ratings were favourable. Only 4.3 per cent were negative ('Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree'), and 4.9 per cent were neutral. Figure 6 shows this overall distribution.

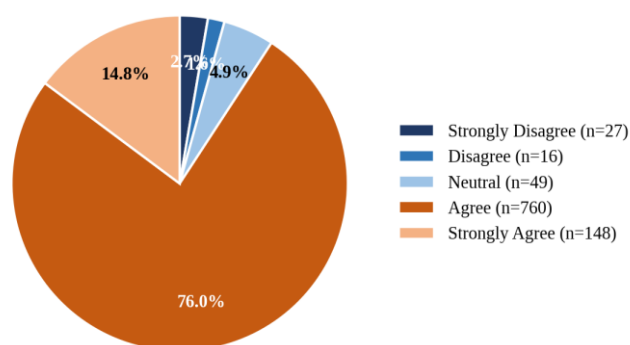


Figure 6: Distribution of all ratings across the 25 statements (1,000 ratings)

At item level, every statement obtained a mean score of 3.58 or above, and all 25 statements fall in the 'Agree' range (mean 3.40 to 4.19). The highest mean was recorded for the statement that content on new product launches attracts attention (Q14, mean = 4.15), followed by the preference for platforms that regularly share useful and relevant content (Q12, mean = 4.10) and the likelihood of clicking on content relevant to personal interests (Q19, mean = 4.10). The lowest mean related to how frequently respondents notice beauty content from e-commerce platforms on digital media (Q6, mean = 3.58; 67.5 per cent agreement), which indicates that exposure is the area where platforms have the most room to grow.

7.3 Theme-wise analysis and reliability

Table 2 gives the mean, standard deviation and reliability for each of the seven themes, and Figure 7 compares the theme means with the neutral point.

Table 2: Theme-wise mean scores, reliability and test against the neutral value (n = 40)

Theme	Items	Mean	S.D.	Cronbach's α	t (vs 3)	p-value
Content attraction	3	3.88	0.76	0.79	7.27	< 0.001
Informational value	4	4.05	0.59	0.87	11.33	< 0.001
Personalization	2	4.03	0.62	0.75	10.46	< 0.001
Promotions and social proof	4	4.05	0.49	0.83	13.53	< 0.001
Interactivity and creativity	3	3.98	0.64	0.89	9.60	< 0.001
Engagement behaviour	5	3.96	0.61	0.89	9.96	< 0.001
Trust and purchase intent	4	3.96	0.54	0.85	11.36	< 0.001
All 25 statements	25	3.99	0.55	0.97	11.35	< 0.001

Source: Primary survey data, 2026. Alpha values of 0.70 or above are conventionally treated as acceptable (Nunnally, 1978).

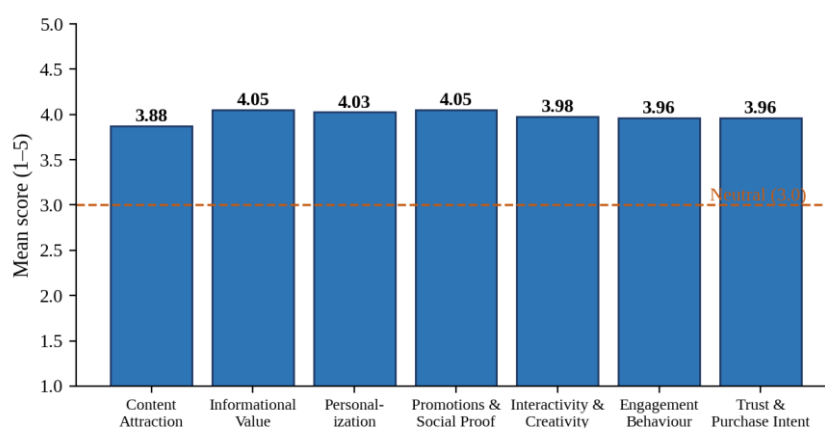


Figure 7: Theme-wise mean scores

All seven themes lie in the 'Agree' range, with means from 3.88 to 4.05, and every theme is significantly above the neutral value of 3 ($p < 0.001$). The reliability coefficients range from 0.75 to 0.89 for individual themes and reach 0.97 for the full scale, which is well above the usual threshold. An alpha this high should be read with some caution: it reflects the fact that most respondents gave very similar ratings across many statements, so the items may overlap or some respondents may have answered in a uniform pattern. This is one of the issues a main study should examine through factor analysis and a more varied scale design.

