

**BUS7075**

**Dissertation with Research Methods**

**Dissertation Title:** “*Challenges and mitigation strategies associated with product promotion on social media platforms: A case study of UK cosmetic industry”*

**Abstract**

The problem addressed in this research paper is the lack of primary investigation in the cosmetic industry of the UK regarding the challenges faced by cosmetic brands while promoting products on social media platforms. It aimed at not only identifying such challenges but also providing recommendations that can act as mitigation strategies. To achieve this aim, the researcher conducted a primary investigation in which the data was collected from marketers working in cosmetic firms in the UK. The strategy of a survey was implemented, and an online survey was conducted to provide a questionnaire to 50 marketers from the UK cosmetic industry to collect the data.

To obtain the desired results, the researcher adopted the technique of frequency analysis to interpret the insights using pie charts and tables with a comparison of the findings with the data reviewed in the extant literature. It is determined by the results of the study that many challenges are faced by UK cosmetic brands regarding social media product promotions such as lack of collaborations, lack of consumer trust, lack of user-generated content and lack of customer engagement. To address these challenges, the mitigation strategies provided by the results are innovation through new technologies, tie-ups with influencers, sustainability, and engaging content in social media product promotions.

**Acknowledgement**

I present my gratitude to everyone who helped in this study either actively or passively. My gratitude is towards marketers from cosmetic firms in the UK who participated in the survey conducted during the research. I owe the results of this study to their valuable responses that they provided while answering the questionnaire. Furthermore, I admire the efforts of my supervisor for the suggestions regarding this research and his feedback which proved beneficial in improving the weak areas of my dissertation. My gratitude is also for my family and friends whose support made me confident while conducting this research.

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Research background and context

The extent of digital marketing done by businesses provided the opportunity of promoting products and services on social media platforms (Alalwan et al., 2017). A large number of customers present on these platforms as well as the prominence of platforms such as Facebook and Instagram also provide the benefit of promoting products for cosmetic brands. Awareness of a brand increases on these platforms as the content reaches an extensive number of individuals and groups. Social media also provides the opportunity for likes, comments and shares by which cosmetics can be promoted effectively. Word-of-mouth assists the recommendations given by customers after watching the post of a cosmetic brand on social media (Watanabe, Kim and Park, 2021). However, the rise in social media promotions also provides many challenges for these brands that can hinder their strategies for targeting customers through social media promotions.

## 1.2 Problem statement

In this study, the problem statement is identified by the importance of product promotion on social media and its importance in the current business landscape. The marketing benefits given by this method to cosmetic brands highlight the necessity to collect data from marketers. It is evident that challenges are faced by brands while promoting their products on social media and thus data about these challenges and associated mitigation strategies should be gathered and analysed from cosmetic marketers in the UK. The lack of research in the UK in this regard provides a research problem that should be addressed.

## 1.3 Research aim

The proposed research aims to evaluate the challenges and mitigation strategies associated with product promotion on social media platforms in the UK cosmetic industry.

## 1.4 Research objectives

* To analyse the opportunities given by product promotion on social media platforms in the UK cosmetic industry.
* To identify the challenges faced by UK cosmetic brands while promoting their products on social media platforms.
* To recommend strategies which can mitigate the identified challenges and improve product promotion on social media platforms by UK cosmetic brands.

The above objectives link to the research aim because they are based on the evaluation of challenges that are faced by marketers in the UK cosmetic industry while promoting products on social media. They also focus on providing mitigation strategies to address these challenges. Furthermore, the objectives also link to the research question because they will be fulfilled by collecting the opinions of cosmetic marketers in the UK about the challenges they face while promoting cosmetic products on social media.

## 1.5 Research significance

This study will be significant to UK cosmetic brands because the findings can not only help them in identifying challenges related to product promotion on social media but also implement strategies that can address these challenges. They can better target their customers and leverage opportunities provided by social media promotions from the implementation of such strategies. Another significance is for the existing literature because specific information about social media promotions of cosmetic brands in the UK will be added to it. The contributed findings can be used by other investigators in the future while conducting a study.

## 1.6 Dissertation structure

The second chapter of this dissertation i.e., Literature review provides a critical evaluation of the extant literature to identify the gap in the findings obtained by other researchers and the conceptual framework is also provided. Furthermore, the discussion of methodology is provided in chapter 3, research methodology which deals with research methods that are required for meeting the research objectives. The fourth chapter, data analysis and findings, has the aim of analysing the data gathered during the study and providing findings that are discussed in relation to the literature based on the research topic. Furthermore, the extent of meeting the research aim and objectives is discussed in the fifth chapter i.e., conclusion and recommendations that also includes the implications of this study, its limitations and some recommendations for subsequent investigations.

# Chapter 2. Literature Review

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter has the objective of providing a critical analysis of the extant literature based on the research objectives. Section 2.2 of this chapter evaluates research papers which identify the opportunities provided by product promotions on social media to cosmetic brands. On the other hand, challenges related to this aspect are evaluated in section 2.3. Section 2.4 reviews studies based on strategies which can be beneficial for cosmetic brands regarding product promotion on social media. Furthermore, the literature gap found in this review is discussed in section 2.5 and section 2.6 provides the conceptual framework made from the research variables present in the literature review.

## 2.2 Opportunities provided by social media product promotions to cosmetic firms.

According to Shareef et al. (2019), one of the major benefits that brands can attain by promoting their products and services on social media is customer engagement. This is because the interactivity offered by social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram can be helpful in engaging customers for the products and services. Cosmetic brands can leverage this promotional technique in attracting customers and increasing the chances for better sales. It can also be evaluated from the arguments of Shareef et al. (2019) that engagement leads to better attitudes of customers towards the brand. On the other hand, Suresh, Chitra and Maran (2016) argue that social networking sites are beneficial in making a positive impact on the purchasing decisions of customers. The promotions done for cosmetic products on social media enable the brand to impact such decisions. Growth can be fostered by a brand with the implementation of social media production which highlights the opportunity provided by social media product promotions to cosmetic brands. It can also be analysed that the number of individuals in the customer base of a cosmetic brand can be increased with the promotion of products on social media.

The findings of the research conducted by Bilgin (2018) highlight that brand awareness is one of the major benefits of marketing conducted on social media platforms because a greater number of customers can be reached by the brand. This awareness provides the opportunity to extend the current customer base and increase sales from the purchasing decisions of new customers. Awareness also increases through the recommendations given by one customer to another on social media which leads to the promotion of cosmetic products effectively. It can also be analysed from the arguments of Bilgin (2018) that a better brand image is made in front of the customers when promotions are done adequately. On the other hand, Ismail (2017) argues that customer loyalty is an advantage for which social media product promotions are preferred by cosmetic brands. This loyalty is dependent on the value given by the products and the value can be promoted on social media platforms adequately by this marketing technique. Furthermore, it is evaluated that trust is established among the existing customers of a cosmetic brand when the meeting of changing needs and wants of customers are highlighted in social media product promotions. This leads to better loyalty from customers which acts as a benefit for cosmetic brands.

## 2.3 Challenges faced by cosmetic brands while promoting their products on social media.

Jaakonmäki, Müller and VomBrocke (2017) evaluated the importance of user engagement in their research when considering the extent of social media promotions. The findings reveal that the challenge of making engaging content for the targeted customers is present because the content might not be relevant to the customers based on the information shared via social media posts. In addition, the type of content such as images or videos also plays an essential role in the engagement of people and when interactivity is not present in social media product promotions, a cosmetic brand can fail in getting customer engagement. In contrast, Zhu and Chen (2015) argue that a lack of collaboration with influencers can lead to a challenge for brands. The reason behind this issue is that the recommendations given by influencers act as drivers of purchasing decisions of customers. The trust customers have in celebrities can be of great use to cosmetic brands while promoting their products through the reviews of influencers on social media. However, when tie-ups are not there with influencers, cosmetic brands face the challenge of a lack of trust in the credibility of cosmetic products.

