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CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT TOWARDS INSTAGRAM CONTENT ACCROSS DIFFERENT SECTORS

Abstract. This study explores the impact of Instagram content on customer engagement in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across the pharmaceutical and cosmetic sectors in Kazakhstan. By analyzing business-related and non-business-related posts in both image and video formats, the research finds that video content consistently generates higher engagement, especially in non-business posts. The results highlight sector-specific differences in consumer interaction, offering valuable insights for SMEs to optimize their social media strategies. Future research could link engagement metrics with purchasing behavior and explore sector-specific nuances further.

Keywords: Instagram, Consumer Engagement, Social Media Content, SMEs, Kazakhstan

Introduction

Social media has become an integral part of modern communication and marketing, allowing businesses to connect with a broad audience at a relatively low cost (Kapoor et al., 2018). Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter have reshaped the way companies interact with customers, providing a direct and dynamic channel for engaging with consumers, sharing updates, and receiving feedback (Greenwood & Gopal, 2015). In particular, Instagram's unique focus on visual content makes it an effective tool for brands seeking to foster customer engagement through photos and videos (Statista, 2022).

In the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), social media, especially Instagram, serves as a cost-effective marketing tool that can enhance brand visibility and consumer interaction. However, many SMEs, particularly those in emerging markets, struggle to leverage these platforms effectively due to a lack of skills and resources (Atanassova & Clark, 2015).

Despite the growing body of research on social media marketing, there is limited understanding of how specific content types—such as business-related versus non-business-related posts and videos versus images—affect consumer engagement differently across various sectors. Most studies have broadly addressed social media's impact without distinguishing between the nuances of different product types and market contexts (Bashar et al., 2012; Maier et al., 2015). This research seeks to fill this gap by providing a comparative analysis of Instagram content effectiveness between two distinct market segments: pharmaceutical firms, representing necessity products, and cosmetic firms, representing luxury products.

This study explores the effectiveness of different Instagram content types in driving consumer engagement for SMEs, particularly within the pharmaceutical (necessity products) and cosmetic (luxury products) sectors in Kazakhstan. Using data from the Instagram pages of selected companies, the study employs a quantitative approach to analyze consumer responses—measured by likes and comments—to different post types. By understanding which content types generate higher engagement, SMEs can make informed decisions on social media strategies to optimize their marketing efforts.

This research contributes to the literature by offering insights into the specific content strategies that can drive customer engagement on Instagram for SMEs, particularly in the context of an emerging market like Kazakhstan. The findings are expected to provide practical recommendations for small retailers looking to enhance their social media presence and effectiveness. Furthermore, this

study lays the groundwork for future research to explore the link between social media engagement and actual purchasing behavior.

Literature Review

Social media has become an essential tool for modern marketing, enabling businesses to engage with customers, increase brand visibility, and enhance customer relationships in a cost-effective manner (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Greenwood & Gopal, 2015). As businesses increasingly adopt social media platforms, particularly Instagram, as part of their marketing strategies, understanding the impact of different content types on customer engagement has gained importance. This literature review examines previous research on social media marketing, focusing on content types and their effectiveness in driving consumer engagement, with an emphasis on sector-specific differences between pharmaceutical and cosmetic firms.

Social media marketing (SMM) involves the use of social media platforms to promote products and engage with consumers. According to Chi (2011), SMM is the connection between brands and consumers that offers a personal channel for user-centric networking and social interaction. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe social networks as platforms that allow the creation and sharing of user-generated content, which has transformed consumers into active participants in marketing processes. Social media allows businesses to interact directly with customers, gather feedback, and enhance brand loyalty (Bashar et al., 2012; Maier et al., 2015). In particular, Instagram, with its focus on visual content, provides unique opportunities for businesses to create engaging posts that attract and retain customers (Miles, 2019).

The effectiveness of social media marketing largely depends on the type of content shared. Various studies have explored the impact of different content formats, such as images and videos, on consumer engagement metrics like likes, comments, and shares. Videos have been found to generate higher levels of engagement compared to images, as they are more dynamic and can convey more information in an engaging manner (Giakoumaki & Krepapa, 2020; Kite et al., 2016). Additionally, content that evokes positive emotions or provides entertainment tends to attract more consumer interaction (Dennis, 2014). However, the effectiveness of content types can vary depending on the context and the audience, indicating a need for tailored strategies for different sectors.