7.4 Overall influence, interaction and purchase consideration

Three statements capture the outcomes of content marketing most directly. For the statement that content marketing has a significant overall influence on engagement (Q30), 90.0 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (mean = 3.98), as shown in Figure 8. For the statement that content marketing increases interaction with platforms (Q26), 95.0 per cent agreed or strongly agreed (mean = 3.95, Figure 9), and for the likelihood of considering a purchase after engaging with useful content (Q28), 92.5 per cent agreed or strongly agreed (mean = 4.00, Figure 10).

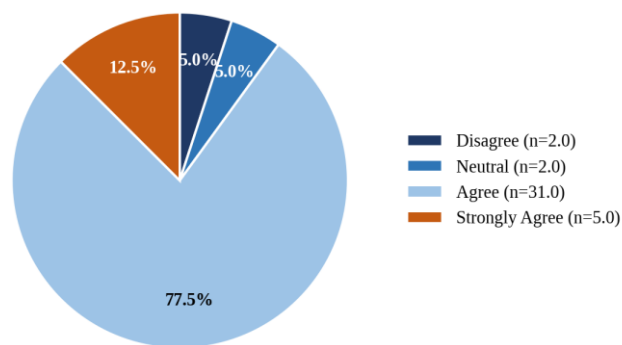


Figure 8: Overall influence of content marketing on engagement (Q30)

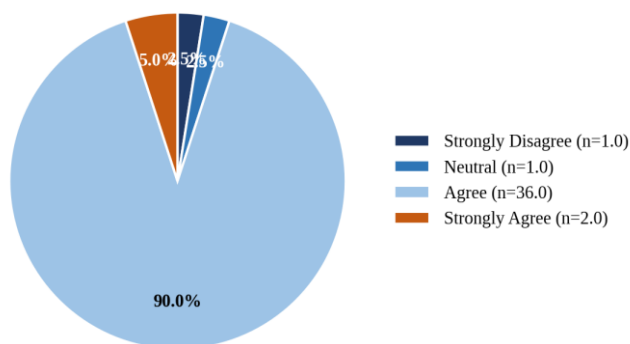


Figure 9: Content marketing increases interaction (Q26)

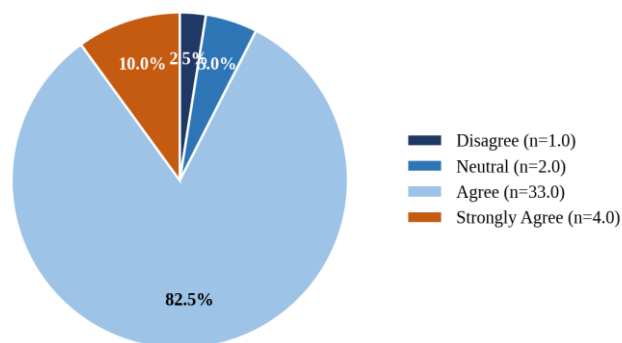


Figure 10: Purchase consideration after useful content (Q28)

7.5 Testing of hypotheses

H1 – Influence on engagement. A one-sample t-test comparing the engagement behaviour score (mean = 3.96, S.D. = 0.61) with the neutral value of 3 gave $t = 9.96$ and $p < 0.001$. The result is the same for the single overall statement Q30 ($t = 9.95$, $p < 0.001$). The null hypothesis is rejected, and H1 is supported.

H2 and H3 – Content qualities and engagement. Table 3 reports Pearson correlations between each content theme and the engagement behaviour score.

Table 3: Correlation of content themes with engagement behaviour (n = 40)

Content theme	Pearson's r	p-value	Strength
Interactivity and creativity	0.96	< 0.001	Very strong
Trust and purchase intent	0.95	< 0.001	Very strong
Personalization	0.89	< 0.001	Strong
Content attraction	0.88	< 0.001	Strong
Informational value	0.77	< 0.001	Strong
Promotions and social proof	0.77	< 0.001	Strong

Source: Primary survey data, 2026. Engagement behaviour is the mean of Q22–Q26.

