



Business & Social Science
IJRBS

Research in Business & Social Science

IJRBS VOL 12 NO 3 (2023) ISSN: 2147-4478

Available online at www.ssbfnct.com

Journal homepage: <https://www.ssbfnct.com/ojs/index.php/ijrbs>

Using social media marketing in the digital era: A necessity or a choice

 Musammat Tahmina Khanom ^{(a)*}



^(a) Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Leading University, Sylhet, Bangladesh

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 16 February 2023

Received in rev. form 18 April 2023

Accepted 24 April 2023

Keywords:

Social Media, Digital Marketing,
Social Media Marketing, Internet,
Technology

JEL Classification:

M00, M31, O33

ABSTRACT

Today is the era of digitalization. Nowadays, people prefer to attach their lives to social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Hence, manufacturers and producers use social media tremendously in this digital era to reach customers with their products and services. Thus, social media marketing has become famous for businesses to promote their products or services, engage with their customers, and build brand awareness. The present study focuses on reviewing the mediating role played by several social media platforms to gain the interest of consumers. This paper also aims to analyze the necessity of social media marketing compared to other forms of marketing communication and promotion. This paper helps the reader decide whether to depend on social media only for marketing purposes or whether there can be a choice of another means. Without analyzing the pros and cons, relying heavily on social media platforms for marketing is not always a good idea. The author employed a qualitative and descriptive method for constructing the paper. This paper will review the literature regarding social media marketing compared to other means, try to recommend, and shed light on selecting the right marketing platform by different marketers. The study's main findings demonstrate that measures should be taken to enhance responsible use and limit some of its harmful effects. Furthermore, in providing insights into whether social media marketing is a necessity or a choice, the author suggests that productive utilization should be the main priority for all, whether social media or other platforms.

© 2023 by the authors. Licensee SSBFNET, Istanbul, Turkey. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Introduction

Today is the age of digitization. In this contemporary world, everything is getting digitalized day by day. Marketing is not an exception to that. Nowadays, people mostly attach their lives to social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Hence, manufacturers and producers use social media tremendously to reach customers with their products and services. Social media has become integral to communication, and we must recognize its impact on marketing. According to Faruk, M. et al. (2021), many customers spend their time on social and digital media for various purposes ranging from information searching to purchasing goods and services. The rise of social media platforms has changed the way businesses operate. Social media has become a vital factor in marketing, enabling businesses to engage with customers, build brand awareness, and promote their products or services.

For this reason, companies are spending a substantial part of their advertising budget on digital marketing. People tend to share anything, even everything, over social media platforms. Marketers try to attract their customers by taking advantage of this tendency. Marketers have utilized various means, such as classical marketing mix variables, and new marketing methods, such as events, sponsorships, one-to-one marketing activities, Internet marketing, and social media marketing over the last few decades (Keller, 2008; Kotler & Keller, 2007). Here, the latest and most popular one is social media marketing.

Sabahat, W. et al. (2022) show that marketing campaigns for luxury brands consist of crucial factors like customization, reputation, trendiness, interaction, and entertainment, affecting customers' purchase intentions and brand equity significantly. According to Parsons and Lepkowska-White, 2018, community marketing activities accrue from interactions between events and the mental states of individuals, while products are external factors for users. It is also mentioned that in future marketing, the rivalry will focus more

* Corresponding author. ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3949-6800

on brand marketing activities; hence, the marketing activities should offer sensory stimulation and themes that give customers a wonderful experience.

Ara Eti, I., et al. (2021) found that social media marketing imposes a significant stimulus on consumers purchase intention during COVID-19, and all factors except discount or coupon offer and brand awareness had an epoch-making and constructive connection with consumers' purchase intention during the coronavirus malady (COVID-19) epidemic in Bangladesh. A study on American consumer behavior by Suman et al. (2021) showed that members participating in community activities (meetups, discussion, and browsing) influence brand-associated behavior. Again, a consumer's brand identity positively impacts satisfaction (Di Minin et al. (2021). According to Sirola et al., 2021, consumers capitalize on virtual communities to share their experiences and thoughts about a brand regularly and easily.

