The Effect of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Cosmetic Products and Strategic Uses

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Abstract

This research delves into the transformative role of social media influencer marketing in shaping consumer perceptions of cosmetic products. In this comprehensive study, we employ a mixed-methods approach to analyze the multifaceted dynamics of this evolving marketing landscape. The study unfolds against the backdrop of the burgeoning influence of social media on consumer behavior, particularly in the realm of cosmetic products. With the explosive growth of influencer marketing, understanding its impact becomes imperative for businesses navigating this competitive landscape. Our primary objective is to unravel the intricacies of social media influencer marketing and its sway over consumer choices in the cosmetics sector. By doing so, we aim to fill a critical gap in our understanding of the practical, scientific, and theoretical dimensions underlying this influential phenomenon. To achieve comprehensive insights, the authors deploy a dual research methodology. A quantitative survey targeted 400 respondents; active social media users aged 18-45. Simultaneously, qualitative in-depth interviews with 10 cosmetics brands enrich our understanding of industry perspectives. Quantitative analyses unveil compelling relationships between social media use patterns, beauty product consumption, and influencer following. Regression analysis scrutinizes the hypotheses related to influencer type, exposure method, and sponsorship status, illuminating their significant impact on consumer acceptance intentions. Qualitative interviews provide brands' narratives, offering valuable context and depth to the quantitative findings.

Our study concludes that businesses are strategically harnessing social media and influencers to wield considerable influence over consumer decisions in the cosmetics market.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing, Influencer Marketing, Consumer Acceptance, Cosmetic Products*

1. Introduction

The use of social media is increasingly common, with consumers obtaining information from various sources. Businesses strategically employ digital content and platforms to engage consumers, utilizing influencer marketing strategies to positively influence consumer perceptions and behaviors. However, prolonged exposure to aggressive marketing on social media has led to consumer fatigue, prompting a shift towards influencer marketing as a more effective strategy. Particularly in the cosmetics industry, beauty influencers on social media play a significant role in shaping consumer trends and purchasing decisions. The effectiveness of influencer marketing is influenced by factors such as the type of influencer, sponsorship display status, and product exposure. In recent years, influencer marketing has emerged as a crucial strategy for businesses across various industries, including cosmetics. Previous research has highlighted its effectiveness in engaging consumers. However, as social media platforms evolve and consumer preferences

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shift, there is a need for ongoing research to understand the intricacies of influencer marketing, particularly in the context of the cosmetics industry.

2. Objectives

The aim of the present research is to undertake a detailed study into the effect of social media influencer marketing on cosmetic products and their strategic use. The objectives of the study are as follows:

1) To study the motivations behind brands utilizing social media marketing for cosmetic
2) To understand the rationale behind brands choosing influencer marketing instead of other forms of advertising on social media

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Research Design:

The research design for this study aims to explore the impact of social media influencer marketing on cosmetic products and their strategic uses. The present study uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

3.2 Population and sample size:

The total size of the population in Bangkok is 2,619,705 people, according to the Statistical yearbook Thailand 2019 (2019). For sample selection, the researcher employed the convenience sampling method and utilized the Taro Yamane formula (Yamane, 1967) to calculate the sample size.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$= \frac{2,619,705}{1 + 2,619,705(0.05)^2}$$

$$= 400$$

Figure 1: Taro Yamane formula (Yamane, 1967)

This study will focus on the target group of 400 respondents, as a 95% confidence level and P =.5 are assumed for calculating the sample size equation. The sample will encompass both male and female individuals aged between 18 and 45 years old.

3.3 Data Collection:

This research employed convenience sampling through online polls and brand interviews as a form of non-probability sampling method, aimed at collecting data from community representatives easily accessible for study participation.

3.4 Data Analysis:

To calculate and analyze the primary data in this study, IBM's SPSS version 27.1 statistical analysis software will be employed. The approach involves descriptive and inferential mathematical analysis methods, including the use of frequencies and percentages to analyze the populations of respondents, as well as multiple regression analysis.