According to Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch (2017), when user-generated content is not posted on social media, business organisations face the challenge of a lack of trust among the targeted customers. The underlying factor behind the lack of trust is that customers become unable to acknowledge the actual benefits of the cosmetic product realised by other customers. Furthermore, the potential of user-generated content to positively impact the purchasing decisions of customers is also hindered by this challenge. Social media product promotions thus become ineffective for cosmetic brands. In addition, the findings of the study conducted by Voorveld (2019) indicate that there is a challenge in providing personalised content on social media by brands. This challenge is related to the alignment of the personal needs of customers and the information about products posted on social media by cosmetic brands. When the content is not relevant to the targeted customers, marketing done by brands becomes ineffective leading to the failure of social media promotion strategy. Brand communication has thus been evaluated as challenging and requires greater attention from marketers in the cosmetic industry. Communication becomes unreliable when the content doesn’t align with the changing needs of customers about cosmetic products.

## 2.4 Strategies that can improve product promotion of cosmetic brands on social media platforms.

According to Nunes et al. (2018), opinion leaders play important roles in the marketing of products on social media because their opinions allow customers to have faith in the product being promoted. Therefore, the strategy of integrating influencer marketing with social media can be beneficial for cosmetic brands while promoting their products on social media platforms. It can be analysed from the findings of Nunes et al. (2018) that the attitudes of customers can get changed by the persuasive messages of opinion leaders or influencers. So, corporate growth can be achieved by a cosmetic brand while promoting cosmetics. On the other hand, Arrigo (2018) argues that better website traffic can be attained by marketers through the promotion of engaging content on social media. This engagement should be aligned with the motivational factors of customers so that things that motivate people to buy cosmetics can be identified and presented while promoting cosmetic products on social media. This strategy also benefits in increasing the conversion rates of cosmetic brands because visitors to the social media pages of the brand become purchasing customers when they find value and motivation in the advertisements.

Furthermore, the importance of promoting green cosmetics is given by Pop, Săplăcan and Alt (2020) in their study which revealed that sustainability is a factor that can enhance the extent of social media marketing implemented by cosmetic brands. The changing expectations of customers also include sustainability under which they aspire to purchase cosmetics which do not make a negative impact on the environment. It can be analysed that the absence of sustainability of cosmetics in the promotions on social media leads to ineffective marketing by cosmetic brands. It is recommended that the strategy of promoting steps towards sustainability such as decreasing the negative impact of cosmetic production should be implemented. In addition to this, Holt (2016) provided another strategy which is locating the cultural opportunity so that content based on the culture of targeted products can be posted on social media. This will make the content relevant and attractive to the customers leading to more purchase intentions. It can also be analysed from the findings of Holt (2016) that innovation should be done by cosmetic brands so that the utilisation of new technologies can lead to better promotion of cosmetics on social media.

## 2.5 Literature gap

In the critical analysis of the extant literature done in the above sections, the gap recognised is related to the lack of primary investigation in the UK. Most of the findings are generic and specific research has not been done in the cosmetic industry of the UK. This literature gap requires a study which can collect the opinions of marketers of cosmetic brands in the UK about challenges that occurred in promoting products on social media and how these challenges can be mitigated. This will help in addressing the area of improvement identified in the existing literature as a gap.

## 2.6 Conceptual framework

**Lack of engagement**

**Lack of trust**

**Ineffective communication**

**Product promotion on social media**

**Lack of collaboration**

**Engaging content**

**Tie-ups with influencers**

**Sustainability**

**Innovation**

***Challenges***

***Mitigation Strategies***

Figure 1 Conceptual framework

*Source: By author*

The direction for an appropriate exploration of the research area is provided by the identification of research variables in the conceptual framework of a study (Varpio et al., 2020). Based on the research topic, two independent variables of challenges and mitigation strategies have been identified along with the dependent variable of product promotion on social media that led to the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1. The sub-variables of the independent variables have been discovered from the literature review which are ‘lack of engagement’, ‘ineffective communication’, ‘lack of trust’ and ‘lack of collaboration’ under the challenges whereas the sub-variables under mitigation strategies are ‘engaging content’, ‘sustainability’, ‘tie-up with influencers and ‘innovation’.

## 2.7 Chapter summary

The literature review concludes that many opportunities are provided by product promotions on social media to cosmetic brands. They can increase their sales, customer base, brand awareness and customer loyalty. However, there are many challenges such as lack of collaboration with influencers, lack of engagement, etc. that can hinder the identified opportunities. Many researchers provided strategies for being innovative, sustainable and providing engaging content so that cosmetic brands can mitigate the discussed challenges. The literature gap of inadequate data collection from marketers in the UK has also been discussed in this chapter which requires the selection and implementation of appropriate research methods.

# Chapter 3. Research methodology

## 3.1 Introduction

The identification and selection of research methods which can help achieve the objectives of this primary study are important and thus research onion as shown in Figure 2 is adopted to select an appropriate methodology. Research onion is a framework that describes the different aspects which have to be considered in the development of a research methodology (Sahay, 2016). These aspects are philosophy, approach, choice of methodology, strategy, time horizon and techniques and procedures. The philosophy linked with this study is discussed in section 3.2 of this chapter and section 3.3 has the aim of selecting the research approach. Furthermore, the methodological choice is evaluated in section 3.4 and section 3.5 deals with the strategy which is adopted in this study. Section 3.6 of this chapter discusses the time horizon of the research and the techniques and procedures to be implemented are selected in section 3.7. Furthermore, the ethics of this primary investigation are discussed in section 3.8 of this chapter.

Diagram

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Figure 2 Research onion

*Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019)*

## 3.2 Research philosophy

The internal belief held by the researcher while performing an investigation along with attitudes and a set of principles are included in the research philosophy (Tamminen and Poucher, 2020). Philosophy can be interpretivism, critical realism, pragmatism, positivism and post-modernism as mentioned in the research onion. The most appropriate philosophy which will be beneficial for the present study is positivism because objective reality is considered under this philosophy and no modifications are done to the data collected by the researcher. Positivism philosophy deals with the fact that knowledge exists outside of already-known information (Park, Konge and Artino, 2020). On the other hand, interpretivism philosophy is concerned with the cultural and social factors which impact the knowledge (Yanow, 2015). So, positivism is suitable because new knowledge i.e., the opinions of marketers in the UK cosmetic industry can be collected and analysed. Furthermore, positivism is appropriate when conducting a primary study based on objective data and thus is beneficial for this research.

## 3.3 Approach to theory development

A number of approaches are given by the research onion i.e., deduction, abduction and induction. The selection of the positivism research philosophy requires the adoption of the deduction approach. Another reason is that the information present in reality can be tested with the use of a deductive approach (Pandey, 2019). Thus, validation of data regarding product promotions on social media can be done with the implementation of a deductive approach. This is also suitable for quantitative studies which is also the nature of the current investigation because objective data will be collected from research participants.

## 3.4 Choice of methodology

Mono method, multi-method and mixed method are mentioned in the research onion which are based on the utilisation of a single or multiple types of information. Research methodology is concerned with the type of data collected and analysed with the implementation of adequate research methods (Opoku, Ahmed and Akotia, 2016). In the present study, the researcher adopts the mono-quantitative methodology under which only the collection and analysis of numerical data will be done. Accuracy in the results can be achieved with this methodology which has also been the reason for its selection.

