

Skincare Among Thai Women

Routines, Brands & Self-Perception

CLIENT

Be Digital Case Study

METHODOLOGY

AI-Moderated In-Depth Interviews

FIELDWORK DATE

April 2026

SAMPLE SIZE

50 Completed Interviews

TARGET

Thai women, skincare users

PLATFORM

Qual-AI by Be Digital

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Hero Products Drive Loyalty

Moisturizers and sunscreens are universally indispensable. Loyalty to proven products runs for years — the fear of breakouts and irritation outweighs the appeal of trying something new, even when price is a consideration.



Trust Spans Local & Global

Mixed-brand routines are the norm. Western brands win on scientific credibility for treatment; Thai brands on affordability and climate-fit for cleansers and sunscreens; Korean brands on innovation and the “glass skin” ideal.



Skin Equals Self-Confidence

Skincare is digitally discovered (TikTok, online dermatologists, e-commerce reviews) and emotionally weighted. Good skin builds confidence and self-care; bad skin triggers social withdrawal and self-consciousness.

KEY FINDINGS

- Comprehensive AM/PM routines: cleanse, tone/serum, moisturize, sunscreen — night routines often add masks or treatment.
- A clear shift toward “less but targeted” — many simplifying due to time constraints, especially mothers.
- Common skin concerns: oily T-zones, dryness, sensitivity, acne and scars, large pores, dullness.
- Skin concerns are typically long-standing, fluctuating in severity but rarely fully resolved.
- Routine adjustments are incremental — adding eye cream or anti-acne serum based on emerging issues.
- Routines are more reactive than aspirational — driven primarily by problems to solve.

IMPLICATIONS

- ▶ Position products as targeted problem-solvers, not all-purpose lifestyle items.
- ▶ Multi-step regimens have a ceiling — single-product solutions for specific concerns will resonate.

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In the past 1–2 years I've adjusted my routine quite a bit. From “using many steps” it's become “less but targeted.”

— Respondent 31

KEY FINDINGS

- Moisturizers and sunscreens are universally indispensable across respondents.
- Serums and cleansers also feature prominently as essential daily items.
- Loyalty is high — many users stay with the same brand for 5–10+ years.
- Switching is rare — perceived risk of irritation outweighs cost savings or novelty.
- Sensitive-skin respondents are the most loyal and most reluctant to experiment.

IMPLICATIONS

- ▶ New brands need exceptional credentialing or risk-free trial mechanics to break through.
- ▶ Loyalty data suggests CRM and retention — not acquisition — is the largest unlock for incumbents.

“

I've used the same brand for over 10 years.

— Respondent 37

KEY FINDINGS

- Ingredients are actively scrutinized — hyaluronic acid, niacinamide, ceramides, vitamin C top wish-lists.
- Avoid-list is consistent: harsh alcohol, strong fragrance, parabens, SLS/SLES, mercury.
- Trust in claims (SPF level, brightening) is conditional — buyers cross-check with reviews and certificates.
- Past bad reactions (irritation, breakouts, peeling) permanently shift behaviour toward cautious selection.
- The “white & radiant” ideal still holds, but a healthy/natural skin trend is rising in parallel.

IMPLICATIONS

- ▶ Lead with ingredient transparency: print active percentages, list excluded irritants, attach test certificates.
- ▶ Bridge the brightening-to-healthy-skin shift with multi-claim positioning rather than mono-promise whitening.

“

I don't really believe SPF claims. There must be a certificate to confirm it for me to believe.

— Respondent 32

KEY FINDINGS

- TikTok, YouTube, and e-commerce reviews are the dominant discovery channels.
- Online dermatologists carry strong authority — credibility tied to expertise and visible results.
- Influencers heavily sway trial — one respondent estimated 80% of her purchase choices are influencer-led.
- Recommendations from sisters, family, and close friends remain highly trusted alongside digital sources.
- Visible before/after results outweigh polished branding for new product trial.

IMPLICATIONS

- ▶ Prioritize dermatologist-credentialed creators over generic beauty influencers — their conversion runs structurally higher.
- ▶ Build organic UGC and review density on Shopee/Lazada as a primary purchase enabler.

“

If it's an online dermatologist, I will believe them — they have experience and expertise in skin.

— Respondent 31

KEY FINDINGS

- Good skin is the strongest single driver of self-confidence — it changes how respondents present socially.
- Skincare routines double as self-care rituals — a moment of personal attention amid daily demands.
- Mothers especially treat skincare time as “getting myself back” amid caregiving demands.
- Bad skin days lead to social withdrawal — avoidance of public spaces, more makeup, less interaction.
- Compliments on skin appearance powerfully reinforce continued use of the current routine.
- Confidence enables visible behaviour shifts — wearing less makeup, leaving home more readily, engaging more openly.

IMPLICATIONS

- ▶ Anchor communications in emotional outcomes (confidence, calm, self-care) rather than only functional claims.
- ▶ Self-care positioning is a high-leverage angle, particularly for mothers and time-poor segments.

“

When my skin improves, it makes me more confident. I wear less heavy makeup.

— Respondent 1

KEY FINDINGS

- Three dominant emotions surface: lack of confidence, frustration with poor outcomes, and pride in good skin.
- Self-consciousness is the most common negative trigger — fear of being looked at or judged.
- Frustration peaks when products fail to deliver, especially after time and money have been committed.
- Skin issues prompt social avoidance: not going out, not meeting people, not wearing makeup.
- Improvement triggers a virtuous cycle — visible progress encourages more consistent care.
- The ritual itself, regardless of outcome, provides a sense of calm and self-attention.

IMPLICATIONS

- ▶ Pre/post visible-progress storytelling drives the strongest emotional resonance — show the cycle of recovery.
- ▶ Address the “fear of trying” barrier with sensitive-skin reassurance and small-format trial sizes.

“

Acne covered my whole face. I didn't dare to touch my face, didn't dare to go out, didn't dare to meet people.

— Respondent 22

 **STRENGTHS**

- Affordable and accessible across mass-market channels
- Formulations suited to Thailand's hot, humid climate
- Strong in cleansers and sunscreens — daily-use staples
- Perceived as gentle and well-suited to Asian skin types
- Growing trust — brands like Smooth E, Srichand, Provamed cited positively

 **BARRIERS**

- Lower scientific credibility than Western brands for treatment products
- Less associated with innovative ingredients than Korean brands
- Marketing leans on influencer sales tactics over genuine reviews
- Production standards and ingredient sourcing are under-communicated
- Premium and sensitive-skin segments still default to Western brands

"Thai skincare brings to mind gentleness, accessibility, and suitability for our climate. That's the first thing I think of." — Respondent 31

Prove Quality & Efficacy

Demonstrate credibility and proven efficacy, especially for sensitive and acne-prone skin. Lab data and clinical results close the trust gap with Western brands.

Build Multi-Benefit Products

Address several concerns in one product — brightening, anti-aging, pore-tightening. The simplification trend rewards combination products that earn their slot in the routine.

Formulate for Local Climate

Lightweight, non-sticky textures suited to Thailand's heat and humidity. This is a defensible advantage Thai brands hold over Western imports — but it must be communicated explicitly.

Lead with Ingredient Transparency

Print active percentages, list excluded irritants, attach test certificates. Buyers cross-check claims and reward brands that publish what most won't.

Replace Hype with Genuine Reviews

Move beyond influencer sales tactics. Buyers want transparent communication about production standards and honest user reviews — not paid endorsements.

Own the Self-Care Narrative

Position skincare as confidence and self-care, not just function. The emotional outcome — calm, restored sense of self — resonates strongly with mothers and time-poor segments.