3.5 Research framework:
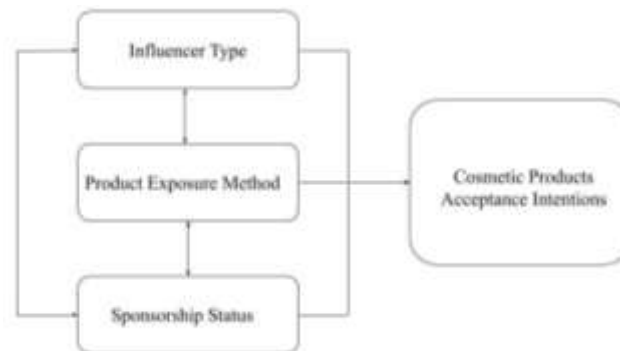
Figure 2: Research framework

This research adopts a research framework to examine the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable, as outlined in the aforementioned framework. Moreover, qualitative research will entail in-depth interviews with 10 cosmetic brands, each involving 10 questions, to elucidate their perspectives on online influencer marketing approaches.

This study examines three key factors: influencer types, product exposure methods, and sponsorship status. Schouten, A. P., Janssen, L., & Verspaget, M. (2019) investigated the impact of influencer type on advertisement effectiveness, finding that public influencers had a stronger influence on consumer behavioral intentions compared to direct product exposure. These findings highlight the importance of the interaction between influencer type and product exposure in shaping customer behavioral intentions. Similarly, Chu, P., Saucier, D., & Hafner, E. (2010) discovered that individuals prefer product exposure in the absence of or with minimal advertising. Likewise, Ewers, N. L. (2017) demonstrated that in the absence of product exposure, the absence of a sponsorship display can be more advantageous, as a sponsorship display may inadvertently disclose the advertisement context to the audience.

3.6 Interview questions:

1) Are you using influencer marketing on social media to advertise your products, and why?

2) Can a social media influencer represent your brand properly, and why?

3) What are the main criteria you consider when selecting which social media influencer should represent your products online?

4) Which social media platform do you think is optimal to advertise your cosmetic products, and why?

5) Do you prefer to advertise your products using online or offline marketing channels, and why?

6) How important is the online social media footprint for your business, and why?

7) Does the age, gender, and beauty characteristic of the social media influencer matter to you, and why?

8) Will you select a social media influencer that is not popular outside of social media, and why?

9) Do you prefer to work with one or multiple social media influencers, and why?

10) Do you prefer dedicated product reviews on social media or sponsorship mentions across multiple posts? Explain why?

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic analysis:

Figure 3: Age of survey participants

The majority of survey participants were aged between 26 and 34, making up 34.5 percent of the total sample. This was closely followed by the 35-45 age group, which accounted for 31.7 percent of respondents. Additionally, there were 90 participants aged 18-25, constituting 18.2 percent of the total sample.
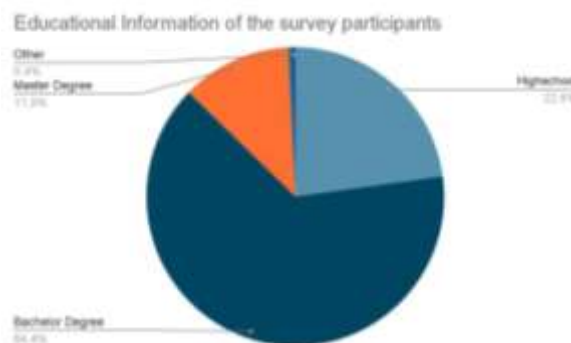

Figure 4: Educational Information

The frequency distribution of the highest education level among the sample was examined. The largest proportion consisted of respondents with a bachelor's degree, comprising 319 individuals, representing 64.4 percent of the total sample. The second-largest group was comprised of respondents with a high school education, totaling 113 individuals, which accounted for 22.8 percent. Following this, 59 respondents held a master's degree, representing 11.9 percent of the total sample.
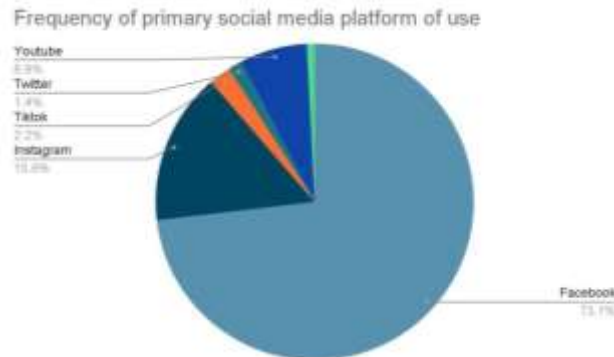
Figure 5: Frequency of social media platform use

