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*THE MOTIVATION AND CHALLENGES OF BLACK WOMEN AS  
INDEPENDENT CATALOG COSMETICS CONSULTANTS<sup>1</sup>*

**A MOTIVAÇÃO E DESAFIOS DE MULHERES NEGRAS COMO  
CONSULTORAS INDEPENDENTES DE COSMÉTICOS POR CATÁLOGO**

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**ABSTRACT**

The direct selling market in Brazil is significant, especially in the catalog cosmetics segment, where a large portion of consultants operate. These consultants face challenges related to logistics and product availability. Despite the growth and inclusion of Black women as consultants, there are still obstacles hindering the full development of these professionals, such as infrastructure limitations, market access, and lack of representation in certain contexts. Understanding these difficulties is essential to foster improvements and create real opportunities for this group. This study aimed to analyze the satisfaction levels of a specific network of independent consultants. The research was conducted with 37 consultants using a questionnaire for data collection. The results indicated that the consultants are satisfied with the brand's inclusion and support but face logistical challenges and difficulties in product availability.

**Keywords:** challenges, entrepreneurship, motivation, woman, opportunity.

**RESUMO**

O mercado de vendas diretas no Brasil é expressivo, especialmente no segmento de cosméticos por catálogo, onde grande parte das consultoras atua. Essas consultoras enfrentam desafios relacionados à logística e à oferta de produtos. Apesar do crescimento e da inclusão de mulheres negras como consultoras, ainda existem obstáculos que dificultam o pleno desenvolvimento dessas profissionais, como limitações de infraestrutura, acesso ao mercado e

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<sup>1</sup> Submitted on 05/02/2025. Accepted on 01/03/2025. DOI: [doi.org/ 10.5281/zenodo.17062058](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17062058)

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falta de representatividade em alguns contextos. Entender essas dificuldades é essencial para promover melhorias e oportunidades reais para esse grupo. Este trabalho teve como objetivo analisar os níveis de satisfação de uma determinada rede de consultoras independentes. A pesquisa foi realizada com 37 consultoras, utilizando um questionário para coleta de dados. Os resultados indicaram que as consultoras estão satisfeitas com a inclusão e o suporte da marca, mas enfrentam desafios logísticos e dificuldades na disponibilidade de produtos.

**Palavras-chave:** desafios, empreendedorismo, motivação, mulher, oportunidade.

## INTRODUCTION

Brazil ranks seventh in the global direct sales ranking, according to data released by the Brazilian Direct Selling Companies Association (ABEVD) and the World Federation of Direct Selling Associations (WFDSA). The country boasts a sales force of around 3.5 million entrepreneurs, moving approximately 45 billion reais in the direct selling market (ABEVD; WFDSA, 2022). Additionally, data indicate that 60% of consultants are women. It is noteworthy that, among direct sales figures, cosmetics sales lead the sector, accounting for a total of 42.7% (ABEVD, 2023).

Catalog cosmetics consultants have been active in the market for years with leading brands; an example is Avon, founded by David MacConnell. The company started in 1886 in Manhattan, New York, and began its operations in Brazil only in 1958. This move was considered a great achievement by its founder, who knew how to exploit the market and the potential of door-to-door sales (Avon, 2024). It was through direct marketing and, more specifically, word-of-mouth that the company managed to consolidate itself. However, the brand only achieved such positive results due to its consultants, also known as “door-to-door” resellers, independent consultants, and individual entrepreneurs.

The work of these professionals is driven by commissions and the use of printed and digital catalogs, with the digital format being widely adopted during



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the COVID-19 pandemic (World Health Organization - WHO, 2023a; 2023b; 2024). The pandemic scenario reduced door-to-door activities and strengthened digital channels, leading to the adoption of chat platforms and social networks as relationship sales channels, including cosmetics consultants who began interacting more with their clients (RATTEN, 2022).

Within this cosmetics sale's scenario, as brands focused on women's audiences gained visibility and grew, brands dedicated to developing beauty products for the Black population emerged. According to Hunt et al. (2018), Black women have increasingly gained space in the market, taking on leadership roles and influencing the growth of brands focused on meeting their needs, including in the cosmetics field.

However, these women may face racial stigma when trying to sell beauty products in a market that still visibly values certain aesthetic standards (AREIAS, 2023). The author points out that they are motivated by various reasons when entering this market; Afro-entrepreneurship provides flexibility, hope, and the desire to achieve economic independence and professionalization. Another important factor is that this type of entrepreneurship contributes to strengthening women's empowerment, making them feel represented - or not - by the products and brands with which they work.