## 3.5 Research strategy

The framework which provides a procedure for data collection during a study deal with the research strategy. In the research onion layer, many strategies such as ethnography, survey, case study, archival research, action research, etc. are present. Among these, this primary investigation can be conducted with the implementation of the survey strategy. Survey research has the benefit of reducing the cost and time required for collecting data from research participants (Vaske, 2019). Furthermore, it is evaluated that an online survey will be beneficial for its convenience as compared to a physical survey and thus Google Forms will be utilised for conducting the required survey.

## 3.6 Time horizon

In addition to research strategy, the time horizon is another major element of research methodology which is concerned with the point of time required to collect data. A cross-sectional time horizon has the aim of collecting data at a single point in time whereas multiple points in time are required in a longitudinal time horizon (Melnikovas, 2018). It is evident that the data collection process through a survey will be implemented only one time during this study and thus the study follows the cross-sectional time horizon.

## 3.7 Techniques and procedures

### 3.7.1 Sampling methods and sample size

A sampling method is of primarily two types of namely probability and non-probability sampling which are used to select the participants who can contribute to the data collection process (Berndt, 2020). A non-probability sampling will be useful in the present study as it is not based on a random selection of individuals and under this sampling, the utilisation of snowball sampling will be done because the first participant refers the research to the second participant and the second participant refers to the third participant and so on (Parker, Scott and Geddes, 2019). It is identified that the research participants will be marketers in the cosmetic industry of the UK and the size of the sample i.e., the total number of participants will be 50 from which information about product promotion on social media will be gathered.

### 3.7.2 Method of data collection

The methodological choice derives the procedure to be implemented for data collection during a study. Primary research involves the data collection procedure of focus groups or interviews when qualitative data is required. In contrast, a questionnaire is useful for collecting quantitative data (Couper, 2017). The above sections provided the selection of a mono-quantitative methodology and thus a close-ended questionnaire will be provided to the participants during the survey. The Likert Scale has been used to develop the questionnaire (refer to appendix) which is based on the research model discussed in the previous chapter.

### 3.7.3 Data analysis method

The analysis of collected data requires the acknowledgement of the type of information collected from secondary or primary sources (Wickham and Wickham, 2016). As mentioned in the selected methodology, quantitative data will be collected and thus the research can use a statistical data analysis method. In particular, the frequency analysis technique will be implemented for analysing the responses given by marketers during the online survey. This method will provide graphs and tables that can be effective in interpreting the responses and patterns that can be identified about the opinions of marketers in the UK regarding challenges and mitigation strategies related to product promotions on social media.

## 3.8 Ethical considerations

Research ethics which are required for a primary investigation include informed consent from participants, confidentiality and anonymity of data, secure storage and disposal (Dooly, Moore and Vallejo, 2017). Before conducting the survey, the consent of participants will be acquired through a consent form so that any forced participation can be avoided. Furthermore, the questionnaire discussed in this chapter highlights that no personal questions are present and thus anonymous data will be gathered. To maintain confidentiality, secure cloud storage will be used to store the responses and permanent deletion will be done after the objectives have been met.

## 3.9 Chapter summary

The purpose of this chapter has been fulfilled by selecting the methodology which is appropriate for this research. By adopting the research onion, the investigator has selected the positivism philosophy and the survey strategy to collect data which will be interpreted by applying the deductive approach. Furthermore, the study follows a cross-sectional time horizon and 50 marketers in the UK cosmetic industry will be surveyed on Google Forms. This chapter also provided the questionnaire through which data will be gathered and analysed through frequency analysis.

# Chapter 4. Data analysis and findings

## 4.1 Introduction

Data analysis has the importance of gaining meaningful insights that can be significant in addressing the research problem. Section 4.2 in this chapter provides the analysis of quantitative data collected from cosmetic marketers in the UK. This is done by implementing the method of frequency analysis which was the method selected in chapter 3. The responses to the twelve questions in the research questionnaire are analysed in section 4.2 with the interpretation of the graphs and tables displaying response frequencies collected during the survey. A comparison of the results of data analysis with the literature is done in section 4.3 to evaluate the reliability of the findings.

## 4.2 Frequency analysis

Frequency analysis is a method in which insights are obtained from the interpretation of the frequency of responses collected by deriving the evaluation from graphical and tabular representations (Cooper and Johnson, 2016). In the below analysis, the number of responses presented by the pie charts extracted from Google Forms are interpreted to obtain useful insights. This extraction was done for the answers given by 50 cosmetic marketers in the UK who participated in the survey conducted on Google Forms.

Chart, pie chart

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Figure 3 Pie chart showing answers received for the first question.

*Source: Google Forms*

Table 1 Number of responses received during the survey for the first question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 1. What is your gender? | Number of responses |
| a) Male | 27 (54%) |
| b) Female | 23 (46%) |
| c) Prefer not to say | 0 |

*Source: By author*

The first analysis is done based on one of the most important demographic variables i.e., the gender of the participants who provided their valuable opinions. In survey research, the identification of the gender of the participants is important because it provides the dependency of the responses on this demographic factor of the respondents (Magliozzi, Saperstein and Westbrook, 2016). The above pie chart and table show that almost equal participation in the survey was achieved from males and females because the frequency of 27 is there for the male participants whereas females have a frequency of 23. It can be analysed that there is no dependency of the results on gender because they are provided by both male and female cosmetic marketers in the UK.

Chart, pie chart

Description automatically generated

Figure 5 Pie chart showing answers received for the second question.

*Source: Google Forms*

Table 2 Number of responses received during the survey for the second question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 2. To which age group do you belong? | Number of responses |
| a) 18-25 | 10 (20%) |
| b) 26-35 | 28 (56%) |
| c) 36-45 | 11 (22%) |
| d) 46 and above | 1 (2%) |

*Source: By author*

The second analysis is based on the second demographic factor of the age of participants and the frequency is highest for the age group 25-35 i.e., 28 participants out of 50 as seen in the above table and chart. This has been followed by the 11 and 10 participants who belonged to the age groups of 36-45 and 18-25 respectively. The age factor of research participants can determine the dependency of their responses on their experience (Jann and Hinz, 2016). It can be interpreted that responses from different aged marketers have been collected and the answers to the subsequent questions are given mostly by middle-aged marketers.

Chart, pie chart

Description automatically generated

Figure 6 Pie chart showing answers received for the third question.

*Source: Google Forms*

Table 3 Number of responses received during the survey for the third question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 3. How many years of experience do you have as a marketer in the UK cosmetic industry? | Number of responses |
| a) 0-3 | 12 (24%) |
| b) 3-7 | 8 (16%) |
| c) 7-10 | 16 (32%) |
| d) More than 10 | 14 (28%) |

*Source: By author*

It was also necessary to identify the work experience of the participants as marketers in the cosmetic industry of the UK so that reliable findings can be obtained. The highest frequency in this aspect is obtained for the experience of 7 to 10 years which is 16 responses out of the total 50. The second highest is obtained for the last option of more than 10 years. It can be analysed that cosmetic marketers who have significant work experience participated in the survey which highlights the potential and reliability of research findings.

Chart, pie chart

Description automatically generated

Figure 7 Pie chart showing answers received for the fourth question.

