



Analyzing Consumer Perception of Dermatologically Tested Claims in Skincare Products Among Working Professionals

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Abstract

The increasing use of scientific and medical claims in skincare marketing has significantly influenced consumer perception and purchase behaviour. Among these claims, the term “dermatologically tested” is widely used to signal product safety, professional evaluation, and reduced health risk. The present study examines how working professionals perceive dermatologically tested claims in skincare products and how such claims influence trust formation, perceived risk, and purchase decisions. A descriptive and exploratory research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 80 working professionals through a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistical tools were used for data analysis. The findings reveal that dermatologically tested claims enhance perceived safety, brand trust, and purchase intention among a majority of respondents. However, the study also identifies a gap between perceived understanding and actual comprehension of dermatological testing. The study concludes that while dermatological claims are effective marketing cues, transparent communication and consumer education are essential to ensure informed decision-making.

Keywords: Dermatologically tested claims; Skincare products; Consumer perception; Trust; Purchase decision; Working professionals

Introduction

The global skincare industry has experienced rapid expansion due to growing awareness of skin health, lifestyle changes, and increasing exposure to environmental stressors. Skincare products are no longer perceived as discretionary items but are considered essential components of daily personal care routines, particularly among urban working professionals. Factors such as pollution, occupational stress, irregular working hours, and prolonged screen exposure have intensified consumer concern regarding product safety and effectiveness.

In response to heightened safety concerns, skincare brands increasingly rely on scientific and medical claims

in their marketing communication. Labels such as “clinically tested,” “dermatologist recommended,” and “dermatologically tested” are widely used to enhance credibility and reassure consumers. Among these, the claim “dermatologically tested” has gained prominence, as it implies professional evaluation and reduced risk of adverse skin reactions.

Working professionals represent a critical consumer segment in the skincare market. Due to time constraints and limited opportunity for detailed product evaluation, this group often relies on simplified cues and expert-based claims while making purchase decisions. Despite the widespread use of dermatological claims, limited empirical evidence exists on how such claims are interpreted and trusted by working professionals. This study seeks to address this gap by examining perception, trust, and behavioural influence associated with dermatologically tested claims in skincare products.

Literature Review

Previous research on consumer behaviour suggests that expert-based and scientific claims act as powerful extrinsic cues during product evaluation. Studies grounded in cue utilization theory indicate that consumers rely on external signals such as labels and certifications when intrinsic product attributes are difficult to assess. Medical terminology has been found to enhance perceived quality and safety, even in the absence of technical understanding.

Research on health-related claims highlights the presence of a “health halo effect,” wherein scientific language leads consumers to overestimate product safety and effectiveness. Perceived risk theory further explains that consumers seek reassurance through expert validation when products are associated with health or safety concerns. Dermatological claims, therefore, function as symbolic indicators of reduced risk.

Studies in the cosmetics domain reveal that safety labels and professional endorsements increase trust and purchase intention. However, several researchers have noted that consumer understanding of such claims remains limited, leading to over-reliance on authority cues rather than informed evaluation. While international studies have examined cosmetic labeling and health communication, limited research focuses on the perception of dermatologically tested claims among Indian working professionals. This study contributes to the literature by empirically examining this under-researched segment.

Research Methodology

A descriptive and exploratory research design was employed to examine consumer perception of dermatologically tested claims in skincare products. Descriptive research was used to systematically capture attitudes, beliefs, and behavioural tendencies, while exploratory research facilitated deeper understanding of emerging perceptions in the Indian skincare market.

Primary data were collected through a structured online questionnaire administered using Google Forms. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select respondents who met the study criteria: working professionals who actively use skincare products and are familiar with dermatological claims. The final sample consisted of 80 respondents from diverse occupational backgrounds.

The questionnaire comprised statements measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” Secondary data were obtained from academic journals, regulatory reports, and industry publications to support the theoretical framework. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive

statistical tools, including percentage analysis and frequency distribution.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis indicates that a majority of respondents are familiar with the term “dermatologically tested” and associate it with product safety and expert evaluation. More than half of the respondents reported that such claims increase trust in skincare brands and reduce concerns related to side effects, irritation, and long-term usage.

The results further demonstrate that dermatologically tested claims significantly influence purchase behaviour. A substantial proportion of respondents indicated a higher likelihood of trying new products, preferring dermatologically tested alternatives, and recommending such products to others. However, the findings also reveal that a notable segment of respondents lacks complete clarity regarding the actual meaning of dermatological testing, suggesting reliance on assumed interpretations rather than technical understanding.

Findings and Discussion

The study reveals that dermatologically tested claims function as strong credibility and reassurance cues in skincare marketing. These claims enhance perceived safety, build trust, and reduce perceived risk among working professionals. The influence of such claims is particularly strong during first-time purchases and product comparison situations.

Brand reputation was found to strengthen the effectiveness of dermatological claims, indicating that trust in the brand amplifies belief in the claim. The findings also suggest that emotional reassurance plays a more significant role than factual knowledge in shaping consumer trust. While positive perception dominates, the lack of standardized understanding raises concerns regarding informed consumer decision-making.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that dermatologically tested claims exert a significant influence on perception and purchase decisions among working professionals. These claims act as symbolic indicators of safety, scientific credibility, and professional validation, leading to increased trust and buying intention. However, a clear gap exists between perceived understanding and actual knowledge of dermatological testing.

It is recommended that skincare brands adopt transparent and ethical communication practices by clearly explaining the meaning and scope of dermatological testing. Regulatory bodies should work toward standardizing cosmetic safety claims to reduce ambiguity. Consumer education initiatives may further promote informed decision-making and reduce over-dependence on superficial cues.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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