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Role of Social Media Credibility in Building Consumer Trust towards Wellness Brands: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

In the digital era, social media has emerged as a primary source of information influencing consumer perceptions, particularly in the wellness sector where trust plays a pivotal role. Wellness products are closely associated with health, lifestyle, and personal well-being, making credibility of information a critical determinant of consumer trust. This study empirically examines the role of social media credibility in building consumer trust towards wellness brands. Primary data were collected from 200 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, reliability testing, correlation, and multiple regression analysis were applied. The findings indicate that source credibility, transparency of information, and consistency of social media communication significantly influence consumer trust. The study offers valuable implications for wellness marketers and contributes to the existing body of knowledge on digital marketing and consumer behavior.

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1. Introduction

The widespread adoption of social media platforms has significantly reshaped the marketing landscape across industries. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn have evolved from simple networking tools into influential marketing channels that allow organizations to communicate directly with consumers. These platforms enable information sharing, interaction, and engagement at an unprecedented scale. As a result, consumers increasingly rely on social media content while forming opinions about brands, particularly in sectors where trust and credibility are critical. The wellness industry represents one such sector where consumer trust is of paramount importance. Wellness products include health supplements, herbal and ayurvedic products, fitness-related items, organic personal care products, and mental well-being solutions. Since these products directly relate to physical and psychological health, consumers tend to perceive higher risk while purchasing them. Consequently, they actively seek credible, transparent, and reliable information before developing trust towards a

brand. Social media credibility refers to the extent to which consumers perceive information available on social media platforms as reliable, authentic, and trustworthy. Credibility is influenced by several factors such as the expertise of the information source, transparency of content, consistency of communication, and absence of misleading claims. When wellness brands communicate credibly on social media, they reduce information asymmetry and perceived risk, thereby strengthening consumer trust. In the Indian context, the growing popularity of wellness products combined with high social media penetration makes it essential to study how social media credibility influences consumer trust. Despite the increasing relevance of this issue, empirical research focusing specifically on social media credibility and trust in wellness brands remains limited. This study seeks to address this gap by empirically examining the role of social media credibility in building consumer trust towards wellness brands.

2. Review of Literature

The relationship between social media communication and

consumer behavior has been widely explored in marketing literature. Researchers have consistently emphasized that credibility of online information plays a crucial role in shaping consumer trust, attitude, and behavioral responses. According to prior studies, credibility acts as a filtering mechanism through which consumers evaluate the usefulness and reliability of digital content.

Source credibility theory suggests that messages delivered by credible sources are more likely to be accepted by consumers. In the context of social media, source credibility depends on factors such as expertise, trustworthiness, and authenticity of content creators. Studies indicate that expert-backed information and influencer credibility significantly enhance consumer trust, particularly for health and wellness-related products.

Electronic word-of-mouth has also received significant attention in earlier research. Scholars argue that peer-generated reviews and testimonials are often perceived as more reliable than brand-generated content. Positive e-WOM has been found to strengthen brand image and trust, while negative reviews can damage credibility. Transparency in communication, including honest disclosure of product benefits and limitations, further enhances trustworthiness.

Consistency of social media communication is another important dimension highlighted in literature. Consistent messaging across platforms reinforces brand identity and reduces consumer confusion. Inconsistent or exaggerated claims may create skepticism and weaken trust. Although existing studies provide valuable insights, most focus on purchase intention or brand loyalty. Limited empirical studies have examined consumer trust as a dependent variable in the wellness sector, especially in the Indian market. This research contributes to the literature by addressing this gap.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze consumers' perception of social media credibility related to wellness brands.
2. To identify key dimensions of social media credibility influencing consumer trust.
3. To examine the relationship between social media credibility and consumer trust.
4. To measure the impact of credibility dimensions on consumer trust.

4. Hypotheses of the Study

- **H1:** Social media credibility has a significant impact on consumer trust towards wellness brands.
- **H2:** Source credibility significantly influences consumer trust.
- **H3:** Transparency of information on social media positively affects consumer trust.
- **H4:** Consistency of social media communication significantly enhances consumer trust.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The study follows a descriptive and analytical research design.

5.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A total of 200 respondents were selected using convenience sampling. The respondents were active social media users and had prior exposure to wellness brands.

5.3 Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Secondary data were collected from journals, books, and online databases.

5.4 Tools for Analysis

- Percentage Analysis
- Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)
- Mean Score Analysis
- Correlation Analysis
- Multiple Regression Analysis

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Particulars	Category	Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	92	46.0
	Female	108	54.0
Age	Below 25	64	32.0
	25–40	86	43.0
	Above 40	50	25.0

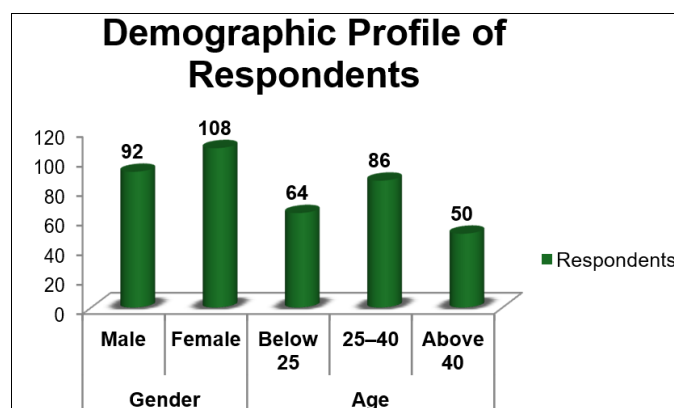


Fig 1: Demographic profile of the study population

Interpretation: The majority of respondents fall within the 25–40 age group, indicating higher engagement with wellness content on social media.