According to Interobserver (2022), traditional marketing is a promotion strategy that reaches a local audience offline. The form of marketing based on billboards, commercials, print ads, and other forms of advertising to promote a product or service is traditional marketing. It is often expensive and can be challenging to track the effectiveness of the campaigns, and digital marketing has replaced it. The latter uses online channels like social media, email, and search engines to reach customers. Compared to traditional marketing, digital marketing is more effective and less expensive, and one can track performance or effectiveness more easily.

It is essential to understand social media marketing properly, determine the availability of resources, deciding marketing methods feasibility, investigate the competitors online and join them, and develop an overall marketing strategy that integrates the most effective initiatives for the niche and situation. The present paper will focus on social media's role in marketing and clarify whether social media marketing is necessary or a choice. Without analyzing the pros and cons, relying heavily on social media platforms for marketing is not always a good idea. This paper will review the academic literature regarding social media marketing compared to other means, try to recommend, and shed light on selecting the right marketing platform by different marketers. It is essential to begin this discussion by reviewing the concept of digital marketing, the types of marketing platforms, the necessity of social media marketing, and the opposing sides of it.

However, some businesses still need to be more open to investing in social media marketing, questioning its effectiveness and whether it is necessary for its success. Therefore, the author has conducted the present study using secondary data from the Internet, newspapers, publications, journals, and books to research social media marketing and determine its necessity and nature. The data used in the paper is qualitative and descriptive.

This paper is organized as follows: following the introduction, a second part is a literature review with theoretical and empirical studies that shed light on categories of marketing practices. The third part introduces the background information on the research and methodology, including the significance of the study. A comparison between traditional marketing and digital marketing follows this section. After analysis and findings of the study, the author provides discussions and implications. Finally, this paper concludes with key points, recommendations, future research directions, and limitations.

Literature Review

Social media comprises blogs, internet forums, consumer review sites, social networking sites (Twitter, Blogger, LinkedIn, and Facebook), and Wikis (Arrigo, 2018). Cheung et al., 2021 state that social networkers, government organizations, and business firms are using social media to communicate, and its use is increasing tremendously. It is described by Nugroho, S. D. P. et al. (2022) in a study, promotional activities, as part of a marketing strategy, especially through social media require influencers as endorsers. Tafesse and Wien. (2018) demonstrates that integrated marketing activities can be completed with less cost and effort for seamless interactions and communication among consumers, partners, events, media, digital services, and retailers via social media.

The marketing world has experienced a remarkable transformation with the advent of digitalization. Now marketing and promotion are no longer limited to traditional sources. The term 'digital marketing' comprises various marketing processes, utilizing various digital channels to build a brand image and promote a product or service in the best possible way. (Bhojaraja1, and Muniraju, M. 2012). The various channels utilized mainly by digital marketing include websites, social media platforms, email marketing, mobile marketing, WebTV, video marketing, SEO, and pay-per-click campaigns (Bhagowati, A., and Datta; D. M., 2018).

Bala, M. and Verma, D. (2018) state that marketing is becoming increasingly digital, and continuous technological developments present marketers with new challenges and opportunities: mobile marketing, Internet of Things, analytics, big data, 3D printing, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, consumer neuroscience/neuromarketing are some of the most exciting and challenging domains where the future marketer are expected to must be able to function and deliver. It is found by Hafez, M. (2022) that a greater degree of interaction on social media pages will leverage the superior value and brand experience. He also opined that social media is an interactive and low-cost media for sharing brand-related information with followers, so marketers can easily utilize social media as a vehicle for enhancing brand value and brand equity.

Digital marketing through social media platforms transmits information in digital form. It could be featured as computers, smartphones, or any other digital device to promote the brand image, deliver the brand's message, and increase sales through advertising the product. In today's internet world, digital marketing has become an inseparable part of everybody's life. Social media marketing provides a platform for people to keep their lives updated and provides a network of potential clients which helps the

business to grow. As per statistics, India is the second largest country in the world, with approximately 462 million internet users (Bhagowati, A. and Datta, D. M., 2018).