Therefore, the general objective of this study was to analyze the satisfaction levels of a specific network of independent consultants. To achieve this objective, the study sought to identify the consultants' behavior and satisfaction, qualify and describe the challenges and opportunities present in the network, in addition to analyzing the challenges faced and proposing improvement strategies.



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## **AFROCONSUMPTION AND AFROENTREPRENEURSHIP: MARKET CHARACTERISTICS AND POSSIBILITIES**

Afroconsumption is driven by Black entrepreneurship, which diversifies and expands the market with products and services aimed at this audience. Carneiro and Gomes (2018) point out that, with the growing demand for products that meet the needs of this group, entrepreneurs have become increasingly attentive to this market, bringing representation, diversity, and inclusion.

Direct sales consultant is a key element for this channel, especially in the cosmetics sector, which serves a diverse customer base with great potential (ABEVD, 2023). This type of consultancy supports the growth and recognition of a brand, allowing it to reach more people with greater agility. One example is the brand *Negra Rosa*, founded in 2016 by Rosângela José da Silva, a Black woman who asked herself: how to reach more Black people? In 2017, through her brand, the entrepreneur launched a direct sales channel with the participation of consultants, creating opportunities to reach places and people more quickly.

It is worth highlighting that, according to the 2022 Census of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), most of the Brazilian population identifies as Black (Black and Brown), with statistics indicating 56% of the population, equivalent to 112.73 million people (IBGE, 2022). Furthermore, data from the Ministry of Racial Equality (MIR) show, based on household samples, that Black women represent the largest population group, comprising 11.3 million Black women and 49.3 million Brown women, totaling 60.6 million Black women (Black and Brown), which corresponds to more than 28% of the country's population (MIR, 2023).

However, even though Black women make up a large part of the population, they still face several challenges when becoming independent consultants. Due to their condition as Black women, job opportunities remain scarce, making it difficult to achieve social mobility and build a professional career



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(MATOS, 2021). Matos (2021) adds that, in the commercial sector, there are still barriers to market access, lack of representation, and insufficient attention to Black women's entrepreneurship, inclusion, and training. This perpetuates inequality, making it difficult for consultants to succeed and grow in their careers.

Afro-entrepreneurship reflects the growing leadership of the Black population in Brazil, which seeks to occupy spaces historically denied to them, both in consumption and production (ALMEIDA, 2014). According to Oliveira-Júnior and Pesseti (2020), Afro-entrepreneurship promotes not only economic emancipation but also the construction of a cultural identity that values ancestry and redefines consumer relationships.

The theory of consultative selling, discussed by Hanan (2011), emphasizes creating value for the client by deeply understanding their needs. For independent consultants selling cosmetics for the Black public, consultative selling is a powerful tool to engage customers and build long-term relationships. By listening to and understanding consumer demands, consultants not only increase their sales but also promote inclusion and self-esteem - crucial elements in Afroconsumption.

Additionally, the concept of relationship marketing, introduced by Morgan and Hunt (1994), highlights the importance of creating and maintaining trust-based relationships with consumers. This is especially relevant in the direct sales market, where trust in consultants and the brand is a decisive factor for loyalty (NELSON; WANG; CUI, 2024; BADRINARAYANAN; RAMACHANDRAN, 2024). For the Afro-descendant public, this trust can be strengthened through cultural identification and representation (WOOTEN; RANK-CHRISTMAN, 2021; BRANCA; GROSSO; CASTALDO, 2024; POPESCU; PUDELKO, 2024). Thus, relationship marketing and consultative selling complement each other by providing a solid foundation for the growth of Black enterprises.



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Another point to consider is the theory of emotional selling, proposed by Maslow (1943) in his hierarchy of needs and reinforced by Sharma et al. (2023) and Lee, Gan, and Liew (2023). Selling cosmetic products to the Black population meets not only functional needs but also emotional needs related to acceptance, confidence, and belonging. Black aesthetics, often neglected by traditional industries (BAIRD, 2021; TORRES ET AL., 2022), finds space and value in Afro-entrepreneurship, allowing consumers to feel seen and represented.

The sociocultural context is also important for understanding the challenges faced by Black women direct sales consultants. According to Matos (2021), these women often face intersectional prejudices that combine racism and sexism, hindering access to training, support networks, and the infrastructure necessary for their professional development. The theory of the opportunity gap, presented by Sen (1999), is relevant here, highlighting how structural inequalities perpetuate economic exclusion and limit the growth potential of Black women entrepreneurs (ZUCOLOTTO; COCCO; RUVIARO, 2019; COOLEY; BURKHOLDER; KILLEN, 2020; BANAJI; FISKE; MASSEY, 2021; BROWN ET AL., 2023; NASCIMENTO ET AL., 2024).