On the frequency of social media platform use, the largest group, accounting for 362 respondents (73.1 percent) of the total sample, selected Facebook as their primary platform. The second-largest group, comprising 77 respondents (15.5 percent), indicated Instagram as their primary social media platform. Following closely, YouTube was chosen by 34 respondents (6.9 percent).
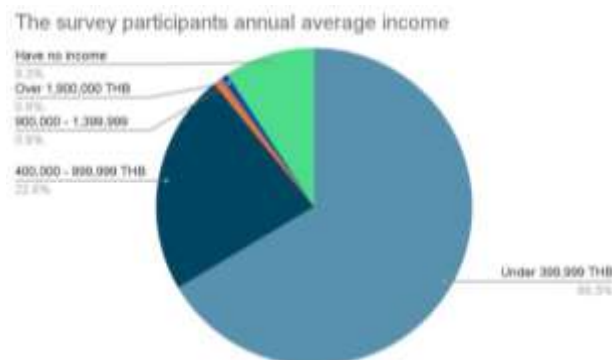
Figure 6: The survey participants annual average income

On annual income, the majority of respondents, comprising 329 individuals (66.5 percent), reported an annual salary below 399,999 THB. The second largest group, consisting of 112 respondents (22.6 percent), reported an annual income between 400,000 and 899,999 THB. Additionally, 4 respondents (0.8 percent) reported an annual income between 900,000 and 1,399,999 THB, while 3 respondents (0.6 percent) reported an annual income exceeding 1,900,000 THB. Only 1 respondent (0.2 percent) reported an annual income between 1,400,000 and 1,899,999 THB.

4.2 Regression analysis:

Table 1: The impact of the three predictors Influencer Types

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1.(Constant)	.446	.059		7.525	.000
Influencer Type	.274	.018	.375	15.556	.000

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Exposure Method	.380	.021	.429	17.731	.000
Sponsorship Status	.224	.017	.269	13.252	.000

a.   Dependent Variable: Acceptance Method

The regression analysis aimed to test the hypotheses proposed in this study. It examined the influence of three predictors—influencer types, exposure method, and sponsorship status—on the outcome variable, acceptance method, using multiple linear regression analysis. The results, as summarized in Table 1, indicate that all three predictors—influencer type, exposure method, and sponsorship status—were statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.000 at $\alpha = 0.05$.

4.3 In-dept interview:
A total of 10 respondents participated in the qualitative research, providing in-depth interviews for the present study. The following section will present the findings derived from these interviews.

The in-depth interview began with the question, "Do you use influencer marketing on social media to promote your products, and if so, why?" Two respondents responded with a simple "yes." Those who affirmed their use of influencer marketing and social media advertising cited reasons such as "awareness," "customer reach," and "access," indicating their understanding of the importance of brand exposure on social media. Some respondents preferred to employ their own digital marketing strategies rather than engaging social media influencers. Conversely, those who responded negatively explained their preference for traditional advertising methods over using social media influencers. One respondent mentioned that they had not yet considered utilizing influencer marketing.

The in-depth interview posed the question, "Can a social media influencer represent your brand properly, and why?" Most respondents answered affirmatively. One participant provided a detailed response, outlining the desired attributes in a social media influencer. They emphasized the importance of regular self-care, gentleness, thoughtfulness, and warmth to convey the product's gentleness. Additionally, they stressed the significance of influencers projecting a positive personality and confidence in their own beauty. Another respondent agreed, stating that using a social media influencer for cosmetic products could be an effective strategy if they align with the brand's identity, gimmick, style, and overall aesthetic. Despite acknowledging the challenge of finding the right influencer, they highlighted that it's not impossible to find one with the appropriate mindset. Three participants emphasized the importance of selecting an influencer from the same field or industry as the product being advertised. One respondent summarized this by stating that finding the right influencer within the relevant categories can rapidly expand the customer base and increase brand exposure to potential customers.

In the subsequent in-depth interview question, participants were asked about the primary criteria they used when selecting a social media influencer to advertise cosmetic products. Out of the 10 respondents, 4 individuals highlighted the influencer's "lifestyle," "interests," and "personality" as crucial factors. Another respondent emphasized the significance of "aesthetics." For 4 participants, the number of "followers" emerged as the most important characteristic, while only one respondent mentioned "cost" as the primary factor. These findings are summarized in the table below. One respondent opted not to provide an answer to this question.

