

PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCING SALES IN COSMETICS PRODUCTION SECTOR THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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Abstract. *The paper deals with the promotional opportunities enhancing sales in the cosmetics production sector through social media platforms (SMPs). This topic holds significant relevance in the contemporary business landscape. Firstly, in the digital age, consumer behavior is evolving rapidly, with SMPs becoming integral in shaping purchasing decisions. Understanding the dynamics of consumer engagement and preferences on these platforms is crucial for cosmetics producers seeking to optimize their promotional strategies. Moreover, as the cosmetics industry increasingly transcends geographical boundaries, social media provides a global platform for reaching diverse audiences. Understanding how to tailor promotional efforts to different demographics and cultures is vital for international market expansion, and this study addresses these considerations.*

The aim of the research is to analyse the promotional opportunities for enhancing sales in the cosmetics production sector through social media platforms.

Methods: analysis of scientific literature, questionnaire survey, analysis of information sources, data summarisation, graphical representation.

The results obtained through the questionnaire survey indicate a relatively low level of popularity in the analyzed cosmetics production sector. Consequently, respondents encountered challenges in providing comprehensive responses due to this limited awareness. The survey further highlights that the company primarily employs a modest set of fundamental sales promotion methods on social networks.

Keywords: cosmetics production, enhancing sales, sales promotion (SP), social media platforms (SMPs).

Introduction

Relevance of the topic. Businesses have consistently aimed to distinguish themselves from rivals. Yet, in today's environment of growing consumer purchasing influence, it is imperative for companies not merely to engage in occasional sales but to cultivate robust customer relationships for enduring success. Achieving this requires increasing supply, developing strategies to attract new customers while retaining existing ones, and finding ways to increase consumption.

Traditionally, people are used to using simple sales promotion tools. However, with the development of new technologies, this process has become more complex. In order to successfully sell a product, it is necessary to have a sincere interest in it and a good understanding of it. Effective sales promotion tools can greatly influence customer behavior and influence their decision to choose a particular company's products or services. However, every company and its customers are unique, so it is very important to remember that success depends on choosing the right promotion tools. Conducted analysis (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Duffett et al., 2020; Binsawad, 2020; Bilushchak et al., 2020; Zarella, 2009; Negi and Ketema, 2010; Nasru and Yasri, 2018; Nisar and Whitehead, 2016; Isoraite, 2020; Streimikiene et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020; Onete et al., 2020) shows that although there is a lot of research of this topic, sales promotion on social media platforms is a relatively new phenomenon and it has been going on for a little more than a decade, so it remains a very relevant issue for trade companies.

Therefore, the research problem is posed by a question: What are the opportunities for enhancing sales in the cosmetic production sector on social media platforms?

The research object is enhancing in the cosmetics production sector on social media platforms.

The aim of the research is to analyse the promotional opportunities for enhancing sales in the cosmetics production sector on social media platforms.

The research objectives:

1. To analyze promotional opportunities for enhancing sales through social media platforms from a theoretical perspective.
2. To conduct a survey on promotional opportunities for enhancing sales in the cosmetics production sector through social media platforms.

The research methods: analysis of scientific literature sources, questionnaire survey, data summarization, graphic representation.

As the cosmetics industry increasingly transcends geographical boundaries, social media provides a global platform for reaching diverse audiences. Understanding how to tailor promotional efforts to different demographics and cultures is vital for international market expansion, and this study addresses these considerations.

Promotional Opportunities for Enhancing Sales through Social Media Platforms from a Theoretical Perspective

Sales promotion conception. Sales promotion (SP) stands out as a key marketing strategy aimed at enhancing company's sales through the promotion of its products or services using various tactics. This approach becomes particularly valuable when introducing new offerings, liquidating existing product

inventories, and attracting a broader base of potential customers. The primary objective of SP is to achieve short-term sales goals by forcing customers to make purchases (Shamout, 2016).