In a critical review of marketing by Bala, M. and Verma, D. (2018), it is described that digital marketing includes the use of a company website in conjunction with online promotional techniques, such as banner advertising, search engines, PPC advertising, email and links or services from other web sites to acquire new customers. Many people can think that internet marketing is just a website with its content, but it is much more complex. Internet marketing is the interconnection among the site portal, search engines, partner's sites, blogs, other site linking, B2B partners, customers, outsource partners, and more. For any marketing, it is essential to have as large an audience as possible; as long as Internet marketing is concerned, the number of potential customers goes along with the Internet itself.

When social networks are used for marketing a company's products through Facebook or Instagram ads, using influencers, or building a presence online to engage with customers, it is referred to as social media marketing. According to Anwar, M. (2019), The present age of the digital world has transformed the course of people's individual and collective thoughts and the service providers' views. The rapid growth of ICTs and their associated aids has altered the living standard of human beings. ICTs made several revaluations regarding social media and other similar media of communications. Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012) demonstrates that as the use of social media marketing increases exponentially, not only existing social networkers but even business firms and governmental organizations are joining and using them as communication tools.

At the beginning of the computer and the Internet, people thought this was the biggest thing to use for their lifelong work. However, at the inception of social media, people saw a massive change in communication throughout the globe. The increased use of social media, and the impact of social media on both consumer behavior and marketing practice, have primarily been driven by the social media platforms themselves. In the early days of social media, social networking sites like MySpace and Friendster were popular, as might be recalled by some readers. They worked as precursors to Facebook, and everything else developed over the last decade. (Appel G. et al. 2019.).

Nyagadza, B. (2020), in a paper, states that creating a solid customer connection through social media can develop loyalty and encourage people to recommend the business to other potential customers. Social media marketing is about establishing customer relationships via platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. It allows businesses to connect with prospective new customers or followers interested in their products or services.

According to Anwar, M. (2019), social media is a computer-based technology that facilitates sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through online networks and communities. Social media is internet-based and provides users with fast electronic communication of content, like personal information, documents, videos, and photos. Users use web-based software or applications to use social media with the help of a computer, tablet, or smartphone.

Social media originated to interact with friends and family. However, they were later adopted by businesses and companies to take advantage of a popular new communication method to reach out to end users. The power of social media denotes the ability to communicate and share information with anyone on earth or with many people at a time. There are more than 3.8 billion users of social media across the globe. The nature of the social media field is ever-changing and ever-evolving, with new apps such as TikTok and Clubhouse coming out every year, adhering to the ranks of commonly used social networks like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram. Social media users in the US are forecast to increase to approximately 257 million by 2023.

As per the Pew Research Center, social media users are of early age. Nearly 90% of people between 18 and 29 are attached to at least one form of social media. Further, these users are better educated and relatively wealthy or earn over \$75,000 annually. The top 10 social media apps may be listed as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Messenger, Instagram, TikTok, QQ, Douyin, and Sino Weibo.

Followings are some of the popular social media platforms used for marketing purposes and reaching end users:

- i. Facebook is one of the favorite free social networking websites that allows registered users to make profiles, share photos, and videos, send messages, and stay connected with friends, family, and colleagues. It is an online community that allows individual users to create personal profiles, share photos and videos, and post on each other's profile pages or "Timelines."
- ii. WhatsApp (also called WhatsApp Messenger) is an internationally available freeware, cross-platform, centralized instant messaging (IM), and voice-over-IP (VoIP) service owned by American company Meta Platforms (formerly Facebook). WhatsApp is so popular because, unlike SMS, it uses end-to-end encryption, which means nobody other than the message recipients can view messages. When someone calls on WhatsApp, third parties cannot listen to one's conversation.
- iii. YouTube: YouTube is a video-sharing service that permits users to view videos posted by other users and upload their videos. The service was started independently in 2005 and was acquired by Google in 2006. Videos uploaded to YouTube may appear on the YouTube website and be posted on other sites. The slogan of the YouTube website is "Broadcast Yourself." Although several companies and organizations use YouTube to promote their business, most of the YouTube videos are created and uploaded by amateurs.
- iv. Twitter: An internet service that allows people to publish quick updates and see posts or "tweets" of other users they follow in real-time.