Research indicates that the impact of social media content on engagement can differ significantly across sectors. For instance, pharmaceutical companies often utilize social media to share educational content about health and wellness, which aligns with their product offerings (Westerfield & Cain, 2019). In contrast, cosmetic firms tend to focus on visually appealing content that highlights product aesthetics and lifestyle appeal (Vinerean, 2019). The difference in engagement strategies between these sectors suggests that the nature of the product—whether it is a necessity or a luxury—may influence how consumers interact with content. For pharmaceutical firms, informational videos may be more effective, while for cosmetic firms, visually striking images or lifestyle videos may drive higher engagement (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016; Roncha & Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016).

While the existing literature provides valuable insights into social media marketing strategies, there are notable gaps. Much of the research has focused broadly on social media platforms without delving deeply into sector-specific dynamics or regional contexts (Alalwan et al., 2017). Additionally, there is limited understanding of how different types of content impact engagement for SMEs in emerging markets like Kazakhstan. This study addresses these gaps by examining the effectiveness of various Instagram content types in enhancing consumer engagement across pharmaceutical and cosmetic SMEs in Kazakhstan.

The reviewed literature underscores the importance of content type in social media marketing and highlights sector-specific differences in engagement strategies. However, gaps remain in understanding these dynamics in the context of SMEs, particularly in emerging markets. This study builds on existing research by exploring these aspects further, providing practical insights for SMEs to optimize their social media strategies on Instagram. The findings aim to contribute to the broader

understanding of how tailored content strategies can enhance customer engagement and ultimately drive business success.

Methodology

The study collected data from the leading 3 pharmaceutical and 4 cosmetics companies based in Kazakhstan, representing nearly all businesses operating in the sectors. The selection process aimed to include all publicly available posts, and each post's content type, category, and number of likes received by the posts between January 2023 and March 2024. There were two content criteria: post type (image or video) and post category (business-related or non-business-related). The data then were manually extracted and recorded into an Excel spreadsheet, capturing all corresponding details.

To address potential biases in manual data extraction, clear guidelines were established across the dataset for consistent classification of the posts as business-related or non-business-related. For instance, business-related posts included content directly promoting the company's products or services, such as advertisements, product launches, and company updates. Non-business-related posts encompassed lifestyle imagery, industry trends, awareness campaigns, and other content not explicitly focused on product promotion but aimed at broader audience engagement. These clear distinctions ensured consistency in categorizing content.

To further enhance reliability, two independent reviewers in the field cross-validated the classification of each post, resolving any discrepancies through consensus. All posts within the timeframe were included to provide a comprehensive representation, minimizing any selection bias related to engagement levels. Engagement was measured consistently using the number of likes, recorded at a fixed interval (e.g., 30 days after posting) to account for temporal variations. A 30-day timeframe was chosen to allow posts to reach their full audience and accumulate representative engagement, balancing initial visibility with sustained interactions for a comprehensive view. The chosen timeframe captured a full year's activity to balance any seasonal or short-term fluctuations in consumer interaction.

The comprehensive and systematic approach to data collection aimed to ensure that the sample accurately represented the Instagram activity of these sectors while minimizing potential biases and enhancing the reliability of the findings. The final dataset consisted of 919 posts, with 407 posts from the pharmaceutical sector and 512 from the cosmetics sector as displayed by Table 1. The data were then analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 21.0.

Table 1. Cross tabulation

	Business	Non-business	Total
Cosmetics	450	62	512
Pharmaceuticals	153	254	407
Total	603	316	919
	Image	Video	Total
Cosmetics	406	106	512
Pharmaceuticals	343	64	407
Total	749	170	919
	Image	Video	Total
Business	503	100	603
Non-business	246	70	316
Total	749	170	919

Analysis and Findings

To achieve its objectives, the independent samples T-tests were chosen for their ability to directly compare the mean engagement levels (likes) between two groups, such as image versus video content, within the sectors examined. Given the study's focus on assessing differences in engagement

across specific, clearly defined categories, the T-tests provide a straightforward and statistically powerful approach when assumptions of normality and variance equality are met. Other methods, such as ANOVA or regression analysis, are suitable for comparing multiple groups or controlling for various variables, but the T-tests align best with the study's aim to analyze direct pairwise differences in engagement efficiently and effectively.