In recent times, there has been a heightened focus on SP of diverse products. Various persuasive and informative tools are deployed to expedite and fortify consumer responses. As Kumar, Suganya, and Imayavendan (2018) pointed out, SP is a facet of marketing activities that enhances sales. Additionally, it exerts a short-term influence, compelling consumers to select one among competing brands, reinforcing their desire to make a purchase, and consequently, boosting overall sales (Jean, Yazdanifard, 2015).

In summarizing the concept of SP, it can be asserted that when analyzed from different perspectives, the fundamental approaches to SP underscore its role as a key tool for attracting consumers, boosting sales, stimulating unplanned purchases, adding value to sales, fostering competitiveness, and influencing consumer behavior. SP can be characterized as a marketing tactic with the objective of heightening demand for a product or service through the provision of incentives to customers. These incentives encompass a range of activities such as discounts, coupons, rebates, free samples, contests, giveaways, loyalty programs, in-store displays, and product demonstrations.

Diversity of social media platforms and their benefits for business and consumers. Social media platforms (SMPs) have become a common form of social communication. In addition, SMPs facilitate communication with various user groups. The most used SMPs are *Facebook* (2.93 billion monthly active users), *Instagram* (over 1.28 billion monthly active users) and *LinkedIn* (over 740 million members). In order to connect with existing or potential users, companies often create their own social media pages or accounts. However, SMPs also present challenges related to access to private information and privacy. Therefore, researchers and companies are paying more and more attention to them in order to use SMPs to sell products and services (Boyd, & Ellison, 2008).

According to Davis, Wolff, Forret and Sullivan (2020), SMPs contribute to the improvement of companies by offering new insights about the brand and by offering innovative ways of implementing marketing (Zarella, 2009). More and more businesses are exploiting the niche of SMPs, so it is important to pay attention to what methods of SP prevail in them. Analyzing the scientific literature (Seturi, 2022; Graham et al., 2019; Dehkordi et al., 2012; Karthikeyan, & Panchanatham, 2019; Ramesh et al., 2016; etc.), it is observed that SP measures are often taken to achieve one of two goals: short-term or long-term sales that apply to both traditional and online SP. Short-term SP usually aims to sell off inventory, increase sales of a specific product, or introduce customers to a new product. On the other hand, long-term SP differs from short-term ones in that they do not aim for quick results.

SMPs can be a useful tool for businesses to increase sales and attract new customers. According to Negi and Ketema (2010), one of the main benefits of SMPs for business is the ability to build personal relationships with customers and potential customers. Products or services can be presented through photos, videos or even live streaming. This allows companies to create more visibility and attract new customers (Barkley et al., 2007). As consumers have become more pampered, the quality of service has also improved significantly. Table 1 summarizes the benefits for businesses and consumers.

Table 1 Benefit of Enhancing Sales for Businesses and Customers (made by the authors)

BENEFITS OF ENHANCING SALES FOR BUSINESSES AND CUSTOMERS		
FACTOR	BENEFITS FOR BUSINESS	BENEFITS FOR CUSTOMER
ACCESS AND CHOICE	Geography is no barriers to social businesses. It enables small companies to join the global network and do business on a global scale.	Consumer can choose from a wide range, regardless of where they are in the world, they can choose the product that best suits their needs.
COMPETITIVENESS, SERVICE QUALITY	When dealing with customers, businesses can compete more successfully because companies can offer higher quality products and services, as well as provide faster and more complete information.	High competition leads to better customer service and faster solutions to their problems.
COMMODITY NECESSITY	Electronic data collection allows salespeople to quickly and easily learn customer preferences and offer the best possible product.	The consumer will choose the product with the best price-quality ratio and which best meets his needs.
OPPORTUNITIES, ORIGINAL GOODS	A great opportunity to enter the market for brand new products and services.	Customers can choose from a larger range at better prices.
COSTS	Electronic communication reduces human resource costs.	Reduced prices for goods and services offered to consumers.

A theoretical model for SP on SMPs. The analysis of scientific literature allows to present a generalizing theoretical model for SP on SMPs (see Figure 1).