Informational value is positively and significantly related to engagement ($r = 0.77$, $p < 0.001$), so H2 is supported. Interactive and creative content shows the strongest relationship ($r = 0.96$, $p < 0.001$), so H3 is supported. A multiple regression of engagement on the five content themes was also tried, but the predictors are so strongly inter-correlated (variance inflation factors up to 12.4) that the individual coefficients cannot be interpreted reliably, and it is therefore not reported. Correlation does not establish causation, and the strength of these correlations partly reflects the uniform answering pattern noted earlier.

H4 – Engagement by frequency of use. Respondents were grouped into daily users ($n = 18$), weekly users ($n = 10$) and occasional users, i.e. monthly, rare and non-users combined ($n = 12$). Mean engagement scores were 4.09 for daily users, 4.20 for weekly users and 3.57 for occasional users. A one-way analysis of variance showed a significant difference between the groups ($F(2, 37) = 4.30$, $p = 0.021$). The Kruskal–Wallis test, which does not assume normality, gave a result just above the conventional level ($H = 5.64$, $p = 0.060$). H4 is therefore accepted at the 5 per cent level on the basis of ANOVA, but the support is moderate, and the result should be confirmed on a larger sample.

Table 4: Summary of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Test	Result	Decision
H1: Content marketing influences engagement	One-sample t-test	$t = 9.96$, $p < 0.001$	Supported
H2: Informational value and engagement	Pearson correlation	$r = 0.77$, $p < 0.001$	Supported
H3: Interactive content and engagement	Pearson correlation	$r = 0.96$, $p < 0.001$	Supported
H4: Engagement differs by frequency of use	One-way ANOVA (Kruskal–Wallis check)	$F = 4.30$, $p = 0.021$; $H = 5.64$, $p = 0.060$	Supported (moderate)

Source: Primary survey data, 2026.

Content type and overall influence. As a descriptive supplement, the mean score on Q30 was highest among respondents who preferred product reviews (4.25, $n = 8$) and beauty tips and advice (4.20, $n = 5$), followed by offers and discounts (4.00, $n = 4$), product tutorials (3.92, $n = 13$) and videos or reels (3.70, $n = 10$). The groups are too small for testing, but the pattern suggests that respondents who value credible, advice-oriented content are the most convinced of the influence of content marketing.

8. INTERPRETATIONS

The results show a consistent picture. Respondents are frequent users of beauty e-commerce platforms, and they respond positively to nearly every aspect of the content these platforms publish. The strongest agreement relates to usefulness and relevance (Q11, Q12, Q19) and to the novelty of content (Q14), which is in line with the uses and gratifications view that audiences attend to media that offers them information and something new. The comparatively lower agreement on the frequency of exposure (Q6) suggests that the quality of content is not the main constraint; reach and visibility are.

The very strong association between interactive and creative content and engagement behaviour ($r = 0.96$) is consistent with the engagement literature, which treats participation as an outcome of interactive experiences (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Polls, quizzes and contests invite a response rather than passive viewing, and creative formats keep the viewer on the platform longer. Similarly, the association of engagement with trust and purchase intent ($r = 0.95$) indicates that respondents who interact with content also tend to trust the platform and consider buying from it. However, the data cannot show which of these comes first, and trust may also encourage engagement.

The preference for tutorials, videos and reviews over discounts is also noteworthy. Only 10.0 per cent of respondents named offers and discounts as the most attractive content, although promotional content still received a favourable rating (Q15, mean = 3.95). Price promotions seem to be treated as a supporting incentive, while

demonstration and advice are what draw attention in the first place. The difference in engagement between frequent and occasional users suggests that content marketing works best in a cycle: regular users see more content, engage more, and are therefore exposed to still more content.

9. FINDINGS

- Seven in ten respondents (70.0 per cent) use beauty e-commerce platforms at least weekly, and 45.0 per cent use them daily.
- Product tutorials (32.5 per cent), videos and reels (25.0 per cent) and product reviews (20.0 per cent) are the three most attractive content types; offers and discounts are the least preferred (10.0 per cent).
- Of the 1,000 ratings given, 90.8 per cent were favourable; the grand mean of 3.99 lies in the 'Agree' range.
- All seven content themes have means between 3.88 and 4.05 and are significantly above the neutral value ($p < 0.001$).
- Engagement behaviour is significantly above neutral (mean = 3.96; $t = 9.96$); 90.0 per cent of respondents agree that content marketing has a significant influence on their engagement.
- Engagement correlates most strongly with interactive and creative content ($r = 0.96$), personalization ($r = 0.89$), content attraction ($r = 0.88$) and informational value ($r = 0.77$).
- Daily and weekly users report higher engagement (4.09 and 4.20) than occasional users (3.57), with ANOVA significant ($p = 0.021$) and the non-parametric check borderline ($p = 0.060$).
- The statement on how often respondents see beauty content (Q6) had the lowest mean (3.58), so exposure is the weakest link.
- 92.5 per cent of respondents say useful content makes them more likely to consider purchasing beauty products.