- v. TikTok: TikTok is a social app used to create and share videos. Many videos tend to be music-focused, with creators leveraging the app's vast catalog of sound effects, music snippets, and filters to record short clips of them dancing and lip-syncing. However, there is an untold number of videos to discover, with varying topics.
- vi. Pinterest: It is a professional networking website that allows users to create profiles, post resumes, and communicate with other professionals and jobseekers. This virtual community allows users to share ideas and photos with others by "pinning" items and describing them on their profile pages.
- vii. MySpace: It is an online community that allows friends to stay connected and meet new people. It started as a website that bands could use to promote their music but has since grown into a more general community of friends.
- viii. Instagram: It is an online photo-sharing service. It allows the application of various photo filters to pictures with a single click and then sharing them with others.
- ix. Blog: Short for 'Web Log,' which means anybody who can create and publish a Web page can publish their blog.
- x. Wiki: A wiki is a Web site allowing users to add and update content on the site using their Web browser. Knowing how deeply each platform reaches the global online community is critical for a company's social media marketing strategy.

Choosing which social network, a brand will focus its marketing efforts on is a crucial decision that should be taken on something other than a hunch. Facebook is the largest social media platform worldwide, with a substantial advantage over other social media.

The data for the most popular social media websites as of November 2022 are as follows:

- i. Facebook (2.74 billion users)
- ii. YouTube (2.29 billion users)
- iii. WhatsApp (2 billion users)
- iv. Facebook Messenger (1.3 billion users)
- v. Instagram (1.22 billion users)
- vi. WeChat (1.21 billion users)
- vii. TikTok (689 million users)
- viii. QQ (617 million users)
- ix. Douyin (600 million users)
- x. Sino Weibo (511 million users)
- xi. Reddit (430 million users).

Theoretical and Conceptual Background

Nowadays, the Internet and social media have become the backbone of every firm growth, and this technology has changed the way of doing business. Every firm needs to adopt this technology to advertise its products. Business has changed with the internet/IT revolution, and the firm must adopt modern technology (Ali, Z. 2016). In a different study Alalwan, A. A. et al. (2017) states that people worldwide are largely engaged and attached with the social media platforms, and businesses start looking at such platforms as effective mechanisms to interact more with their customers.

Appel, G. et al. (2019) demonstrates that social media has been embraced academically, and extensive research on social media marketing and related topics, like online word of mouth (WOM) and online networks, has been created. Despite what academics and practitioners have researched and explored over the last 15–20 years regarding the topic, due to the ever-changing nature of social media and consumers using patterns, the future of social media marketing might not be merely a continuation of what is being seen today.

According to Chowdhury, A. (2018), consumers live in a way where social media is associated with most of their lives via digital social interactivity in such domains as travel (e.g., TripAdvisor), work (e.g., LinkedIn), food (e.g., Yelp), music (e.g., Spotify). Furthermore, social media companies have typically expanded their platforms to serve various functionalities and services. Although the rise (and fall) of different kinds of social media platforms has been significant for understanding the social media landscape, understanding the present condition of social media, from a marketing perspective, lies more in what the users' activities are over these platforms than the technologies or services offered by these platforms.

People worldwide use social media in various forms, such as news feeds on Facebook and Twitter, private messaging on WhatsApp and WeChat, discussion forums on Reddit, and like. We can generally categorize them as (1) digitally communicating and socializing with known others, such as family and friends, (2) doing the same but with unknown others who share common interests, and (3) accessing and contributing to digital content, such as news, gossip, and user-generated product reviews (Appel, G. et al., 2019).

Research and Methodology

This research paper is based on a descriptive qualitative study conducted by analyzing the data from secondary sources. The present study utilizes secondary data from the Internet, newspapers, publications, journals, and books to research social media marketing. It intends to discover the necessity, nature, advantages, disadvantages, and the like. The study aims to investigate the available thoughts on the importance of social media marketing and whether it is a necessity or a choice.

Background of the Study

Generally, research on social media marketing increasingly addresses the impact of social media activities performed by marketers to attract consumers. However, how a consumer's intention is affected by social media activities should be discussed more. The present study focuses on the mediating role played by several social media platforms to gain the interest of consumers. It analyzes the necessity of social media marketing compared to other marketing communication forms.