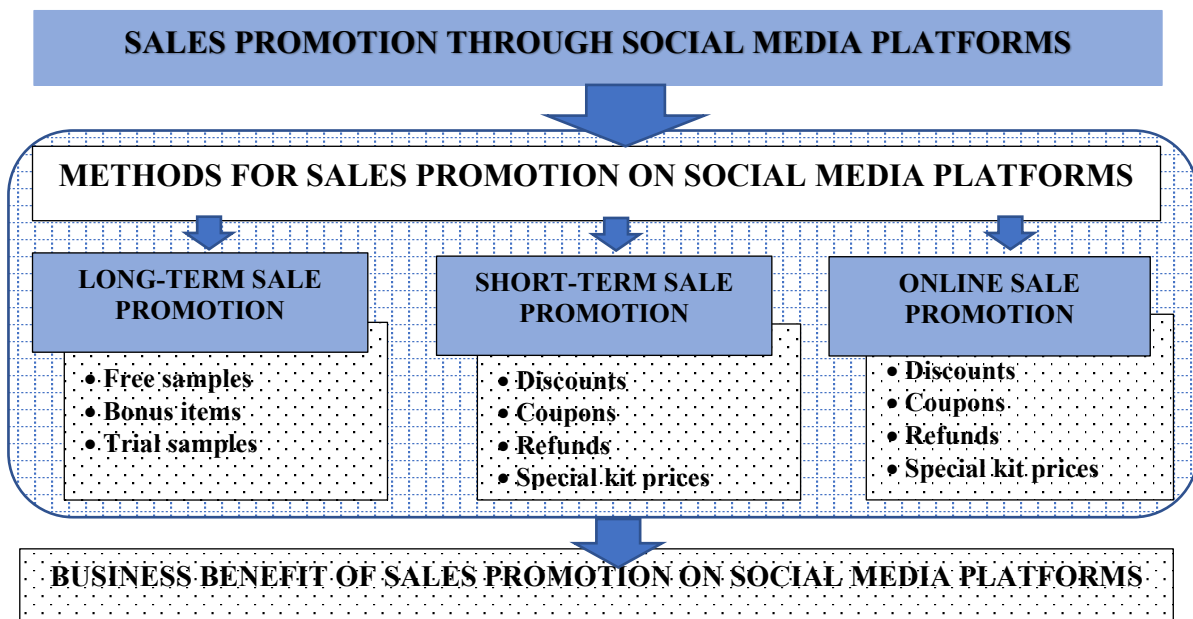


Figure 1 Model for Sales Promotion on Social Media Platforms (made by the authors)

Generalising the benefit of SP for businesses and customers, it can be claimed that SMPs serve as a potent and limitless instrument for businesses to enhance sales and attract in new customers. Consequently, enterprises are progressively opting for SMPs not solely as platforms for advertising, but also as avenues for communication, user community engagement, and product or service presentation. Furthermore, SMPs contribute to enhancing a company's image, rendering it more appealing, contemporary, and innovative. This facilitates the brand's ability to garner favor from a broader customer base, reaching a larger audience at a comparatively economical cost.

SMPs are an inexhaustible tool that helps companies increase sales and attract new customers as well as improve the company's image, make it more attractive, modern and innovative. This makes it easier for brands to gain more customer favor and less expensive to reach a wider audience.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted from in March-April, 2023 with the aim to analyse the promotional opportunities for enhancing sales in the cosmetics production sector on social media platforms.

The research method is quantitative research. This research method was chosen because of its large-scale, systematic, well-considered data collection, using representative sample groups and expressing the results numerically. Data is collected through an online survey.

Research process: in order to investigate the possibilities of SP of cosmetic products, the research process consists of 5 stages (see Figure 2).