Moreover, the transformational leadership model, as proposed by Bass (1985), can be an effective tool to overcome some of these challenges. Consultants who take on leadership roles in their networks can inspire other Black women to enter the sector, promoting training and collective empowerment (SMITH, 2000; OLIVEIRA ET AL., 2023). This leadership model is especially valuable in Afro-entrepreneurship, where building supportive communities can help mitigate the barriers faced.

Finally, it is important to highlight the relevance of Afro-entrepreneurship to the Brazilian economy as a whole. According to the ABEVD (2023) report, direct sales contribute significantly to the GDP, and the inclusion of Black women as consultants represents progress in diversifying the sector. However, for this



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progress to be sustainable, it is necessary for public policies and private initiatives to invest in training and supporting Afro-entrepreneurship, ensuring that these professionals have the same growth opportunities as their peers in other segments.

## **METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

The nature of the research was applied, and the quantitative approach aimed to evaluate the satisfaction levels of a specific network of independent consultants, based on the relative and absolute frequency of the participants in this work.

The methodological procedure of the research consisted of a case study conducted at a large cosmetics company located in São Paulo, SP. The sample was non-probabilistic by convenience, composed of 37 professionals from the sales department. The research instrument was a mixed semi-structured questionnaire based on studies by Baird (2021), Torres et al. (2022), Lee, Gan, and Liew (2023), and Nascimento et al. (2024), consisting of four constructs, fifteen closed questions, and one open question.

The first construct gathered basic information from participants to contextualize the answers and understand the respondents' sociodemographic profile, such as age group, gender, education level, and time working in sales. The second construct identified the consultants' behavior and satisfaction with the brand, focusing on representation. The third qualified and described the main difficulties and opportunities perceived by the consultants. Finally, the fourth aimed to understand the challenges faced and the improvement strategies suggested by the consultants.

A consent form was applied to notify participants that their personal data would not be collected. Additionally, the Ethics Form (FDE) was filled out and submitted to the Continuing Education Program in Economics and Business



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Management (PECEGE), to exemplify the selected sampling and the criterion used for field data collection.

The questionnaire was created using Microsoft Word and submitted to Google Forms during the period from June 1 to 18, 2024, to facilitate the distribution of the research instrument to respondents. After obtaining the results, they were compiled into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to create a logic through the participants' responses. Finally, the data were presented in tables to elucidate the participants' perceptions.

The data obtained from the questionnaire were initially analyzed using absolute and relative frequencies, providing a clear view of the distribution of participants' responses. The correlation of the results with academic literature was carried out to validate and contextualize the findings, offering a deeper understanding of the perceptions investigated.

Additionally, a descriptive statistical analysis was applied to identify patterns and trends in the responses, such as average, mode, standard deviation, maximum and minimum values, in order to understand the variability and consistency of the answers to different questions. For these quantitative analyses, the JAMOVİ software was chosen, as it offers an accessible interface and advanced features that facilitate data interpretation, including graphical visualization and statistical modeling (JAMOVİ PROJECT, 2024).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Sociodemographic Profile**

Table 1 presents the sociodemographic profile of the research participants, providing information on age group, gender, and length of experience as independent cosmetics consultants.





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Regarding age, most participants are in the 35 - 44 years (35.1%) and 45 - 54 years (40.5%) ranges, totaling 75.6% of the sample in this intermediate age group. Only one participant is 55 years or older (2.7%), and none are in the 18 - 24 years range, indicating an absence of young adults in the study. The age distribution points to a group of more experienced participants, possibly with greater professional stability, given that most are in adulthood or mature stages.

With respect to gender, all 37 participants identified as female, which is common in studies focused on the cosmetics consulting sector, a field predominantly composed of women.

Table 1 - Sociodemographic profile of the participants

	N	%
1. What is your age group		
25-34 years	8	21.6
35-44 years	13	35.1
45-54 years	15	40.5
55 years or older	1	2.7
2. What is your gender?	N	%
Male	0	0
Female	37	100
Prefer not to say	0	0
3. How long have you been working as an independent cosmetics consultant?	N	%
Less than 1 year	3	8.1
1-3 years	12	32.4
4-6 years	14	37.8
7 years or more	8	21.6

Source: Original research results.

Among the participants, most have been working as independent cosmetics consultants for 4-6 years (37.8%) or 1-3 years (32.4%), representing a combination of intermediate experience levels. A total of 8.1% of the participants have less than 1 year of experience, while 21.6% have been in the field for more than 7 years, indicating that one fifth of the group has more extensive experience in the sector. This variation in length of service suggests the presence of both beginner consultants and those with more consolidated experience, which may influence the perception of the statements analyzed in the research.