10. SUGGESTIONS

- **Invest in demonstrative formats.** Platforms should give priority to tutorials, short videos and reviews, since these are the formats students prefer most.
- **Add interactive elements.** Polls, quizzes, shade-finder tools and contests show the strongest link with engagement and should be built into the regular content calendar.
- **Increase reach in regional student communities.** Because exposure scored lowest, platforms could use regional languages, campus ambassadors and student-focused collaborations to reach students in district-level hubs such as Guntur.
- **Personalise recommendations.** Content matched to skin type, budget and interests is more likely to be clicked; platforms should use browsing history and simple preference questions to tailor feeds.
- **Use credible voices and genuine reviews.** Influencer and customer-review content received favourable ratings, but platforms should ensure that endorsements are transparent and authentic to protect trust.
- **Treat discounts as a supporting tool.** Promotions should be paired with educational content instead of replacing it.
- **Maintain regular publishing.** Respondents value regular updates and new launches, so a predictable posting rhythm will help keep them coming back.
- **For researchers:** use a larger probability-based sample, a more varied scale and factor analysis in the main study.

11. CONCLUSION

This pilot study examined how content marketing by beauty e-commerce platforms relates to the engagement of female students of private universities in Guntur district. The evidence from 40 respondents, read against industry reports and the engagement literature, indicates that students pay attention to, interact with and trust platforms

that provide useful, relevant, creative and interactive beauty content, and that they say such content makes them more likely to consider a purchase. Frequent users reported higher engagement than occasional users. The practical lesson is that, for this audience, a platform's content is not decoration around the product listing but one of the main reasons for visiting it again.

Limitations. The study has a small sample ($n = 40$) drawn through convenience sampling from a single district and is therefore not statistically representative. Data are self-reported and may be affected by social desirability. Responses were highly uniform, which produced a very high alpha and strong correlations that should be treated cautiously. The 'Other' categories for education and university type were chosen by a large share of respondents and could not be interpreted further. The sample also included respondents under the age of 18, for whom parental or institutional consent should be confirmed and documented in a main study. The grouping of items into themes has not been validated by factor analysis. Finally, the secondary data are derived from commercial reports whose methodologies differ.

Scope for further research. A main study could use a larger and probability-based sample from several districts, compare private and government institutions, include male respondents, test a structural model linking content quality, trust and engagement, and compare the effectiveness of specific content formats through experiments.

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ANNEXURE I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Title: The influence of content marketing by beauty e-commerce platforms on customer engagement among female students at private universities in Guntur district.

Part A – Profile and usage

1. What is your age? (Below 18 / 18–20 / 21–23 / 24–26 / Above 26)
2. What is your current level of education? (Undergraduate / Postgraduate / Other)
3. Which type of private university do you attend? (Arts and Science / Engineering/Technology / Management/Business / Other)
4. How often do you use beauty e-commerce platforms? (Daily / Weekly / Monthly / Rarely / Never)
5. Which type of beauty content attracts you the most? (Product tutorials / Videos/Reels / Product reviews / Beauty tips and advice / Offers and discounts)