The fourth question in the in-depth interview sought to determine the preferred social media platform among respondents. Out of 10 participants, five indicated Facebook as their platform of choice, while four favored Instagram. Two respondents mentioned TikTok as a third option after Facebook and Instagram. One participant elaborated on their preference for Facebook, stating, "Because you can choose ages, gender, and location wherever you want to advertise," underscoring the significance of demographic targeting in ad budget management, particularly for seasoned advertising marketers.

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The fifth question in the in-depth interview aimed to determine the respondents' preferred marketing approach – online or offline. All participants unanimously favored online marketing as their go-to strategy. One participant succinctly summarized the reasons, stating, "In this day and age, online marketing is more effective than offline. While offline methods could be effective, my target demographic is global, and offline marketing, such as billboards, has limited reach." Most respondents cited social media as the primary reason for choosing online marketing, emphasizing its broad reach and effectiveness compared to traditional offline methods.

The sixth question in the in-depth interview aimed to ascertain respondents' views on the importance of a social media footprint for their business. All respondents emphasized that a strong social media presence is "very important" as it establishes brand "identity" and "exposure," given the widespread use of social media today.

The seventh question of the in-depth interview sought to determine respondents' opinions on whether demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and beauty of the social media influencer are important. All respondents answered affirmatively, stating "yes," with the main reason being that the influencer "represents the brand and it's what the people see us and what we want to show to our audiences." One respondent provided a more pragmatic response, mentioning that age, gender, and beauty are important "because the brand's customers are between 15-40 years of age, the brand's image is focused on teenagers to working age." Another respondent indicated that their focus was not on age and gender but rather on whether "their style and whole look have to align with the brand's identity."

The eighth question in the in-depth interview addressed whether respondents would opt to collaborate with an influencer who lacks popularity beyond social media. Responses were divided, with "price" or "cost" being the influencing factor for some. However, most respondents concurred that this is not a significant factor when selecting social media channels for marketing.

The ninth in-depth interview question sought to determine whether respondents prefer to collaborate with one or multiple social media influencers. Here, eight respondents indicated a preference for working with multiple influencers, citing reasons such as "gaining more audience" and "observing the response trend of each person." Two respondents stated that they prefer to work with only one social media influencer, particularly if their business is "in the beginning" or if they are the sole proprietor of the business.

The final question focused on the preference between dedicated products versus sponsorship across multiple posts on social media. Here the opinions were divided, with three respondents choosing specifically sponsorship and another three dedicated. One respondent provided a quite elaborate answer to why he/she uses sponsorship as the preferred method, respectively, because "it is a big opportunity for our brand to get and feel bigger by being a part of the big company, which means my product can definitely gain awareness from the company and customers in the future," while another respondent said that "because other customers can read the reviews and choose the product from real reviews." One respondent said that the question is quite difficult to answer, but if he/she would need to choose, he/she would go with the dedicated post as "it is more personal, familiar, and genuine." The rest of the respondents did not provide a clear answer between the two but mentioned "awareness" and "brand exposure" as what they are looking for the most when choosing a social media influencer.

5. Conclusion

The study investigates how influencer marketing impacts consumer acceptance of cosmetic products on social media. It finds that influencer type, sponsorship status, and product exposure method significantly influence consumer intentions. Influencer type—whether directly endorsing products or receiving support—shapes consumer perceptions, while sponsored content generally enhances acceptance. Different product exposure methods on social media yield varying consumer responses. The study underscores the complex interaction between influencer type and sponsorship status, as well as between product exposure method and influencer type, in shaping consumer behavior. While no significant interaction is observed between the product exposure method and sponsorship display, qualitative insights hint at a potential influence. Overall,

it highlights the growing importance of social media and influencer marketing in shaping consumer decisions in the cosmetics industry.

6. Limitation

The study's findings and conclusions are limited to the demographic examined and may not be broadly applicable to other populations due to differing contextual factors and individual perspectives. To gain a comprehensive understanding of social media's impact on consumer behavior across diverse demographics, a larger and more statistically robust study is warranted. Despite constraints in time and scope, the study investigated several hypotheses to offer a general overview. Future research could further explore the effectiveness of influencer marketing in cosmetics on specific social media platforms and within distinct categories of cosmetic products.

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