*Behavior and satisfaction*

Table 2 presents the results obtained after conducting a survey that evaluated the participants' perceptions regarding four statements related to behavior and the selection of a cosmetics brand. The responses are based on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

Table 2 - Participants' perception of the 'Behavior and Satisfaction' construct

Item	Statements	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		$\bar{x}$	s
		f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%		
1.	The representation of Black women in the cosmetics brand you represent is evaluated positively	1	2,6	1	2,6	2	5,3	2	5,3	12	31,6	8	21,1	12	31,6	5,5	1,48
2.	You feel motivated by the brand's mission and values	0	0,0	2	5,3	0	0,0	7	18,4	8	21,1	6	15,8	15	39,5	5,6	1,44
3.	The level of satisfaction working with specialized products for Black skin is classified as high	1	2,6	0	0,0	2	5,3	2	5,3	13	34,2	10	26,3	10	26,3	5,5	1,33
4.	You frequently receive positive feedback from customers about products	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	3	7,9	12	31,6	15	39,5	8	21,1	5,7	0,89

Source: Original research results.

According to Table 2, in the first statement, which investigated the representation of Black women in the brand, 84.3% of respondents expressed agreement, with 31.6% totally agreeing. Only 10.5% (summing the levels of disagreement) showed some level of disagreement, while 5.3% remained neutral. These numbers reflect a very favorable perception, with the majority recognizing the brand as inclusive and representative. The results corroborate studies indicating that practices promoting diversity in advertising campaigns not only attract a broader audience but also strengthen the feeling of inclusion and belonging among both employees and consumers.

The study by Martins et al. (2023) emphasizes that brands authentically representing different ethnic groups create deeper bonds with their target



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audiences, which in turn positively impacts both customer loyalty and internal staff satisfaction. This affirms what Paulson et al. (2017) show in their work: the alignment between the diversity promoted by the brand and employees' perceptions improves organizational performance and reduces turnover.

When analyzing whether participants feel motivated by the brand's mission and values (second statement), 76.4% (summing levels of agreement) of respondents positioned themselves positively, with 39.5% stating they totally agree. However, 18.4% remained neutral, suggesting that some participants may not feel as connected to the brand's values. Only 5.3% expressed some degree of disagreement. When aligned with employees' personal values, these initiatives create an environment where motivation is sustained not only by extrinsic rewards but also by a sense of fulfillment and belonging. According to Martins et al. (2023), management by values becomes a strategic tool for building a strong, cohesive organizational culture where employees feel more connected to the company's long-term goals.

Additionally, Jin and Li (2024) highlight that corporate social responsibility initiatives strengthen employees' intrinsic motivation, as they allow them to see a greater purpose in their daily activities, while also contributing to talent retention and the construction of a positive reputation in the market.

Regarding satisfaction in working with products specialized for Black skin (statement 3), the survey showed that 86.8% of participants agreed, with 26.3% totally agreeing. Disagreement was minimal, with only 5.3% of respondents, and the same percentage remained neutral.

The literature suggests that developing products aimed at specific groups can be a competitive differentiator both in the market and in talent retention. Schockman (2021) asserts that employees who feel connected to the products they sell, especially those with significant social meaning, tend to demonstrate greater satisfaction and engagement at work. This emotional connection with the



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product is important for increasing sales effectiveness, as employees feel they are promoting something that truly values diversity and meets the needs of a historically neglected audience. Furthermore, Singh and Tiwari (2012) reinforce that market segmentation not only improves consumer perception but also raises employee commitment, creating a positive feedback loop between innovation and job satisfaction.

Finally, in the fourth statement, about positive customer feedback, 92.2% of respondents stated they often receive positive feedback, with 21.1% saying they totally agree. No one disagreed with this statement, and only 7.9% remained neutral, demonstrating strong acceptance and recognition from customers. It is important to highlight that recognition for a job well done is one of the main motivators in the corporate environment.

Metz (2020) points out that customer feedback not only validates employees' efforts but also increases engagement and motivation for continuous improvement. Costa and Nunes (2019) complement this analysis by noting that regular, positive feedback reinforces a sense of personal accomplishment and contributes to building an organizational culture focused on excellence. This cycle of recognition is important for keeping employees motivated, especially in highly competitive markets, where direct contact with the end customer can be a differentiating factor for the brand's success.