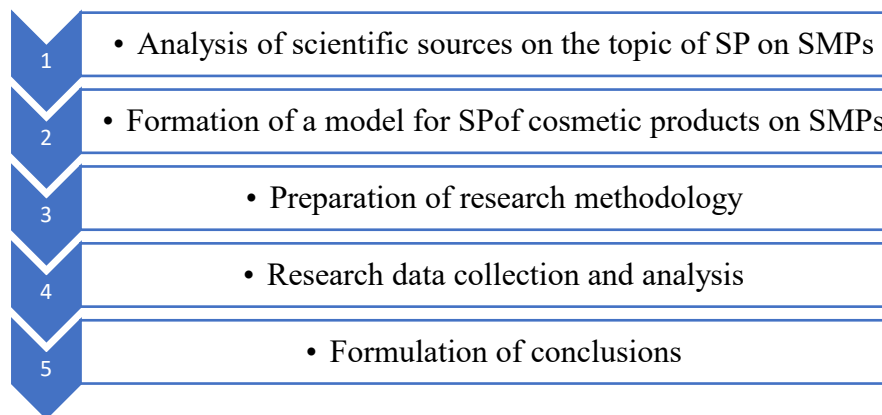


Figure 2 *Stages of the Research* (made by the authors)

Research instrument: the empirical study is based on the results of the analysis of the scientific literature on SP on SMPs. In order to analyze the possibilities of SP in the sales stream of cosmetics production, the research instrument - a questionnaire survey - was created. The questionnaire consists of 17 closed type questions.

Research instrument criteria consist of the concept and goals of SP, methods of SP on SMPs, advantages and disadvantages of SP on SMPs, benefits of SP on SMPs for business and consumers, consumer opinion about the cosmetic production of the investigated company and demographic data of respondents.

Study sample and sampling method: the study sample was calculated according to the Paniotto formula. In order to conduct a study on the possibilities of SP on SMPs, it is necessary to conduct an interview with at least 380 respondents.

Research ethics: ethical principles were observed during the research - anonymity, data security, confidentiality.

Limitations of the study: in order to ensure the reliability of the research results, there are limitations that are related to the data. The data used for the research was obtained from respondents during an online survey. In the questionnaire, it was possible to choose several or all of the offered options for the question asked, but the respondents usually chose only one or two, in their opinions.

The study is conducted on the example of a company that sells eyebrow and eyelash serums, plumping lip glosses, face serums and makeup bases, hair strengthening products online.

Analysis of the Research Results

The first aim of the research was to find out the opinion of the respondents whether SP influences their decision to buy and to find out what methods of SP are noticeable on SMPs. The research revealed that only 26.1 percent of the respondents said that SP has only a short-term effect, which is created to encourage the choice of one of several competitive brands. The majority of 59.7 percent answered that they did not know about the production, before buying goods or services, they think many times whether they really need the goods or services.

What influences on their decision to buy, as the results of the study show, 34.7 percent respondents answered that discounts, 26.3 percent noticed coupons, 22.9 percent noticed samples and 15.5 percent noticed a refund for goods. It was also aimed to find out what long-term methods of SP you notice on SMPs. Research data show that 27.5 percent noticed free samples, 26.9 percent noticed bonus goods, 23.1 percent answered that they notice trial size samples and 22.2 percent replied that partially free samples.

The fourth research criterion "Benefits of SP on SMPs for business and consumers" aimed to find out what benefits SP on SMPs provide for business and consumers. According to the research data, 27.8 percent claimed that they attract new customers, 26.7 percent believed that it increased sales, 18.2 percent claimed to build personal relationships with customers. The research analysis also showed that 32.5 percent of respondents believed that they could choose goods with the best price-quality ratio. 24.7 percent believed that due to the high competition of companies, they could get better service. 24.4 percent said that it seemed useful for them to be able to choose from a wide range offered and 18.4 percent believed that SMPs offered reduced prices for goods.

One of the aims was to find out in which SMPs the respondents noticed the investigated cosmetic products under the study (see Figure 3).