The independent samples T-tests in this study are based on assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variance, and independence of observations. To ensure the validity of these assumptions, tests such as the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality and Levene's test for equality of variances were applied, with adjustments made when necessary. Given the sample size of 919 posts, potential limitations related to smaller subgroups were acknowledged, particularly where reduced statistical power may affect results. Outliers, which could impact the engagement data (likes), were identified and assessed through visual inspections of boxplots. Later, six independent samples T-tests were conducted across three distinct analytical steps.

Step 1: In the first step, the analysis was performed without distinguishing between sectors, focusing on the entire dataset to compare business-related and non-business-related posts.

Business-Related Posts: The dataset comprised 503 image posts and 100 video posts categorized as business-related. The mean number of likes for image posts was 368.96 (SD = 560.45), while video posts averaged 443.82 likes (SD = 452.45). The T-test results showed no significant difference between the likes for image and video posts in the business-related category ($t(601) = -1.256$, $p = 0.209$), suggesting that both content types perform similarly in terms of consumer engagement when the posts are business-focused.

Non-Business-Related Posts: There were 246 image posts and 70 video posts in the non-business-related category. Image posts received a mean of 181.52 likes (SD = 337.06), whereas video posts averaged 741.93 likes (SD = 1407.84). The T-test indicated a significant difference in likes between image and video posts ($t(314) = -5.714$, $p < 0.01$). Video posts garnered significantly higher engagement, highlighting that consumers respond more positively to non-business-related video content compared to images.

Step 2: The second step focused on analyzing content from cosmetic firms, aiming to explore whether the type of content impacts consumer engagement differently in the luxury product sector.

Business-Related Posts: The cosmetic sector had 378 image posts and 72 video posts categorized as business-related. The mean likes for image posts were 459.67 (SD = 613.64), while video posts received an average of 536.92 likes (SD = 487.66). The T-test revealed no significant difference in engagement between images and videos for business-related content in this sector ($t(448) = -1.009$, $p = 0.314$), indicating that both types of content are equally effective for business-related communication in the cosmetics sector.

Non-Business-Related Posts: For non-business-related content, there were 28 image posts and 34 video posts. The mean number of likes for image posts was 680.50 (SD = 757.68), whereas video posts averaged 1025.97 likes (SD = 1145.33). The T-test showed no significant difference in engagement between image and video posts ($t(60) = -1.368$, $p = 0.177$). This suggests that while video posts have higher mean likes, the difference is not statistically significant, indicating a similar consumer response to both content types in non-business contexts for cosmetics firms.

Step 3: The third step concentrated on the pharmaceutical sector, representing necessity products, to determine if content type affects consumer engagement in a different way compared to the luxury product sector.

Business-Related Posts: The pharmaceutical sector included 125 image posts and 28 video posts categorized as business-related. The mean likes for image posts were 94.66 (SD = 160.73), while video posts averaged 204.43 likes (SD = 206.60). The T-test indicated a significant difference in engagement between image and video posts ($t(151) = -3.091$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that video content is significantly more effective than image content for business-related posts in the pharmaceutical sector.

Non-Business-Related Posts: For non-business-related content, there were 218 image posts and 36 video posts. The mean number of likes for image posts was 117.43 (SD = 143.48), compared

to 211.34 likes for video posts (SD = 205.17). The T-test results confirmed a significant difference in engagement (t(252) = -3.364, p < 0.01), indicating that video posts are more effective than image posts in attracting consumer engagement for non-business-related content in the pharmaceutical sector.

The findings from the analysis indicate that:

1. Overall Engagement: Video posts generally receive higher engagement than image posts, especially for non-business-related content. This trend is consistent across both sectors but is more pronounced in the pharmaceutical sector.

2. Sector-Specific Insights: In the pharmaceutical sector, video content is significantly more effective than images for both business and non-business-related posts. In contrast, for the cosmetics sector, the type of content (image vs. video) does not significantly impact consumer engagement, indicating that consumers are equally receptive to both forms of content in the context of luxury products.