Regarding the descriptive statistical analysis of the responses about the representation of Black women in the cosmetics brand, the average of 5.5 reflects a generally positive perception among respondents. However, the standard deviation of 1.48 indicates considerable variation in opinions, suggesting different perspectives among participants. While some consider the brand representative, others are less convinced, reflecting varying levels of perception on the topic.

When observing the motivation generated by the company's mission and values, the average of 5.61 indicates that many participants feel motivated by



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these aspects. The standard deviation of 1.44 points to a more controlled dispersion compared to the first item, suggesting greater cohesion in the responses. The presence of some extreme values, such as a minimum of 2, shows that there are individuals who do not share the same motivation, although they are a minority.

Satisfaction with products specialized for Black skin shows an average of 5.53, with a standard deviation of 1.33, indicating a lower variation in responses. This suggests that most participants are satisfied with these products, with more uniform perceptions compared to previous items.

Finally, the item that evaluates positive feedback received from customers presents the highest average (5.74) and the lowest standard deviation (0.89). This reveals a high level of agreement among respondents, indicating that most consider positive feedback a constant factor in their experiences. The low dispersion in responses reinforces the relevance of this element for satisfaction and motivation in the workplace, showing that it is widely recognized and valued.

### *Challenges and opportunities*

The challenges faced by independent cosmetics consultants, as shown in Figure 1, can be understood on multiple levels, highlighting issues related to logistics, product supply, capital, and market competitiveness.

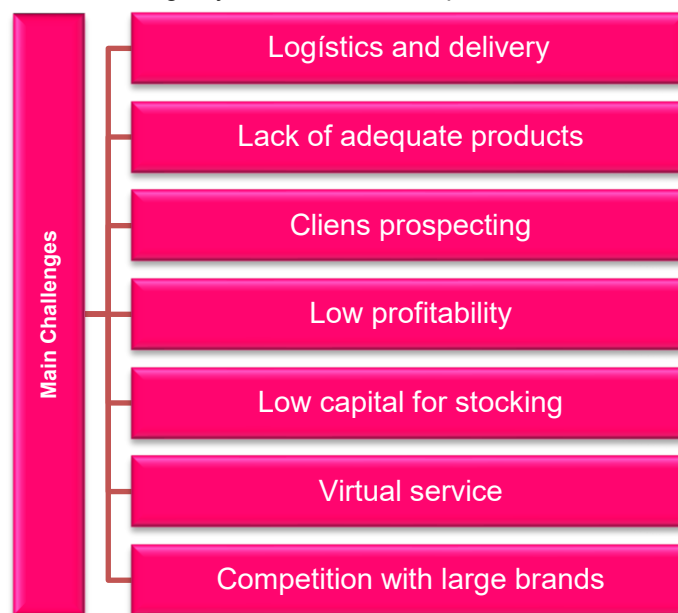
The first challenge identified in Figure 1, logistics and delivery, is directly related to transportation efficiency and the management of specific conditions such as temperature and humidity, in order to ensure that products reach consumers in proper condition. According to Clausen et al. (2016), efficient logistical process management is essential for providing competitive advantage and ensuring product integrity, especially in sectors like cosmetics, where final quality is critical.



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Additionally, the lack of adequate products was highlighted as a challenge by consultants. The ability to manage inventory flexibly and effectively is fundamental to guarantee product availability during periods of high demand. Inventory adaptability in modern supply chains is vital to ensure that companies can respond quickly to consumer needs.

Figure 1 - Main challenges you face as an independent cosmetics consultant



Source: Original research results.

Regarding customer prospecting, independent consultants need to adopt digital strategies to reach new audiences and maintain market relevance. The use of tools such as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has proven effective for improving client acquisition, as noted by Chopra and Meindl (2016), who emphasize the importance of integrating marketing and logistics to optimize customer service and ensure sales continuity.

Low profitability was also a factor with significant impact, mainly due to high operational costs. Adopting sustainable practices and optimizing logistical processes can significantly reduce costs while improving the operational



efficiency of consultants, allowing them to increase their profit margins (CLAUSEN et al., 2016).

Finally, limited capital for stocking requires consultants to seek innovative solutions to optimize their resources. Just-in-time inventory management and the use of real-time tracking technologies can reduce the cost of maintaining large inventories, enabling small businesses to operate more efficiently and with less capital (CLAUSEN et al., 2016).

Table 3 presents the results of participants' perceptions regarding opportunities and challenges in the work context, providing relevant insights for the analysis of "Challenges and Opportunities."