*Source: Google Forms*

Table 4 Number of responses received during the survey for the fourth question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 4. To what extent do you agree that the lack of engagement of customers is a challenge while promoting cosmetic products in the UK on social media? | Number of responses |
| a) Strongly disagree | 1 (2%) |
| b) Somewhat disagree | 2 (4%) |
| c) Neutral | 3 (6%) |
| d) Somewhat agree | 14 (28%) |
| e) Strongly agree | 30 (60%) |

*Source: By author*

The extent of the agreement with the factors mentioned in the conceptual framework of this research is now essential to be evaluated so that the challenges in product promotions faced by cosmetic marketers in the UK can be identified. The above question was based on the factor of customer engagement and the highest frequency of 30 identified from the above table and chart indicates that most of the participants agree that while promoting cosmetic products on social media, engagement of UK customers is a challenge. The attraction of targeted customers towards social media promotions depends on the extent to which these promotions are engaging (Alves, Fernandes and Raposo, 2016). Therefore, it can be analysed that the lack of customer engagement in such product promotions is a challenge that has to be addressed in the UK cosmetic industry.

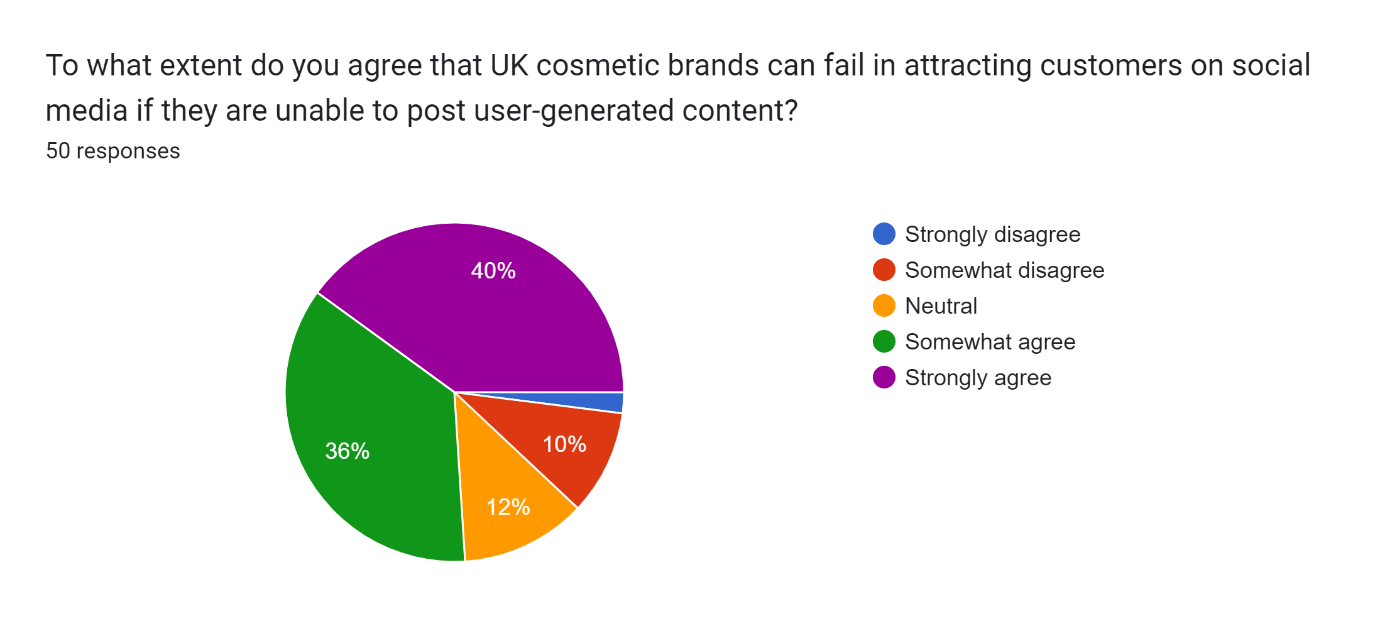


Figure 8 Pie chart showing answers received for the fifth question.

*Source: Google Forms*

Table 5 Number of responses received during the survey for the fifth question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 5. To what extent do you agree that UK cosmetic brands can fail in attracting customers on social media if they are unable to post user-generated content? | Number of responses |
| a) Strongly disagree | 1 (2%) |
| b) Somewhat disagree | 5 (10%) |
| c) Neutral | 6 (12%) |
| d) Somewhat agree | 18 (36%) |
| e) Strongly agree | 20 (40%) |

*Source: By author*

Furthermore, the aspect of user-generated content has been considered by the fifth question for which the somewhat agreement of 18 participants and strong agreement from 20 participants out of 50 has been received during the survey. It can be analysed that the customers present on social media might not be attracted by cosmetic brands if they do not post user-generated content. User-generated content provides trust to other customers about the effectiveness of the product or service promoted in the content (Luca, 2015). So, it is evident that UK cosmetic brands fail in attracting customers which becomes a challenge when user-generated content is not provided during social media promotions.

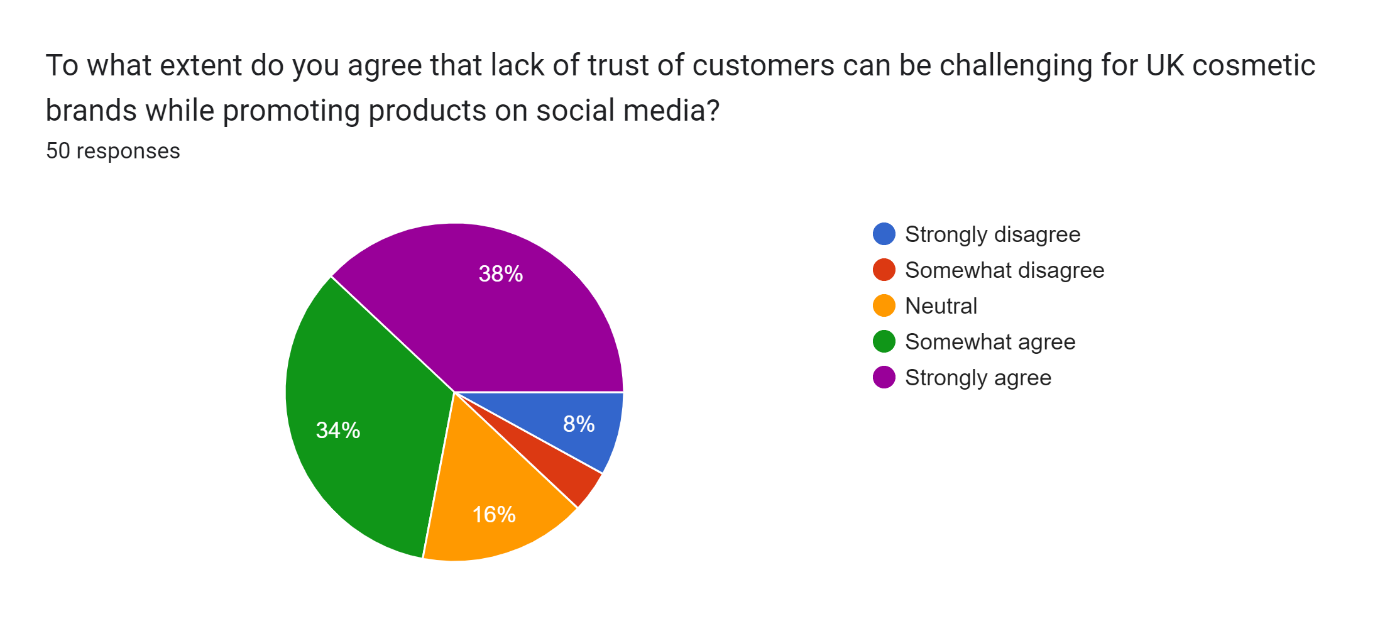


Figure 9 Pie chart showing answers received for the sixth question.