3. Implications for SMEs: These results suggest that SMEs in the pharmaceutical sector should prioritize video content to maximize consumer engagement on Instagram. In the cosmetics sector, while video content may seem more engaging, the differences are not statistically significant, suggesting that a balanced content strategy could be effective.

Table 2. Group Statistics and Independent Samples T-test Summary (Equal Variance assumed)

Group Statistics and Independent Samples T-test Summary (Equal Variance assumed)								
Non-business Posts		**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Like	Image	246	181.52	337.057	21.490	-5.714	314	.000
	Video	70	741.93	1407.841	168.269			
Business Posts		**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Like	Image	503	368.96	560.447	24.989	-1.256	601	.209
	Video	100	443,82	452.445	45.244			
Business posts for Cosmetics firms		**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Like	Image	378	459.67	613.638	31.562	-1.009	448	.314
	Video	72	536.92	487.662	57.472			
Non-business posts for Cosmetics firms		**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Like	Image	28	680.50	757.676	143.187	-1.368	60	.177
	Video	34	1025.97	1145.330	196.423			
Business posts for Pharmaceuticals firms		**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**	**t**	**f**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Like	Image	125	94.66	160.725	14.376	-3.091	151	.002
	Video	28	204.43	206.599	39.044			
Non-business posts forPharmaceuticals firms		**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Like	Image	218	117.43	143.475	9.717	-3.364	252	.001

Video	36	211.34	205.166	34.679			

Discussion

The findings of this study provide important insights into the effectiveness of different Instagram content types in driving consumer engagement for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Kazakhstan, specifically within the pharmaceutical and cosmetic sectors. This research contributes to the existing literature by highlighting the differential impact of content type (image vs. video) and content category (business-related vs. non-business-related) on consumer engagement across sectors representing necessity and luxury products.

However, the study's focus on content type does not account for other variables that may shape engagement outcomes. For instance, the timing of the post, the tone and clarity of the message in the videos or images, and audience-specific preferences for content style might significantly influence how consumers interact with social media posts.

Content Type and Consumer Engagement

The results demonstrate a clear trend: video posts generally receive higher engagement than image posts, particularly in non-business-related contexts. This finding is consistent with previous research that suggests video content tends to be more engaging due to its dynamic nature and capacity to convey more information in a visually stimulating format (Giakoumaki & Krepapa, 2020; Kite et al., 2016). The novelty of our study lies in its application of these general findings to specific sectors—pharmaceuticals and cosmetics—representing necessity and luxury products, respectively.

In the pharmaceutical sector, representing necessity products, video content significantly outperforms image content for both business-related and non-business-related posts. This could be attributed to the educational and informational value that videos provide, which aligns with consumer expectations and needs when engaging with content from firms in this sector (Westerfield & Cain, 2019). For example, pharmaceutical videos may offer detailed explanations about product use or health benefits, which are critical for consumer decision-making and foster greater engagement.

Conversely, in the cosmetics sector, representing luxury products, while video content also receives higher engagement, the differences between video and image content are not statistically significant. This suggests that in the luxury sector, where aesthetics and brand identity play a central role, both images and videos are effective in capturing consumer attention (Vinerean, 2019). The finding that consumers engage similarly with both types of content might reflect the visual and aspirational appeal of cosmetic products, where high-quality images can be as captivating as videos.

Sector-Specific Engagement Strategies

The differential effectiveness of content types between the pharmaceutical and cosmetics sectors underscores the importance of tailoring social media strategies to the specific characteristics of each sector. For pharmaceutical firms, where the focus is on necessity products, leveraging the informational and educational aspects of video content can significantly enhance consumer engagement. This aligns with the need for transparency and detailed product information in health-related industries, where consumer trust and confidence are paramount (Roncha & Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016).

On the other hand, cosmetic firms, which cater to a market driven by luxury and aesthetics, may benefit from a more balanced approach that includes both high-quality images and videos. This balanced strategy can cater to different consumer preferences and maximize engagement across a broader audience. The non-significant difference in engagement levels between image and video content suggests that both forms are effective in conveying brand messages and aesthetic appeal in the luxury sector, providing flexibility in content creation strategies (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016).