Table 3 - Research participants' perception of the 'Challenges and Opportunities' construct

Statementsm ativas	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		$\bar{x}$	s
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%		
1. There are opportunities for professional growth in your current role.	0	0,0	3	7,9	6	15,8	3	7,9	11	28,9	9	23,7	6	15,8	4,9	1,53
2. The brand's support in promoting products for Black skin is perceived positively.	1	4,2	0	0,0	11	28,9	5	13,2	7	18,4	8	21,1	5	13,2	4,5	1,66
3. There are resources or support that could help increase your effectiveness at work.	0	0,0	2	5,3	2	5,3	3	7,9	15	39,5	12	31,6	4	10,5	5,2	1,23

Source: Original research results.

In Statement 1, which assessed whether respondents perceive opportunities for professional growth, most participants expressed a positive view, with 23.7% agreeing and 15.8% fully agreeing. Along with the 28.9% who partially agree, these results indicate that nearly two-thirds of respondents



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recognize development opportunities in their current roles. The average of 4.9 and the standard deviation of 1.53 suggest a positive perception but with significant variability, reflecting different realities within the analyzed group.

Statement 2, which investigated the brand's support in promoting products for Black skin, presents a slightly more dispersed distribution. While most respondents have a positive perception of support (with 21.1% agreeing and 13.2% fully agreeing), the standard deviation of 1.66 indicates greater variability in responses. This suggests that, although support is seen favorably by many, there remains room for improvement regarding how this support is provided.

In Statement 3, which addressed the effectiveness of the available resources and support for work, the results were positive. 39.5% partially agree, while 31.6% agree and 10.5% fully agree. With an average of 5.2 and a lower standard deviation of 1.23, there is a more consistent perception that the resources available help respondents be more effective in their roles.

Overall, it can be considered, for the most part, that both growth opportunities and available support resources are seen positively. However, there is room to improve the perceived support, especially regarding the promotion of products for Black skin. The higher variation in responses in this area may indicate the need for more targeted and clear actions from the brands so that all consultants can feel they receive the necessary support.

The perception of professional growth as a positive opportunity aligns with the concept of continuous workplace learning. According to Pylväs et al. (2022), the perception of growth opportunities is directly related to the development of workers' professional skills, and this advancement impacts both motivation and engagement. Companies that offer such opportunities tend to create a more favorable environment for learning and innovation, which may justify the positive responses regarding growth in their current role.





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Additionally, brand support for promoting specific products, such as those aimed at Black skin, is an important factor for valuing diversity and inclusion in market practices. According to Owen (2022), organizational support not only increases employees' confidence in the brand but also motivates them to promote the products with greater commitment, especially when there is alignment between the company's values and clients' needs. This is reflected in how employees perceive the quality of the support offered, directly influencing workplace performance.

When it comes to the effectiveness of support for improving job performance, studies indicate that the provision of adequate resources and continuous feedback are essential to optimize employee performance. A work environment that provides access to resources and ongoing technical support enables employees to maximize their productivity and feel more empowered to perform their functions with excellence (PYLVÄS et al., 2022).

Finally, the relevance of virtual assistance and technological resources in modern work is an aspect that cannot be ignored. The study by Lefebvre et al. (2018) demonstrates that access to suitable digital tools and appropriate technical support is essential to ensure that employees can deliver quality service, resulting in better satisfaction outcomes for both clients and the employees themselves.

### *Challenges*

Table 4 presents the participants' perception regarding the support provided by the brand and the quality of marketing materials, specifically for products aimed at Black skin. For the first statement, "The support provided by the brand is sufficient to deal with adversities," it is observed that 31.6% of the respondents adopted a neutral stance, indicating that, for a significant portion, the support offered by the brand is adequate but may not yet stand out.



Additionally, 15.8% of participants partially agreed, and 13.2% fully agreed with the statement, reinforcing that there is a base of consumers who positively evaluate this aspect. However, it is important to note that 13.2% partially disagreed and 13.2% disagreed, which shows that the brand can improve this area of activity. The average for this statement was 4.0, with a standard deviation of 1.73, suggesting a moderately varied distribution of opinions.

Table 4. Participants' perception of the construct 'Challenges, Strategies and Improvements'

Item	Afirmativas	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		$\bar{x}$	s
		f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%		
1. The brand's support is sufficient to deal with adversity		3	7,9	5	13,2	5	13,2	12	31,6	6	15,8	2	5,3	5	13,2	4,0	1,73
2. The quality of the brand's marketing materials, specifically for products designed for Black skin, is positively evaluated.		1	2,6	1	2,6	4	10,5	8	21,1	13	34,2	5	13,2	6	15,8	4,8	1,44

Source: Original research results.