*Source: Google Forms*

Table 6 Number of responses received during the survey for the sixth question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 6. To what extent do you agree that lack of trust of customers can be challenging for UK cosmetic brands while promoting products on social media? | Number of responses |
| a) Strongly disagree | 4 (2%) |
| b) Somewhat disagree | 2 (4%) |
| c) Neutral | 8 (16%) |
| d) Somewhat agree | 17 (34%) |
| e) Strongly agree | 19 (38%) |

*Source: By author*

Another challenge is concerned with consumer trust which has been focused on the question for which the responses are provided above. The highest frequency is 19 which is 38% of the total number of participants and is obtained for the option of strongly agreeing. This is aligned with the frequency of somewhat agree which is 17 out of 50 participants. Therefore, the majority of participants agree that cosmetic brands in the UK face the challenge of a lack of consumer trust when they are promoting products on social media. Customer loyalty towards a brand is negatively impacted when the customer has a lack of trust in the propositions offered by the brand (Ebrahim, 2020). Therefore, it can be interpreted that there is also a challenge of lack of customer loyalty.

Chart, pie chart

Description automatically generated

Figure 10 Pie chart showing answers received for the seventh question.

*Source: Google Forms*

Table 7 Number of responses received during the survey for the seventh question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 7. To what extent do you agree that customer loyalty cannot be attained if collaborations are not done by UK cosmetic brands? | Number of responses |
| a) Strongly disagree | 2 (4%) |
| b) Somewhat disagree | 1 (2%) |
| c) Neutral | 15 (30%) |
| d) Somewhat agree | 19 (38%) |
| e) Strongly agree | 13 (26%) |

*Source: By author*

Furthermore, the pie chart shown above is based on the responses collected for the factor of collaborations which is associated with the aspect of customer loyalty discussed in the previous question. The agreement of the marketers who participated in the survey can be realised from the 26% frequency for the last option and 38% for the second last option. It can be interpreted that most participants agree with the challenge of customer loyalty if cosmetic brands do not opt for collaborations. These collaborations are linked to other companies or marketers that can help the brand in enhancing the current level of product promotions (Kay, Mulcahy and Parkinson, 2020). It can be analysed that repetitive purchases are not done by customers in the UK from cosmetic brands when they do not opt for such collaborations.

Chart, pie chart

Description automatically generated

Figure 11 Pie chart showing answers received for the eighth question.

*Source: Google Forms*

Table 8 Number of responses received during the survey for the eighth question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 8. To what extent do you agree that brand awareness can be increased by posting engaging content on social media by UK cosmetic brands? | Number of responses |
| a) Strongly disagree | 1 (2%) |
| b) Somewhat disagree | 4 (8%) |
| c) Neutral | 8 (16%) |
| d) Somewhat agree | 17 (34%) |
| e) Strongly agree | 20 (40%) |

*Source: By author*

The mitigation strategies are further evaluated to address the challenges identified in the above analysis. The eighth question was based on the recommendation of posting engaging content and the highest frequencies are obtained for the options based on the agreement as shown in the above table and pie chart. Most of the cosmetic marketers who participated in the survey agree that engaging content on social media platforms during product promotions can be helpful in increasing brand awareness among customers.

Chart, pie chart

Description automatically generated

Figure 12 Pie chart showing answers received for the ninth question.

*Source: Google Forms*

Table 9 Number of responses received during the survey for the ninth question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 9. To what extent do you agree that sustainability should be included in the social media promotions of UK cosmetic brands? | Number of responses |
| a) Strongly disagree | 2 (4%) |
| b) Somewhat disagree | 1 (2%) |
| c) Neutral | 10 (20%) |
| d) Somewhat agree | 21 (42%) |
| e) Strongly agree | 16 (32%) |

*Source: By author*

Furthermore, the mitigation strategy of promoting sustainability in social media advertisements has been considered by the ninth question for which most participants agree that UK cosmetic brands should make sustainability a part of their social media promotions. Climate change has led to a change in the behaviour of customers that led to the consumption of sustainable products and services (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, Dąbrowska and Machnik, 2021). This makes it essential for cosmetic brands to include sustainability in social media product promotions.

Chart, pie chart

Description automatically generated

Figure 13 Pie chart showing answers received for the tenth question.

*Source: Google Forms*

Table 10 Number of responses received during the survey for the tenth question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 10. To what extent do you agree that tie-ups with influencers are important for UK cosmetic brands while promoting their products on social media platforms? | Number of responses |
| a) Strongly disagree | 2 (4%) |
| b) Somewhat disagree | 5 (10%) |
| c) Neutral | 2 (4%) |
| d) Somewhat agree | 18 (36%) |
| e) Strongly agree | 23 (46%) |

*Source: By author*

The prevalence of influencer marketing in the cosmetic industry is derived from the trust that customers have in social media influencers (Zak and Hasprova, 2020). This has also been identified from the frequency collected for various responses as shown in the above pie chart and table. The highest and second highest frequencies for strongly and somewhat agree i.e., 23 and 18 have been received for the tenth question. It can be interpreted that social media product promotions can be enhanced by UK cosmetic brands through tie-ups with influencers.

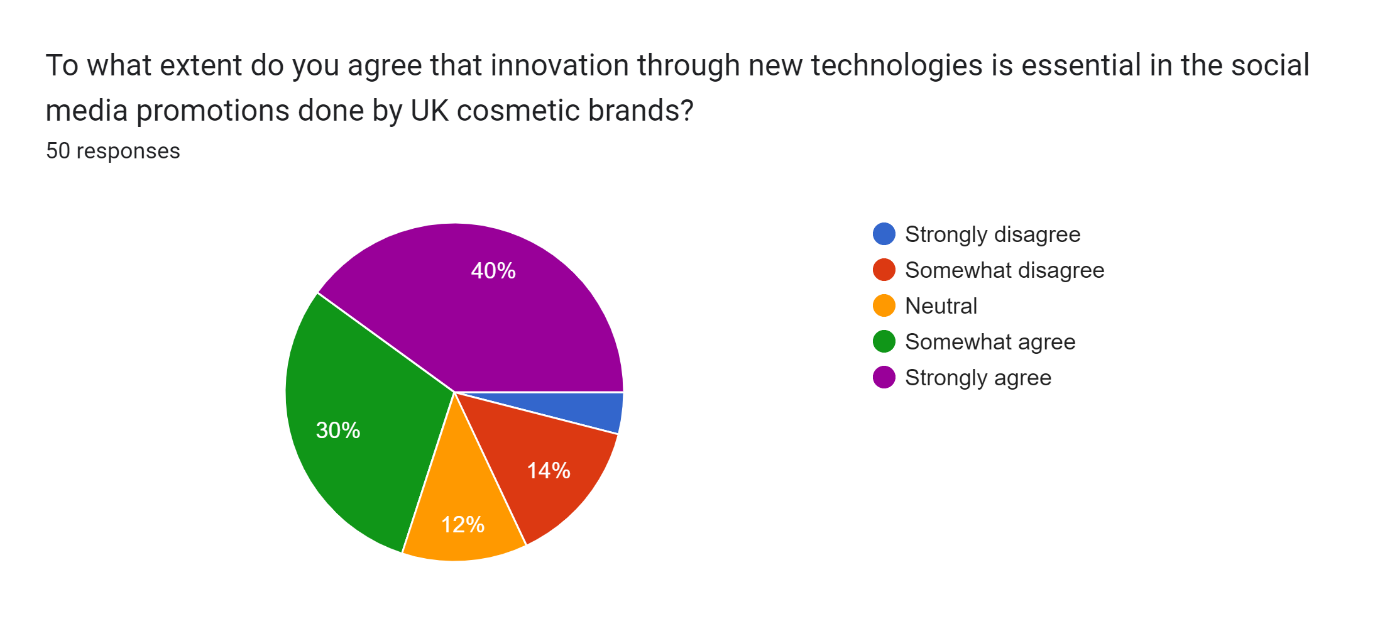


Figure 14 Pie chart showing answers received for the eleventh question.