Social media marketing (SMM) uses social media platforms on which users establish social networks and disseminate information with one another—to improve a company's brand, maximize sales, and drive website traffic. They provide companies with an engagement with current customers and contact, allowing marketers to record their efforts' success and find even more ways to engage. It is also known as digital marketing and e-marketing. Appel G. et al. (2019) state that, in its early days, social media activity was mainly related to designated social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. However, websites and applications that mainly serve particular purposes have embraced the opportunity to embed social media functionality into their interfaces. In a working paper, Duani et al. (2018) found that consumers enjoy watching a live experience much more and for extended periods than watching a prerecorded one. Hence, live streaming by influencers will continue to grow in broad and niche domains. Social media marketing is a valuable tool for businesses of all sizes to reach customers. People discover, learn about, follow, and shop from brands on social media. Therefore, if someone is not on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, s/he will miss out.

Significance of the issue in today's marketing environment

There is nothing in this world without an unmixed blessing. Like many other famous things, social media marketing also has controversies, thus making it a significant issue of discussion in today's business world. There is debate arises on the issue now and then of whether to depend solely on social platforms for promoting a product or service. Nevertheless, it must be answered whether social media marketing is mandatory, whether a marketer can choose from other alternative forms of reaching customers, and does social media marketing always bring good to the business or sometimes it may be harmful. A reduction in consumers' subsequent purchase intentions for the same and similar products allows them to signal their identity, fulfilling identity-signaling needs virtually (Grewal L. et al., 2019). According to Investopedia, like any social media content—SMM (social media marketing) campaigns can open a company to attack.

Being on social media means exposing the business publicly to people who may or may not intend to come across or see the brand. With the Internet being more easily accessible than ever, some people always aim to damage one's reputation. If a business is unknown or just starting to gain momentum, the chances of getting an attack are more likely. Therefore, a company needs to investigate whether social media marketing is helping them gain customer attention or defaming their business by misusing it and creating miscommunication with the ultimate buyers.

Comparative View on Traditional Marketing and Digital Marketing

In a recent study, Bharti, P. K. and Kumar, A. (2020) described that traditional Marketing is one of the ways to support buying and selling in the market. It is one of the earlier forms of marketing, which is offline. It includes print media, broadcast media, and outdoor advertising. It plays a significant role in reaching a local audience, but in the modern world, it has become more difficult for an organization to survive in the competition. So, organizations are trying to adopt modern technologies to meet and satisfy customer needs and wants and make themselves competent. Since the start of the 21st century, there has been drastic improvement in information technology, affecting every part of our lives. Companies have been affected by these changes and are adopting this technology to remain competitive.

Traditional marketing is often considered more expensive regarding resources (material, monetary, human), such as printing brochures, leaflets, catalogs presentations, and product sheets (Jarratt, D., 2009). Also, direct marketing through classic mail is expensive in terms of the costs of postage, envelopes, and the like and requires more time and staff involved in this activity. Marketing research conducted through online questionnaires is much more cost-effective than the classic one, which involves many costs.

Companies are adopting digital marketing over traditional marketing to build customer relationships. Through digital marketing, companies get behavioral information and customer feedback, which helps them make optimized decisions for their betterment. Due to technological improvements, consumers are aware of all the products available and can compare them through available information. One of the benefits of adopting digital marketing by companies is to grab these consumers by getting information about consumers' behavior and habits (Bharti, P. K. and Kumar, A. 2020). According to Pascalau, V. S. and Urziceanu, R. M. (2020), an aspect is the abandonment of advertising companies, which act as intermediaries between the company and organizations or individuals, as in the case of advertisers on TV or radio, or in the written press, who charge pretty high commissions. Negotiation with a website is often done directly by companies. Traditional marketing can be an intensive process, and often its tools take a long time to implement. To be placed in a public location, a physical banner takes a long time to obtain permits and create, and a banner on online sites is displayed much faster. The marketing research carried out through the classic questionnaires takes a long time until the subjects complete them and are centralized.