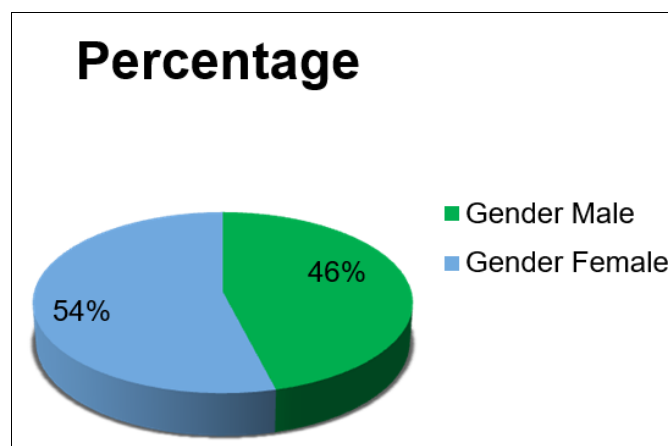


Fig 2: Gender Distribution

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Source Credibility	0.82
Information Transparency	0.80
Communication Consistency	0.84
Consumer Trust	0.87

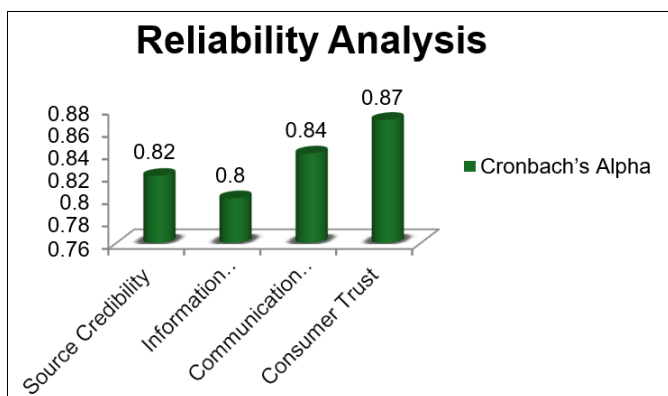


Fig 3: Reliability Analysis using Cronbach's Alpha

Interpretation: All values exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.70, confirming reliability of the measurement scale.

Table 3: Mean Score Ranking of Credibility Dimensions

Factors	Mean Score	Rank
Source Credibility	4.24	I
Information Transparency	4.09	II
Communication Consistency	3.96	III
Visual Presentation	3.62	IV

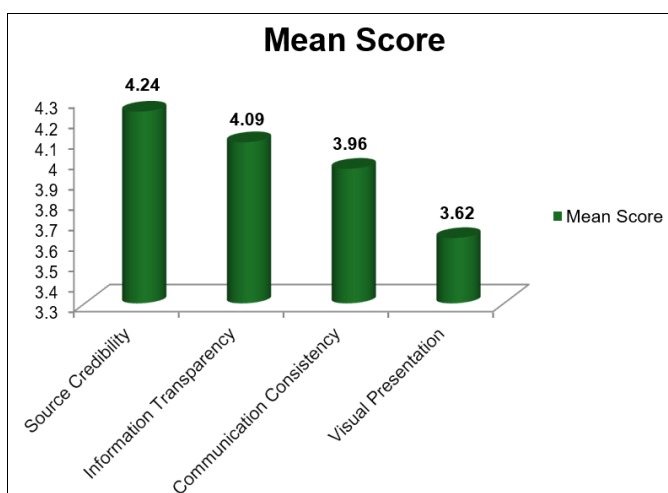


Fig 4: Mean Score of Credibility dimensions

Interpretation: Source credibility is the most influential factor in building consumer trust.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Correlation (r)
Social Media Credibility & Consumer Trust	0.73

Interpretation: A strong positive correlation exists, supporting H1.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis

Independent Variables	Beta	t-value	Significance
Source Credibility	0.39	5.92	0.000
Information Transparency	0.32	4.48	0.001
Communication Consistency	0.23	3.11	0.004

Interpretation: Source credibility has the highest impact on consumer trust, followed by transparency and consistency, supporting H2, H3, and H4.

7. Findings of the Study

- Social media credibility has a significant and positive influence on consumer trust towards wellness brands.
- Source credibility, including expertise and authenticity of content creators, emerges as the most influential factor in trust formation.
- Transparency of information significantly reduces perceived risk associated with wellness products and enhances confidence.
- Consistency in social media communication strengthens long-term trust and brand reliability.
- Consumers exhibit higher trust towards wellness brands that provide evidence-based, clear, and honest information on social media.

8. Limitations of the Study

- The study is based on convenience sampling, which may limit generalization of results.
- Responses are self-reported and may involve personal bias.
- The study focuses only on selected dimensions of social media credibility.
- The geographical coverage of respondents is limited.

9. Scope for Future Research

- Future studies may use a larger and more diverse sample size.
- Comparative studies between wellness and pharmaceutical products can be undertaken.
- Advanced statistical tools such as SEM or CFA may be applied.
- Longitudinal studies may help examine changes in trust over time.

Conclusion

The study concludes that social media credibility plays a decisive role in building consumer trust in the wellness sector. As consumers become more informed and cautious, credibility-driven communication becomes essential for sustainable brand growth. Wellness brands that adopt transparent, consistent, and ethical social media practices are more likely to gain long-term consumer trust and competitive advantage.

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