*Source: Google Forms*

Table 11 Number of responses received during the survey for the eleventh question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 11. To what extent do you agree that innovation through new technologies is essential in the social media promotions done by UK cosmetic brands? | Number of responses |
| a) Strongly disagree | 2 (4%) |
| b) Somewhat disagree | 7 (14%) |
| c) Neutral | 6 (12%) |
| d) Somewhat agree | 15 (30%) |
| e) Strongly agree | 20 (40%) |

*Source: By author*

The consideration of new technologies is done by the above question and most participants agree that innovation is essential for UK cosmetic brands. It can be analysed that better social media product promotions can be done by marketers in the UK cosmetic industry through new technologies and innovation. This can also help in mitigating the challenges identified in the analysis of the above questions.

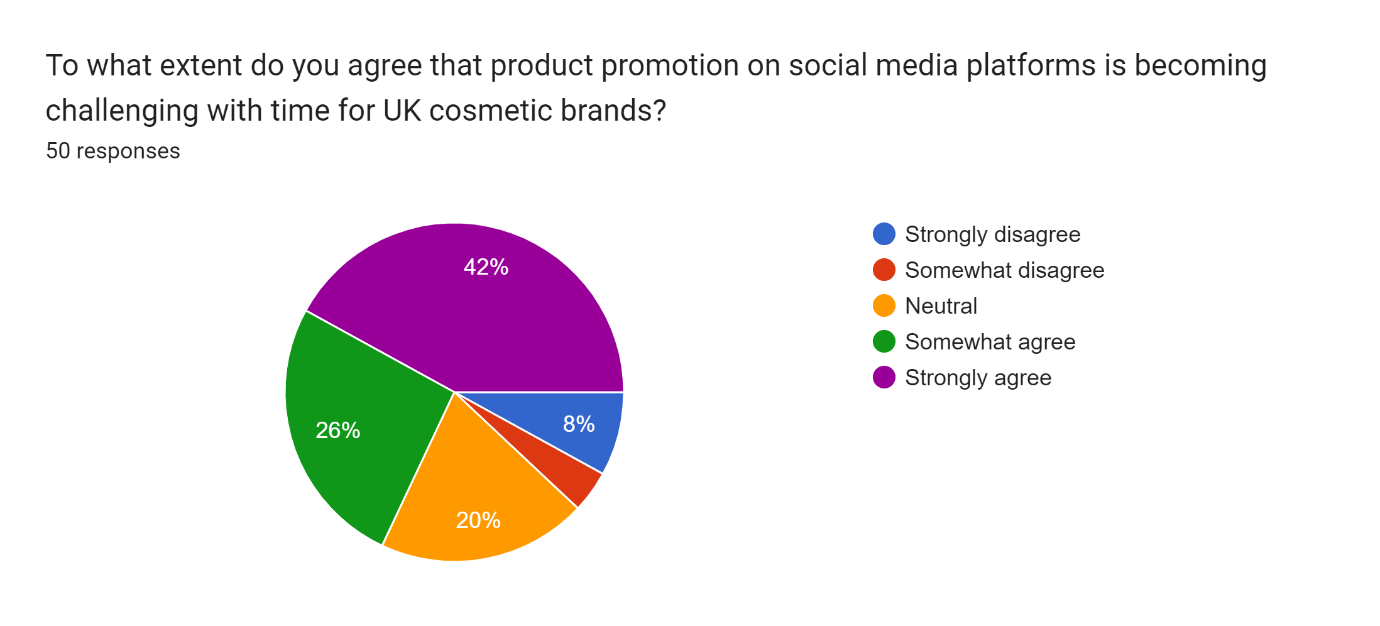


Figure 15 Pie chart showing answers received for the twelfth question.

*Source: Google Forms*

Table 12 Number of responses received during the survey for the twelfth question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 12. To what extent do you agree that product promotion on social media platforms is becoming challenging with time for UK cosmetic brands? | Number of responses |
| a) Strongly disagree | 4 (8%) |
| b) Somewhat disagree | 2 (4%) |
| c) Neutral | 10 (20%) |
| d) Somewhat agree | 13 (26%) |
| e) Strongly agree | 21 (42%) |

*Source: By author*

The analysis of the last question reveals that the consistency of challenges with time is faced by UK cosmetic brands as agreed by the marketers who participated in the survey. In the cosmetic industry, issues are present for marketers in delivering relevant content for changing consumer behaviour on social media. Therefore, the challenge faced during social media promotions must be addressed by cosmetic brands in the UK.

## 4.3 Comparison of the findings with the literature

The above results from frequency analysis provided a number of insights the reliability of which should now be checked by comparing them with the data provided by other authors. The challenge of lack of user engagement related to product promotions on social media has been identified by the results of Jaakonmäki, Müller and VomBrocke (2017). These authors argue that the content might not become relevant to the customers opting for cosmetics if it not engaging enough. The results of frequency analysis revealed the prevalence of the challenge of lack of customer engagement in the UK cosmetic industry. Therefore, an alignment is identified between the research findings and the results provided by Jaakonmäki, Müller and VomBrocke (2017). Furthermore, the challenge derived from the lack of collaboration among cosmetic brands has been evaluated by Zhu and Chen (2015) in their study. This collaboration improves the purchasing decisions of customers through better product promotions. In the current study, the insights of data analysis also revealed this challenge regarding collaboration. Thus, the findings also align with the results obtained by Zhu and Chen (2015).

Furthermore, the challenge of a lack of trust has also been provided by Zhu and Chen (2015) who argue that cosmetic brands fail to attain the trust of targeted customers when they do not tie up with influencers. Therefore, the research findings also align with this argument. On the other hand, an additional issue of lack of user-generated content is highlighted by Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch (2017) who argue that customers do not trust the promotions done by cosmetic brands when they do not provide the content of the users who have tried their products. The results of frequency analysis also highlighted the challenge of the absence of user-generated content. Therefore, the alignment of the insights with the argument of Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch (2017) has been identified. On the other hand, Voorveld (2019) argue that the lack of personalised content on social media is also there for cosmetic brands. However, no such challenge has been identified from the results of data analysis and thus there is no alignment of the findings with the ones provided by Voorveld (2019).

Pop, Săplăcan and Alt (2020) argue that the incorporation of sustainability should be done in the social media promotional strategies of brands. This is because of the expectations of customers regarding sustainable products who purchase cosmetics. A mitigation strategy for considering sustainability for addressing the challenges has been identified from the data analysis results. The importance of this recommendation has been identified in the fact that the changing consumer behaviour regarding sustainability can be better addressed. So, the alignment of the argument of Pop, Săplăcan and Alt (2020) with the research findings has been realised. Furthermore, the recommendation of promoting the products based on the culture of the region has been given by Holt (2016) and the author argues that customers can only be attracted to the promotions when relevant content based on the culture is provided. However, this has not been identified from the results of this study and thus they do not align with the argument of Holt (2016).