Online marketing is being made continuously available by embracing digital technologies. As a result, the online presence of marketing materials is guaranteed by the servers that make up the Internet infrastructure 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Changes to

these materials or updates can also be made available at any time of the day. Thus it allows a much higher accuracy of the information so that the customer can be better informed about the various promotions, price reductions, special offers, and availability (Jayachandran, S., Sharma, S., 2005). Traditional marketing is not always available; for example, a TV or radio commercial is broadcast at certain times, depending on how it is set out in the contract, while a commercial on a website is available all the time, these being some of the primary attributes of the Internet through its infrastructure consist of online servers that are available 24 hours a day, 365 days (about 12 months) a year (Pascalau, V. S. and Urziceanu; R. M., 2020). Digital marketing is similar to traditional marketing, with the ultimate goal being sales, regardless of the object of sale (products, services, information). At the same time, this type of marketing has some distinct features, the integration of the new media into the marketing mix, that leads to new concepts, such as viral marketing (imitates the Viral process), viral mobile marketing, transactional marketing, conversational marketing, internet marketing, digital marketing, interactive marketing. All of these are modalities to attract numerous clients with meager costs and presume a good web design, a comprehensive database, links, using interactive promotional materials, and the development of personal sales (Coltman, T., 2007). Digital Marketing through social media platforms is a cost-effective and cheaper source of advertising compared to traditional marketing channels like TV, Radio, Magazines, Newspapers, Banners, and the like. Digital marketing permits marketers to set their advertising campaigns subject to their budget availability. ("Challenges and Opportunities in Digital Marketing") Primarily, the websites and business profiles (displaying ads and information about products or services) generate massive traffic for free. With its numerous benefits, social media has played a vital role in promoting digital marketing activities. Social Media Marketing platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Blogs, Yelp, Instagram, and YouTube also provide a huge traffic source.

Analysis and Discussions

Advantages of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is unquestionably an essential tool for businesses of all sizes. Social media platforms and the ability to target a much wider audience than traditional advertising have made social media one of the most potent marketing tools accessible today (Erlangga, 2021). Social media may be available in various tech-enabled activities, including photo sharing, blogging, social gaming, social networks, video sharing, business networks, reviews, and more. Moreover, governments and politicians use social media to involve constituents and voters. For individuals, social media is used to stay connected with friends and family. Several people will use various social media applications to network for career opportunities, connect with people around the globe with similar interests, and share their thoughts, feelings, insights, and emotions, making themselves a part of a virtual social network.

Social media is a crucial tool for businesses. Business firms use the platform to attract and attach with customers, drive sales through advertising and promotion, measure consumer trends, and deliver and offer customer service and support. It facilitates customer communication, making it possible to meld social interactions through e-commerce sites. It helps promote products and services, enabling the distribution of target sales in a timely and exclusive manner and the sale of coupons to potential customers. Additionally, social media can help build customer relationships through loyalty programs linked to social media.

Every year more and more businesses give up traditional advertising methods and focus on SEO, Google Ad words, or social media, spending vast amounts of money on these resources. For this reason, the market gets increasingly competitive, and big players get ahead of little companies. As a small business on the market, one cannot compete with them, but there is something to do. One can use Google alert tools to monitor competitors. This tool will allow tracking the competitor's products and marketing strategies so that one can learn something from them and improve own business strategy.

Social media has changed the way of virtual interaction. It allows us to discover what is happening in the world in real-time, connect and stay in touch with long-distance friends, and access enormous amounts of information at our fingertips. Social media has often helped individuals identify similar ground with others online, making the world seem more approachable.

As per a survey by Pew Research Center, social media makes many friends and diverse personal networks. Teenagers start virtual friendships, with 57% of teens meeting a friend online. Businesses also use social media marketing to target their consumers on their phones and computers, build a following to build a loyal fan base, and create a culture behind their brand. Companies like Denny's have created entire personas on Twitter to market to younger consumers using their language and personas.

In a report by Erlangga, H. 2021, social media can help companies build relationships with their customers and followers, create content that is shared and liked by others, and develop innovative marketing strategies that appeal to a broad audience. Social media marketing is essential strategy businesses use to connect with current and potential customers. It allows companies to target specific groups of people with customized messages, increasing their chance of being heard.

Disadvantages of Social Media Marketing

Security and privacy concern the most in using social media. Most people need to trust Web companies completely, and thus, they hesitate to offer information about themselves in cyberspace. When companies that collect data are exposed to scammers and spammers, this is especially true. Adopting a sound policy and implementing a fool-proof security measure becomes imperative for e-businesses. Encryption systems are a tool that online companies should seriously consider for investment.