Regarding the second statement, "The quality of marketing materials provided by the brand, specifically for products aimed at Black skin, is evaluated positively," most respondents gave positive evaluations: 34.2% partially agreed and 15.8% totally agreed. A significant number of participants (21.1%) indicated a neutral position, while a minority (ranging from 2.6% to 10.5%) indicated total or partial disagreement. With an average of 4.8 and a standard deviation of 1.44, this statement seems to be better evaluated than the previous one, with less variation in responses. This suggests that marketing materials for products aimed at Black skin are generally well received by participants.

Figure 2 shows a word cloud with the main suggestions for improving consultants' satisfaction. Among the most mentioned terms are "support (suporte)", "samples (amostras)", "resellers (revendedoras)", "logistics (logístico)" and "assistance (apoio), demonstrating the relevance of providing



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additional resources to help consultants improve their performance. In addition, the figure highlights demands related to facilitating purchases, logistic improvements, gifts, and promotions, indicating a need for operational adjustments to enhance the experience of resellers.

The analysis of the word cloud (Figure 2) presents the main points of attention that cosmetic brand resellers identify as essential to improve their experience and increase their commercial performance. Among the most frequent terms are "training (treinamento)", "samples (amostras)", "gifts (brindes)", "free shipping (frete grátis)", "marketing," and "support (suporte) highlighting a clear demand for greater support and benefits. These resellers, above all, seek strategies that facilitate the sales process, such as the possibility of installment payments via bank slip, progressive discounts, and the reduction of the minimum purchase amount.

Figure 2 - Main suggestions to improve consultant satisfaction



Source: Original research results.

From a literature perspective, the importance of such incentives is supported by studies on sales management and product distribution, which affirm that institutional support - through ongoing training, promotional materials, and logistical improvements - is fundamental to retaining resellers and strengthening



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the distribution network (CHAFFEY; ELLIS-CHADWICK, 2019). The provision of testers and free samples, as highlighted in the word cloud, is also cited in the literature as an effective practice to stimulate sales, as it enables resellers and customers to try the products before purchasing, increasing trust in the brand (KOTLER; KELLER, 2020).

Logistics and digital presence also stand out as central factors. The need for fast delivery and better logistical support reveals an interest in reducing bottlenecks in the marketing process, which can be improved with the use of technological tools and efficient e-commerce practices, as recommended by von See et al. (2021). In addition, regional marketing is seen as an opportunity to expand the reach of resellers and reinforce local presence, an essential strategy for strengthening sales in specific areas (DING, 2021).

Finally, the analysis reinforces the importance of direct incentives, such as gifts and promotional kits, for increasing reseller engagement. Such incentives not only raise the perceived value of the products but also improve the sales experience (RAMANATHAN et al., 2014).

Table 5 presents the cross-analysis of the constructs "Behavior and Satisfaction," "Challenges and Opportunities," and "Challenges and Improvement Strategies" with sociodemographic characteristics, which made it possible to identify specific behavioral patterns and perceptions among sales professionals.

When analyzing Table 5, focusing on the construct of Behavior and Satisfaction, the results indicate there is variation in averages according to experience. Professionals with more years in the field (7-10 years) have an average of 6.2, higher than those with less than one year of experience, whose average is 6.1. This suggests that time in the field positively affects satisfaction perception, possibly due to greater familiarity with sales practices and overcoming the initial learning curve. In the age group analysis, professionals aged 45-54 show the highest average satisfaction (6.3), suggesting that this



career stage may be associated with greater professional stability and adaptation to market demands. However, professionals aged 35-44 have a lower average (5.4), which may indicate a period of greater uncertainty or transition.

The construct of Challenges and Opportunities explored how professionals perceive difficulties and possibilities within the sales market. Those with more experience (7-10 years) identify more opportunities (average of 7.2), suggesting a correlation between experience and the ability to recognize and exploit new growth opportunities. However, those with less than one year of experience have a lower average (6.1), possibly reflecting a more limited view of market dynamics due to less exposure to different sales situations. Looking at age groups, older professionals (45-54 and 55 or older) also tend to identify more opportunities (averages of 6.6 and 7.0, respectively), possibly because they are in a phase of career consolidation.

Table 5. Cross-analysis of the averages of the survey results x sociodemographic profile

Variables	Constructs		
	2. Behavior and Satisfaction	3. Challenges and Opportunities	4. Challenges and Improvement Strategies
Age range	Mean	Mean	Mean
Less than 25 years	-	-	-
25-34 years	5,8	5,6	5,4
35-44 years	5,4	5,4	3,8
45-54 years	6,3	6,6	4,3
55 years or more	-	-	-
Gender	Mean	Mean	Mean
Male	-	-	-
Female	5,9	5,9	4,5
I prefer not to answer	-	-	-
Time of Experience in Sales	Mean	Mean	Mean
Less than 1 year	6,1	6,1	3,3
1-3 years	5,2	5,3	4,1
4-6 years	5,7	5,6	4,6
7-10 years	7,2	7,3	4,9
More tha 10 years	-	-	-

Source: Original research results.