Nonetheless, Holt (2016) also argued that the utilisation of new technologies should be done by cosmetic brands while promoting their products on social media. This has been identified as a mitigation strategy in the data analysis results. Therefore, the research findings align with this recommendation of Holt (2016). Furthermore, Arrigo (2018) argues that engaging content is important to be delivered in social media promotions by cosmetic brands so that better engagement of customers can be achieved. The results of this study also highlighted the importance of engaging content, and it thus aligns with the argument of Arrigo (2018). The findings provided by Nunes et al. (2018) indicate that it is essential for a cosmetic brand to implement influencer marketing because of the trust of customers in influencers. The strategy of tie-ups with influencers has also been recommended by the results of this research that align with the findings of Nunes et al. (2018).

## 4.4 Chapter summary

The implementation of frequency analysis has been done successfully in this chapter which led to effective research findings. The tabular and graphical representations have been interpreted to a reliable extent which led to many insights about the research area. A significant agreement for the identified challenges and mitigation strategies has been obtained from the marketers in the UK cosmetic industry who participated in the survey. Furthermore, the reliability of the research findings has been realised by identifying their alignment with the existing literature.

# Chapter 5. Conclusion and recommendations

## 5.1 Introduction

A necessity of realising the contribution of the findings in the previous chapter in the achievement of the aim of the study and its objectives is there. Section 5.2 provides this realisation and the limitations derived from each of the research methods implemented during the research are provided in section 5.3. Furthermore, section 5.4 is based on the implications that this study has and directions for future research i.e., recommendations are provided in section 5.4 of this chapter.

## 5.2 Aim and objectives achievement

The research had the aim of ***“evaluating the challenges and mitigation strategies associated with product promotion on social media platforms in the UK cosmetic industry.”*** This aim has been achieved because various challenges have been evaluated from the results of data analysis along with the strategies which can be useful for mitigating them.

The first objective of this research was ***“To analyse the opportunities given by product promotion on social media platforms in the UK cosmetic industry.”*** It has been analysed in this research that opportunities such as customer engagement, better purchasing decisions, brand awareness and brand image are provided by product promotions on social media.

The second research objective was ***“To identify the challenges faced by UK cosmetic brands while promoting their products on social media platforms.”*** The research findings achieved this objective by identifying the challenges of lack of customer engagement, ineffective communication, lack of trust and lack of collaboration.

The third and last objective of the study was ***“To recommend strategies which can mitigate the identified challenges and improve product promotion on social media platforms by UK cosmetic brands.”*** This objective has been achieved by recommending the strategies of engaging content, sustainability, tie-ups with influencers and innovation.

## 5.3 Research limitations

**Absence of a mixed approach**

The study has the limitation of not conducting secondary data analysis while attempting to achieve the research aim. Only primary data from the participants has been analysed while following the mono methodology.

**Lack of detailed information**

The optional nature of the questions asked of the participants during the survey is also a limitation. There was an absence of open-ended questions which restricted the participants to only give answers based on the options provided to them.

## 5.4 Research implications

**Policy implications**

The study contributes to the policymaking structure of cosmetic brands in the UK because policymakers can reform the current policies regarding product promotion on social media platforms by using the findings provided by this research.

**Literature implications**

It also contributed to the existing literature because primary data was not there in the literature from the cosmetic industry in the UK. Therefore, the implication is that the results of this study can be utilised by authors for conducting further research.

**Theoretical implications**

The research also has the theoretical implication of a better understanding of theories related to the topic. For instance, theories related to consumer behaviour can be evaluated by interpreting the findings of this study.

**Practical implications**

Cosmetic brands in the UK can make use of the results of this study practically by making better strategies for promoting their products on social media platforms. They can implement the recommendations given in this study to achieve better results.

## 5.5 Potential directions for future studies

**Acquiring detailed information**

It is recommended that researchers should collect in-depth data from marketers in the UK so that the limitation of restricted data collected in this study can be addressed. Open-ended questions should be asked of the participants.

**Adoption of the mixed method**

The suggestion of a mixed methodology is provided so that both primary and secondary data can be analysed simultaneously. The dependency on primary data as identified in this research can be addressed with this recommendation.

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**[](https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjtn_jD-sTVAhWFaRQKHTe9AZMQjRwIBw&url=https://www.studenthut.com/universities/birmingham-city-university-profile&psig=AFQjCNEdrDzwFvMeZ--Az2Tejk03rGDIIw&ust=1502189482049469)Appendix**

**Business School Research Ethics Application Form**

Please fill ALL sections of the form unless it specifies to skip a section.

Email completed forms (including any attachments – see checklist) to the Module Moodle by [INSERT DATE]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project Title** | **Challenges and mitigation strategies associated with product promotion on social media platforms: A case study of UK cosmetic industry** |
| **Module** | Dissertation with Research Methods |
| **Module Code** | BUS7075 |
| **Academic Year** | 2022-2023 |
| **Student** | Ujjawal Jain |
| **Supervisor** | Ye Wang |

This section focuses on gaining an overall understanding of what is being examined within the research project. There should be sufficiently detailed so that a layperson can understand *what* is being assessed and *how.*

# Section A: Nature of Project

**A1- Please provide a brief background and rationale to the research:**

***(This should be no more than 300 words and written for non-subject experts)***

Product promotion on social media has become one of the major activities in the promotion and marketing strategies in the UK. Almost all industries rely on the social media market considering the traffic and boost it gives to the products. For example, UK cosmetic industry also uses social media channels to promote the product all over the world. However, there are several challenges that markers face when using social media channels for marking campaigns and for product promotions (Shen and Bissell, 2013). Similarly, there are challenges such as lack of organic traffic or the right audience, and identification of the right platform as there are multiple social media platforms available, and it is also costly to use all (Akbar et al., 2022).

The rationale for the research is that there is a lack of primary research about social media marketing challenges in the cosmetic industry of the UK. Hence, it is important to find solutions for the cosmetic industry to mitigate these challenges.

**A2 - Please concisely state the research aim(s) and objective(s):**

***(This should be no more than 150 words and written for non-subject experts)***

**Research aim**

The proposed research aims to evaluate the challenges and mitigation strategies associated with product promotion on social media platforms in the UK cosmetic industry.

**Research objectives**

* To analyse the opportunities given by product promotion on social media platforms in the UK cosmetic industry.
* To identify the challenges faced by UK cosmetic brands while promoting their products on social media platforms.
* To recommend strategies which can mitigate the identified challenges and improve product promotion on social media platforms by UK cosmetic brands.

**A3 -Please provide an overview of the methodological approach and materials used in this project:**

***(This should be written for non-subject experts)***

The research follows a mono-quantitative methodology that deals with one type of data that will collect numerical data. The rationale for choosing this methodological approach is to obtain better quantitative data compared to qualitative data that only include theoretical analysis. The research will use the survey method for collecting the data from participants by conducting an online survey on Google Forms. The survey is an effective method to collect data from a large population. The research sample is the collection of data from the total number of participants. This research will include a sample size of 50. A total of 50 marketers from the cosmetic industry of the UK will be included in this survey. Moreover, an online survey on Google Forms will be conducted among the participants based on the research questions that will help in understanding the challenges of social media marketing for the UK cosmetic industry along with the mitigation strategies. A close-ended questionnaire will be used to collect data during the survey. The questionnaire will be based on the research questions that will identify and address the challenges in promotion through social media marketing. The questions will be asked from the marketers in the UK cosmetic industry. The frequency analysis method will be used to analyse the responses collected from the participants.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A4 - Will the project entail ONLY secondary data collection using publically available sources?** | No |

***(If you have answered “Yes” to A4 you do not need to complete sections B-D, please go direct to*** [***section***](#SectionE) ***E)***

Please consider the following:

# Section B: Handling Primary Data

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Does data collection require:**   1. Either researchers or participants to enter private locations (to which neither individual has full access rights) 2. Access to the home(s) of either researchers or participants 3. Private locations with no neutral third-party present 4. Entry to public locations after the hours of 6.00pm? | No |
| **Are there any issues of confidentiality NOT addressed by the following?**   1. Aggregation of numerical data 2. Anonymisation of specific individuals or organisations (e.g., through use of pseudonyms) 3. Paraphrasing of potentially identifiable quotes | No |
| **Are there any issues of data handling which are not dealt with by the following established procedures?**   1. Compliance with the Data Protection Act 2. BCU University storage policy | No |

This section focuses on gaining an understanding of how you will identify and recruit participants and whether what you are wishing to conduct is ethically sound. Please explain who you will recruit, why, how will you ensure their safety i.e., anonymity and any further ethical risks associated.