According to Shibani, D., and Jyoti. (2016), there are no perfect metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing. There are no set answers as to how to measure the ROI of any channel or whether there are any standards for using social media for marketing purposes. So, while businesses know the need to spend on social platforms, they must learn to measure which channel works best for their industry and business. Thus, it is a subjective judgment made by business houses and may not be perfect. Analytics is developing sophisticated tools for measuring the effectiveness of digital marketing and should throw some light on the business houses.

Impersonal service may be another significant problem since digital methods of providing customer service are used by businesses operating online. Sometimes customers perceived this as just too impersonal or uncaring. Merchants must develop efficient checkout procedures for selling goods via the Web to address this problem. Hiring call-handling services is also considered so customers can talk to real people having questions about problems that need instant answers.

Meeting the expectations of a consumer base that is continually associated with is a significant challenge. It is not just about understanding what consumers want, as, or need right now — it is about envisioning trends and demands with the goal to time campaign flawlessly and to make a viral sensation. The greatest challenge confronting digital marketers nowadays is abundance. If companies have enough accessibility, then it would increase responsibility. Marketers are currently expected to administer vast volumes of content over various platforms, make unified experiences that turn visitors into fans, followers, and leads, and simultaneously measure the performance of everything with a specific end goal to settle on more informed marketing decisions. It takes work to keep up and stay ahead of the curve.

Information on the Internet may need to be updated. Update timing is a critical issue here. Many web visitors expect something for free. There is much competition in the market, and by the time a visitor reaches the product, they have already gone through many links and got the required product. They need to find what they are looking for quickly.

Social media marketing does require a lot of challenging work and effort. The social marketing industry is constantly changing. What is in demand for now, maybe different in the next few months, even next week. For this reason, we need to be continuously on the lookout for something that is a concerning area to survive. A broad range of products and services are available in the industry, so competition is tough. We must remember that we are just one selling products and services online. Just like us, there would be many different business owners who are selling the same services and products over the Internet. Internet users are more cautious here as there have been too many scams and hackers over the Web.

Adverse Effects of Social Media

While social media has its good side, many points to the platform and call out its opposite features, likening its overuse to an addiction. Some contest through social media contributes to inattentiveness, stress, and jealousy. The National Center for Biotechnology Information has found an association between heavy social media use with depression. Social media may also be a conduit for misleading information and falsehoods.

Social media is not entirely risk-free in business because many fans and followers can post their views on a specific organization. Negative feedback or comment can lead the organization to failure. Many large organizations have fallen victim to hackers. The wrong virtual brand strategy can doom a company and put it at a substantial viral social disadvantage. Getting involved with social media is very time-consuming. An organization should always assign someone to bolster pages and profiles with significant substance. Most companies need help to measure the results of social media advertising (Murugan T. and Richard, A. 2022).

Siddiqui, S. and Sing, T. 2016, reported in a paper that one of the adverse impacts of social media can be attributed to it making people addicted. People spend lots of time on social networking sites, which can divert concentration and focus from the task. Social media can easily affect kids, and sometimes people share photos and videos on media containing violence and negativities, which can affect the behavior of kids or teenagers. It also abuses society by invading people's privacy. Social lies can worsen family bonding as people spend more time connecting with new people. Some people use their images or videos on social sites, which can encourage others to use them falsely.

Another adverse effect of using social media is social media scams. Americans reported losing about \$770 million to fraud on social media last year, an 18-fold increase from 2017, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recently reported. According to the report released on Jan. 25, those losses account for one-quarter of all reported losses to fraud last year. While the losses increased across age groups, consumers ages 18 to 39 were more than twice as likely as older adults to report losing money to scams in 2021. The number of consumers that reported fraudulent schemes on social media more than doubled to 95,000 in 2021, up from 46,000 in 2020, the FTC said. However, investment scams were the No. 1 category of total reported dollar losses, followed by romance swindles.

Furthermore, most losses came from Americans who lost money to online shopping frauds. Most of the reports stemmed from online shopping swindles, where consumers ordered a product they spotted on social media, but it was never delivered. The report shows nine of 10 consumers purchased those products on Facebook or Instagram.

