



Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Modi Shailavi Rajeshkumar, Registration Number: 2070114, PhD Scholar at the School of Business and Management, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Friday, 01 August 2025 at 3.00 pm in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R & D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru – 560029, Karnataka, India.

- Title of the Thesis** : **Influence of Direct-to-Consumer Personal Care Brand Attributes on Brand Equity: Mediating Role of Brand Image**
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The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 26 July 2025

Registrar (Academics)

ABSTRACT

India has explored the ever-changing consumer preferences and a rapidly changing market that revolves around these preferences. In the last few years, consumers have been triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic to get used to buying products online, resulting in unprecedented and unforeseen growth in the digital and e-commerce sectors. With this digital disruption, India has seen a market revolution in online shopping behaviour that has changed consumer preferences. The opportunity for consumers to judge a product by its touch and feel is lost, while on the other side, e-commerce and digitalization are the buzzwords presently. With this digital disruption in online shopping, consumer preferences have changed, and consumers are realizing the revolution taking place in direct-to-consumer (DTC) brands, especially in the personal care sector, that are sold and shipped without involving intermediaries through websites, e-commerce channels and various social media platforms. These DTC brands heavily rely on digital marketing and branding practices. This study focuses on the DTC brands that sell skincare and grooming products through online platforms, bypassing traditional retail channels. Indian brands included in this study are Mamaearth, Wow skincare, Plum, Mcaffeine, Sugar cosmetics and many more. They offer their products directly to consumers via websites, e-commerce, and social media platforms. Established conglomerates in the personal care sector like Lotus, Himalaya, Revlon, and Lakme have faced direct challenges from these new-age DTC brands mentioned above. They have successfully built a brand within a few years of their launch. In addition to revenue generation, these new-age DTC brands focus towards capital utilization through funding in the initial phase of their product launch. DTC brands capture real-time feedback on consumer's buying patterns and conversion rates. The clicks and traffic volume generated on the websites of such DTC brands enable them to evolve faster than established conglomerates. The study aims to enhance building brand equity for DTC personal care brands. This empirical study has employed a survey-based research design. A sample of 416 respondents who have either been into the history of online shopping via websites, e-commerce channels and social media platforms or have used DTC personal care brands in India participated in the study. Given the research objectives, quantitative research has been used as an appropriate research paradigm to examine hypotheses using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

A study on direct-to-consumer personal care brand constructs like website attractiveness, engagement through social sites, and online testimonials of products to build the DTC personal care brands in Bengaluru will help gain insights into the nascent stage of DTC brands in the Indian context. The study's findings show how consumer preferences change in the digital age and suggest ways DTC personal care brands can build brand equity. The study contributes to marketing and consumer behaviour by highlighting the specific challenges faced by DTC personal care brands in India, which will assist brand managers in better understanding their consumers and creating brand loyalty and equity for their DTC brands in the personal care sector. The limitations of the study are identified as various sectors remain underexplored, and there is a need for empirical studies on DTC brands, which also urges more research. The future scope of research can investigate the impact of DTC brands in various sectors and their influence on quick commerce platforms towards changing consumer preferences and buying patterns.

Keywords: *Direct-to-consumer (DTC) brands, personal care sector, website attractiveness, social media engagement, electronic word-of-mouth, brand constructs, brand equity and structural equation modeling.*

Publications:

1. **Modi, S.** and Balaji, V. (2023), "Mamaearth: from a mother's dilemma to a multi-crore brand", *Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies*, Vol. 13 No. 4. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EEMCS-03-2023-0089>
2. **Modi, S.,** Balaji, V., Mathew S. and Kishore, K. (2024), "Navigating brand equity in personal care: Examining the influence of direct-to-consumer brands and the mediating power of brand image," *International Journal of Management and Sustainability, Conscientia Beam*, vol. 13(2), pages 404-422.
3. **Modi, S.,** Balaji, V., Datta, P. and Singh, Y. (2024), "Marketing odyssey for a digitally native brand: a case study of Sunbird Straws", Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TCJ-01-2024-0009>
4. Datta, P., **Modi, S.,** Singh, Y. and Mathew, J. (2025), "Social entrepreneurship on a crossroad: the case of Sunbird Straws", Vol. 15 No. 1. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EEMCS-11-2023-0435>