Part B – Statements (Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

- Q6. I frequently see beauty-related content from e-commerce platforms on digital and social media platforms.
- Q7. Attractive beauty-related content catches my attention.
- Q8. Product videos and tutorials increase my interest in beauty products.
- Q9. Beauty tips and educational content provide useful information to me.
- Q10. Product images and videos help me understand beauty products better.
- Q11. Informative content increases my interest in a beauty e-commerce platform.
- Q12. I prefer beauty e-commerce platforms that regularly share useful and relevant content.
- Q13. Personalized beauty content is more appealing to me.
- Q14. Content related to new beauty product launches attracts my attention.
- Q15. Offers, discounts, and promotional content encourage me to engage with beauty platforms.
- Q16. Influencer-created beauty content increases my interest in products.
- Q17. Customer reviews and testimonials included in beauty content influence my engagement.
- Q18. Creative and visually appealing content makes me spend more time on a beauty platform.
- Q19. I am more likely to click on beauty content that is relevant to my interests.
- Q20. Interactive content such as polls, quizzes, and contests encourages me to participate.
- Q21. Regular updates and new content keep me interested in beauty e-commerce platforms.
- Q22. I like, comment on, or share interesting beauty-related content.
- Q23. Useful content encourages me to follow beauty e-commerce platforms on social media.
- Q24. Beauty content encourages me to explore more products on an e-commerce platform.
- Q25. I am more likely to revisit a beauty e-commerce platform that provides engaging content.
- Q26. Content marketing increases my interaction with beauty e-commerce platforms.
- Q27. Engaging beauty content increases my trust in the platform.
- Q28. I am more likely to consider purchasing beauty products after engaging with useful content.
- Q29. I would recommend a beauty e-commerce platform that provides valuable and engaging content to others.
- Q30. Overall, content marketing by beauty e-commerce platforms has a significant influence on my engagement with the platform.

ANNEXURE II: ITEM-WISE RESPONSE ANALYSIS (n = 40)

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	S.D.	% A+SA
Q6	I frequently see beauty-related content from e-commerce platforms on digital and social media platforms.	3	1	9	24	3	3.58	0.96	67.5
Q7	Attractive beauty-related content catches my attention.	2	1	2	24	11	4.03	0.95	87.5
Q8	Product videos and tutorials increase my interest in beauty products.	1	1	3	26	9	4.03	0.80	87.5
Q9	Beauty tips and educational content provide useful information to me.	2	0	1	29	8	4.03	0.83	92.5
Q10	Product images and videos help me understand beauty products better.	1	1	2	29	7	4.00	0.75	90.0
Q11	Informative content increases my interest in a beauty e-commerce platform.	0	1	2	30	7	4.08	0.57	92.5
Q12	I prefer beauty e-commerce platforms that regularly share useful and relevant content.	0	1	2	29	8	4.10	0.59	92.5
Q13	Personalized beauty content is more appealing to me.	0	1	3	33	3	3.95	0.50	90.0
Q14	Content related to new beauty product launches attracts my attention.	0	1	2	27	10	4.15	0.62	92.5
Q15	Offers, discounts, and promotional content encourage me to engage with beauty platforms.	0	1	3	33	3	3.95	0.50	90.0
Q16	Influencer-created beauty content increases my interest in products.	0	1	2	31	6	4.05	0.55	92.5
Q17	Customer reviews and testimonials included in beauty content influence my engagement.	1	1	0	31	7	4.05	0.71	95.0
Q18	Creative and visually appealing content makes me spend more time on a beauty platform.	2	0	0	32	6	4.00	0.78	95.0
Q19	I am more likely to click on beauty content that is relevant to my interests.	2	0	0	28	10	4.10	0.84	95.0
Q20	Interactive content such as polls, quizzes, and contests encourages me to participate.	1	1	0	32	6	4.03	0.70	95.0
Q21	Regular updates and new content keep me interested in beauty e-commerce platforms.	1	0	4	32	3	3.90	0.63	87.5
Q22	I like, comment on, or share interesting beauty-related content.	1	0	3	31	5	3.98	0.66	90.0
Q23	Useful content encourages me to follow beauty e-commerce platforms on social media.	2	0	1	33	4	3.92	0.76	92.5
Q24	Beauty content encourages me to explore more products on an e-commerce platform.	2	0	1	31	6	3.98	0.80	92.5
Q25	I am more likely to revisit a beauty e-commerce platform that provides engaging content.	2	0	2	29	7	3.98	0.83	90.0
Q26	Content marketing increases my interaction with beauty e-commerce platforms.	1	0	1	36	2	3.95	0.55	95.0
Q27	Engaging beauty content increases my trust in the platform.	2	0	1	33	4	3.92	0.76	92.5
Q28	I am more likely to consider purchasing beauty products after engaging with useful content.	0	1	2	33	4	4.00	0.51	92.5
Q29	I would recommend a beauty e-commerce platform that provides valuable and engaging content to others.	1	1	1	33	4	3.95	0.68	92.5
Q30	Overall, content marketing by beauty e-commerce platforms has a significant influence on my engagement with the platform.	0	2	2	31	5	3.98	0.62	90.0

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree. Source: Primary survey data, 2026.