Implications for SMEs in Emerging Markets

The study's findings have practical implications for SMEs in emerging markets like Kazakhstan. By understanding the nuances of consumer engagement across different sectors, SMEs can better allocate their limited resources to the most effective content types. For pharmaceutical SMEs, prioritizing video content could enhance engagement and foster stronger relationships with

consumers, while cosmetic SMEs may benefit from a diversified strategy that leverages both images and videos.

Furthermore, this research adds to the literature by providing empirical evidence from an emerging market context, where social media marketing strategies may differ from those in developed markets due to varying consumer behaviors and preferences (Alalwan et al., 2017). These insights can guide SMEs in Kazakhstan and similar markets to optimize their social media strategies and better engage their target audiences.

While these findings provide actionable strategies for SMEs, it is important to note the study's limitations to fully understand the scope of these recommendations. Notably, study focuses solely on content type (image vs. video), without accounting for other factors such as the clarity of the message or the presence of interactive elements like hashtags, mentions, and tags. Future research should consider these variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of what drives consumer engagement.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of how different types of Instagram content affect consumer engagement for SMEs in the pharmaceutical and cosmetic sectors in Kazakhstan. The findings reveal that video content generally drives higher engagement than image content, especially for non-business-related posts. However, the impact of content type varies between sectors, with video content being significantly more effective in the pharmaceutical sector, while both images and videos are equally effective in the cosmetics sector.

The novelty of this research lies in its sector-specific analysis of Instagram content effectiveness, highlighting the importance of tailoring social media strategies to the unique characteristics of different industries. By focusing on an emerging market context, this study adds a new dimension to the existing literature on social media marketing and consumer engagement.

Future research could build on these findings by exploring the relationship between social media engagement metrics and actual purchasing behavior, as well as examining the influence of other variables such as posting time, message content, and interactive elements. Additionally, studies could investigate seasonal or demographic variations across different social media platforms and content types to provide a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of social media marketing strategies for SMEs. In summary, this study underscores the critical role of content strategy in social media marketing and provides actionable insights for SMEs aiming to enhance their digital presence and consumer engagement on Instagram.

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КЛИЕНТТЕРДІҢ ӘРТҮРЛІ СЕКТОРЛАРДАҒЫ INSTAGRAM МАЗМҰНЫНА ҚАТЫСУЫ

Abstract. Бұл зерттеу Instagram мазмұнының Қазақстанның фармацевтика және косметика секторларындағы шағын және орта кәсіпорындардағы (Шоб) тұтынушылардың өзара әрекеттесуіне әсерін зерттейді. Бизнеске қатысты және бизнеске қатысы жоқ жазбаларды кескін және бейне пішімдерінде талдай отырып, зерттеу бейне мазмұны, әсіресе бизнеске қатысы жоқ жазбаларда, тұрақты түрде жоғары белсенділікті тудыратынын көрсетті. Нәтижелер Тұтынушылардың өзара әрекеттесуіндегі салалық айырмашылықтарды көрсетеді, Бұл Шағын Және орта Бизнеске әлеуметтік медиа стратегияларын оңтайландыру үшін құнды ақпарат береді. Болашақ зерттеулер өзара әрекеттесу көрсеткіштерін сатып алу тәртібімен байланыстырып, секторға тән нюанстарды одан әрі зерттей алады.

Түйін Сөздер: Instagram, Тұтынушыларды Тарту, Әлеуметтік Медиа Контенті, Шоб, Қазақстан

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ПРИВЛЕЧЕНИЕ КЛИЕНТОВ К КОНТЕНТУ INSTAGRAM В РАЗНЫХ СЕКТОРАХ

Абстракт. В этом исследовании исследуется влияние контента Instagram на вовлечение клиентов малых и средних предприятий (МСБ) фармацевтического и косметического секторов Казахстана. Анализируя публикации, связанные с бизнесом и не связанные с бизнесом, как в графическом, так и в видеоформате, исследователи пришли к выводу, что видеоконтент неизменно повышает вовлеченность, особенно в публикациях, не связанных с бизнесом. Результаты подчеркивают отраслевые различия во взаимодействии с потребителями, что дает МСП ценную информацию для оптимизации их стратегий в социальных сетях. Будущие исследования могут связать показатели вовлеченности с покупательским поведением и более подробно изучить отраслевые нюансы.

Ключевые слова: Instagram, Вовлечение потребителей, контент в социальных сетях, малые и средние предприятия, Казахстан