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The construct of Challenges and Improvement Strategies assesses the professionals' ability to face daily obstacles in the sales environment and the strategies adopted to overcome them. Professionals with more years of experience (7-10 years) show an average of 4.9, indicating greater effectiveness in using strategies to overcome challenges, compared to those with less than one year of experience, who have an average of 3.3. This data reinforces the importance of experience in developing practical skills for overcoming problems. In the gender breakdown, female professionals show an average of 4.5 in this construct, suggesting a greater implementation of active improvement strategies in their routines.

Overall, the analysis suggests that experience and professional maturity directly influence the perception of satisfaction, the identification of opportunities, and the adoption of effective strategies for facing challenges. More experienced professionals tend to be more resilient and capable of identifying opportunities for improvement in their work routines, while less experienced ones are still developing these skills. Variations among age groups also show that older professionals, having gone through different career phases, tend to adopt a more strategic view regarding opportunities and challenges faced in the sales sector.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This study aimed to analyze the satisfaction levels of a network of independent consultants. The results revealed that the perceptions of sales professionals about the constructs "Behavior and satisfaction," "Challenges and opportunities," and "Challenges and improvement strategies" are strongly influenced by experience and time working in the market. The research showed that more experienced professionals, particularly those with 7 to 10 years of experience, had the highest averages in all constructs, indicating a more positive perception and a greater ability to deal with market challenges.



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Regarding the specific constructs, the support provided by the brand in facing adversities and the quality of the marketing materials aimed at Black skin were evaluated in a mixed way. While most participants positively assessed the quality of the materials, brand support received a more varied distribution, suggesting that, despite satisfactory support, there is room for improvement. The word cloud generated from the consultants' suggestions indicated a clear demand for more support, such as training, samples, gifts, logistical improvements, and digital support, as well as improvements in marketing strategies to more effectively address the target audience.

The results highlight the importance of experience as a determining factor in sales professionals' perceptions of their satisfaction and their ability to face challenges. A higher number of years in the profession correlates with a more strategic and optimistic view of market opportunities, as well as greater effectiveness in implementing strategies to overcome obstacles. This suggests that practical experience not only enhances sales competence but also shapes a more resilient and adaptive mindset, which is essential in a competitive market.

The research provides contributions for both academia and the public and private sectors. From an academic standpoint, the study expands the understanding of the behavior of sales consultants in the cosmetics market, highlighting the importance of experience, representativeness, and institutional support as critical factors for the success of sales strategies. The use of quantitative methods, such as cross-analysis between different sociodemographic variables and constructs of interest, allows for a more accurate interpretation of market dynamics - something that can serve as a foundation for future research in marketing, organizational behavior, and sales management.

For the private sector, especially cosmetics brands, the results emphasize the need for a more integrated focus on consultant training and the personalization of marketing strategies. Improving institutional support through



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training programs, sample provision, and more effective promotional actions can lead to a significant increase in sales performance and consultant satisfaction. Attention to representativeness and the quality of marketing materials targeting different audiences also emerges as a fundamental strategy to strengthen consumer loyalty and engagement.

In the public sector, the findings can contribute to public policies aimed at strengthening the labor market and Black female entrepreneurship, promoting actions that encourage professional qualification and the inclusion of minority groups in the labor market, such as Black women. Furthermore, the study can serve as a basis for initiatives supporting training and the encouragement of entrepreneurial culture, especially in the cosmetics sector, which is highly relevant to the economy of many regions.

Despite significant results, the research presents some limitations that should be considered. Firstly, the sample was limited to sales representatives of a single cosmetics brand, which restricts the generalization of results to other brands or sectors. In addition, data collection took place at a single point in time, which does not allow for observation of changes in participants' perceptions over time. Longitudinal studies could provide a more detailed view of how sales professionals' perceptions and strategies change as they gain more experience.

For future research, it is suggested to expand the sample to include sales representatives from different brands and geographic regions, as well as to adopt mixed methodologies that combine quantitative and qualitative data to deepen the analysis of the motivations and challenges faced by sales professionals. Another interesting approach would be to investigate how changes in digital marketing strategies and the use of technologies influence consultants' experience, in addition to exploring the impact of representativeness in marketing campaigns, emphasizing the effect of these strategies on consumer purchase behavior.





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