# Section C: Participant Information

**C1 - How will potential participants be identified, approached and recruited?**

|  |
| --- |
| The participants will be approached through social media platforms and email. They will be recruited after they give their consent for participation after filling out the consent form which will be shared with them through social media platforms. |

**C2- How will participants give informed consent freely?**

***(Please provide the consent form and participant information sheet with this ethics application)***

|  |
| --- |
| Participants will give informed consent by filling out the consent form and reading the participant information sheet provided to them before conducting the survey. |

**C3 - Will participants be informed of their right to withdraw their participation and/or data at any time during and after the study? Provide details of how you will achieve this:**

|  |
| --- |
| Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw their participation and/or data at any time during and after the study by the information present in the participant information sheet. |

This section requires you to detail a) How you plan to collect your data and, b) How will securely store it. You are required to inform the committee how you aim to minimise environmental risks when collecting data, in addition to discussing the steps that you will take to protect the data that will be collected.

# Section D: Data collection, storage and dissemination

**D1–Please provide details regarding the proposed site(s) for data collection.**

***(e.g., Location(s) and timing of data collection, with reference to potential risks to participants and researchers posed by this)***

|  |
| --- |
| The data will be collected in a password-protected hard drive after the survey has been completed by all the participants in the research sample. |

**D2 - How will you ensure confidentiality (or anonymisation, if possible) in collecting, interpreting and storing data?**

|  |
| --- |
| Confidentiality or anonymisation will be maintained by not asking any questions which can identify the participants and thus the data will be collected anonymously. |

**D3- Where will data be stored and how will access be managed and controlled?**

|  |
| --- |
| The data will be stored in a personal password-protected hard drive of the researcher and only the researcher will manage and control the access by not sharing the password with anyone. |

**Appendices checklist (Not Necessary for Secondary Data Analysis)**

# Section E: Checklist and declarations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Participant information sheet** | Yes |
| **Participant consent form** | Yes |
| **Research materials (e.g., Copies of questionnaires, interviews, vignettes and other research tools)** | Yes |

**Student declaration**

In signing this research ethics application form I confirm the following:

* That the form is accurate and completed to the best of my knowledge.
* If the research is approved, then I will adhere to the terms of the full application and if there are to be any changes to the project I will seek an amendment from the committee.
* I understand that research records/data may be subject to inspection for audit and compliance purposes.
* I understand this application and any additional documentation will be retained for 5 years post the end of the project.
* I understand that my research must not involve: participation of those under 18 years of age; participation of those with learning disability; participation of those with a mental health condition; participation of those with physical or sensory impairments; participation of those with sensitive/significant life experiences (e.g. victims of abuse / ex-offenders); data collection surrounding highly sensitive topics (e.g. abuse, terrorism, religion, interpersonal violence, terminal illness); data collection from those in prison; constraint of participant rights (e.g. informed consent via deception, or perceptions of the right to withdraw from the study); any physical or intrusive intervention with the participant (including consumption of food or drinks); withholding any aspects of routine health treatment or care; a reasonable risk of disclosure of information requiring communication to another organisation (e.g. abuse, criminal offences/illegal activity, unknown illness or disease); long distance travel to collect data; NHS service users.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Signed by | Ujjawal Jain |
| Date | 02/01/2023 |

**Supervisor declaration**

In signing this research ethics application form I confirm the following:

* I am satisfied that the scientific content of the research is satisfactory for an educational qualification at this level.
* I take responsibility for working with the student named above to ensure that this study is conducted in accordance with the relevant disciplinary ethical guidelines.
* I will ensure that the student seeks an amendment from the BLSS Research Ethics Committee before implementing substantial amendments to the protocol or to the terms of the full application of which the Committee has given a favourable opinion.

|  |  |
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| Signed by |  |
| Date | 03/01/2023 |

**ADMINISTRATION SECTION**

|  |
| --- |
| **Application Reference**:Click here to enter text. |
| **Date of Submission:**Click here to enter text. |
| **Allocated Category:**Click here to enter text. |
| **Allocated Reviewers**:Click here to enter text. |

## Survey Questionnaire

Table 13 Survey questionnaire

|  |
| --- |
| **Question 1.** What is your gender? |
| a) Male |
| b) Female |
| c) Prefer not to say |
| **Question 2.** To which age group do you belong? |
| a) 18-25 |
| b) 26-35 |
| c) 36-45 |
| d) 46 and above |
| **Question 3.** How many years of experience do you have as a marketer in the UK cosmetic industry? |
| a) 0-3 |
| b) 3-7 |
| c) 7-10 |
| d) More than 10 |
| **Question 4.** To what extent do you agree that the lack of engagement of customers is a challenge while promoting cosmetic products in the UK on social media? |
| a) Strongly disagree |
| b) Somewhat disagree |
| c) Neutral |
| d) Somewhat agree |
| e) Strongly agree |
| **Question 5.** To what extent do you agree that UK cosmetic brands can fail in attracting customers on social media if they are unable to post user-generated content? |
| a) Strongly disagree |
| b) Somewhat disagree |
| c) Neutral |
| d) Somewhat agree |
| e) Strongly agree |
| **Question 6.** To what extent do you agree that lack of trust of customers can be challenging for UK cosmetic brands while promoting products on social media? |
| a) Strongly disagree |
| b) Somewhat disagree |
| c) Neutral |
| d) Somewhat agree |
| e) Strongly agree |
| **Question 7.** To what extent do you agree that customer loyalty cannot be attained if collaborations are not done by UK cosmetic brands? |
| a) Strongly disagree |
| b) Somewhat disagree |
| c) Neutral |
| d) Somewhat agree |
| e) Strongly agree |
| **Question 8.** To what extent do you agree that brand awareness can be increased by posting engaging content on social media by UK cosmetic brands? |
| a) Strongly disagree |
| b) Somewhat disagree |
| c) Neutral |
| d) Somewhat agree |
| e) Strongly agree |
| **Question 9.** To what extent do you agree that sustainability should be included in the social media promotions of UK cosmetic brands? |
| a) Strongly disagree |
| b) Somewhat disagree |
| c) Neutral |
| d) Somewhat agree |
| e) Strongly agree |
| **Question 10.** To what extent do you agree that tie-ups with influencers are important for UK cosmetic brands while promoting their products on social media platforms? |
| a) Strongly disagree |
| b) Somewhat disagree |
| c) Neutral |
| d) Somewhat agree |
| e) Strongly agree |
| **Question 11.** To what extent do you agree that innovation through new technologies is essential in the social media promotions done by UK cosmetic brands? |
| a) Strongly disagree |
| b) Somewhat disagree |
| c) Neutral |
| d) Somewhat agree |
| e) Strongly agree |
| **Question 12.** To what extent do you agree that product promotion on social media platforms is becoming challenging with time for UK cosmetic brands? |
| a) Strongly disagree |
| b) Somewhat disagree |
| c) Neutral |
| d) Somewhat agree |
| e) Strongly agree |

*Source: By author*