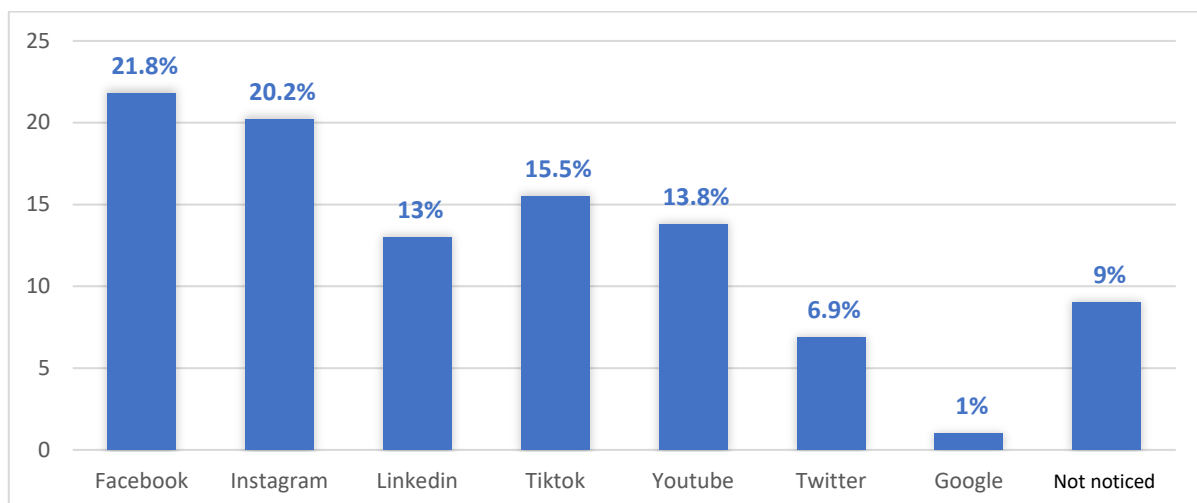


Figure 3 Observability of Respondents for Cosmetics on SMPs (made by the authors)

The research findings indicate that 21.9 percent of respondents noticed cosmetics promotion on Facebook, 19.9 percent on Instagram, 12.8 percent on LinkedIn, 15.6 percent on TikTok, and 13.9 percent on YouTube. 9 percent had no awareness, with one respondent recalling a Google search ad.

Regarding SP methods, 35.1 percent noticed online SP methods (newsletters, loyalty plans, gifts, market segmentation), 33.1 percent observed short-term strategies (discounts, coupons, samples, refunds), and 31.5 percent noted long-term approaches with partial or free product samples, bonus items, and trial sizes.

In summarizing consumer opinions on cosmetic products, respondents partially noticed sales through various SP methods. The company is relatively unknown (32 percent of awareness), with respondents perceiving limited engagement on SMPs.

The study suggests exploring SP opportunities on SMPs like Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, but also on TikTok, YouTube and Twitter to increase brand awareness. Enhancing visibility can involve encouraging user interactions, sharing customer opinions, and using relevant hashtags to facilitate discovery.

In response to the scientific inquiry addressing the research problem - what are the opportunities for enhancing sales in the cosmetic production sector on SMPs - it is advisable for companies engaged in online sales of cosmetic products to strategically leverage SMPs. This recommendation is substantiated by the application of a theoretical model for SP on SMPs, as illustrated in Figure 1. It is noteworthy that the elements encompassed within the model exert varying degrees of influence on SP within the cosmetic production SMPs.

Conclusions

1. Sales promotion is a crucial element of marketing employed by companies to enhance product sales. This strategy encompasses diverse methods like discounts, coupons, and loyalty programs, with the aim of capturing the consumer's sudden interest in the product. In the contemporary landscape, leveraging social media platforms for sales promotion proves effective in enhancing both sales and customer engagement. Sales promotion falls into three categories: short-term, long-term, and online methods. These methods, when strategically chosen, facilitate the establishment of relationships with existing and potential customers. Consequently, businesses increasingly turn to social media not only for communication but also for user attraction, improving their overall image. The direct access to customer expectations afforded by social media platforms aids in the creation of products or services that resonate more effectively with the target audience.

2. A study on the sales promotion of cosmetic products on social media platforms revealed that respondents are familiar with the concept but mostly associate it with selecting advertising tools to boost company sales. Respondents

consider the need for a product or service before making a purchase influenced by sales promotion. Notably, they identified discounts and coupons for short-term promotion, free samples and bonus items for long-term promotion, and newsletters, loyalty incentives, and gifts for online promotion. Respondents value the chance to choose products with the best price-quality ratio and acknowledge the benefits for businesses in attracting new customers and increasing sales. Despite the cosmetics brand's limited recognition, those familiar with it partially noticed its sales promotion methods.

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