According to a report by the Mayo Clinic, the use of social media can adversely harm teens by creating a distraction, disrupting sleep, exposure to bullying, spreading rumors, irrational views of other people's lives, and peer pressure. In 2019, a study of more than 6,500 teens (12-15 years old) in the US found that spending more than three hours a day on social media might heighten the risk for

mental health issues. Another research in 2019 of more than 12,000 (13-16 years old) in England shows that teens who use social media more than three times may lead to poor mental health. Other studies also have observed associations between high use of social media and depression or anxiety symptoms.

Alternative Forms of Marketing Other Than Social Media

There are several alternatives other than social media available for marketing purposes. Those may be summarized as below listings:

Strengthen Product and Landing Pages: Keeping the website updated and fully functional is vital for maintaining visibility online. Several SEO best practices may be followed to start, such as:

- i. Identify and map out a general SEO strategy with keyword research and overall site map structure.
- ii. Create an organized set of landing pages and ensure intuitive navigation between them.
- iii. Update product pages and images. Be particularly aware of checkout and cart navigation.

Take Advantage of Blog: A blog is a place for content. There is more freedom with the type of content on these pages for landing and product pages. However, a marketer must stay relevant to the product and the shoppers' interests.

Advertise with Google and Register Business with Google: While Google's social media platform, Google+, has quietly been retired, there are other valuable ways for businesses to engage with the company. Google Ads is a suitable place to start. The business can be featured above the top results or the result on any page for a fee. The pricing is sliding; typically, websites with better content and traffic will get cheaper ads. Google constantly strives to give its users the best results on the Internet, including its ad platform.

Running a Consistent Email Marketing Campaign: It is easy, automated, and reaches a vast audience instantaneously by email marketing. Email marketing services are affordable, giving it a better average return on investment than any other marketing channel. Email marketing is also an excellent way to start A/B testing marketing results.

Making a Lot of Informative Videos: Google has started to value quality video content more highly. Users demand and respond to it more than most other sources of media. They can be fundamental technically. Many businesses are now hosting conversational videos or even producing podcasts.

Target Local Advertising: Thinking of a local area makes marketing more targeted and affordable. Social media advertising reaches many people but ends with low conversion percentages. A narrower approach should bring in new customers at higher rates and less cost. These advertising can be done through online and offline advertising:

- i. **Online Local Advertising:** A business should be optimized for local SEO to succeed in online local advertising. This online local advertising includes creating a Google Business account with up-to-date information, optimizing for voice search and mobile use, and focusing on local keywords.
- ii. **Offline Local Advertising:** Print ads are not dead yet, either. Without encouraging excessive waste (link how to reduce retail waste blog), handing out postcards, business cards, and flyers in coffee shops and bakeries are manageable ways of spreading the business's name. It will also add to the community's credibility.

Build a List of Past Customers: Building customer relationship management (CRM) might help, although this will lead to higher conversion rates than social media marketing. CRM means handling all interactions with past and potential customers. It helps retailers stay connected to their shoppers. It is easy to lapse from being a regular customer, so a friendly reminder can go a long way.

Get as Many Reviews as Possible: While still considered social media sites, we will treat online review platforms differently for the sake of this blog. The marketer has to preserve the review site profiles and verify the business with Yelp, FourSquare, Trip Advisor, and the like. This preservation permits adding information to the profile and interacting with reviewers (Chalberg, M. 2020).

Implications

The study found that most businesses recognize the significance of social media marketing in today's digital era. Social media provides businesses with a cost-effective way to reach potential customers, build brand awareness, and engage with their audience. Businesses that have invested in social media marketing have positively impacted their bottom line with increased website traffic, sales, and customer engagement. However, some businesses still question the necessity of social media marketing, citing concerns about ROI and the time and resources required. Some businesses also believe social media is irrelevant to their industry or target audience.

Several studies have shown the effectiveness of social media marketing in promoting businesses. Social media has become an integral and critical aspect of the customer journey in the present time. Social media marketing has several advantages over traditional marketing methods. It is more cost-effective, provides outstanding targeting capabilities, and allows real-time customer engagement. Social media also enables businesses to build customer relationships and create brand loyalty.

Despite the benefits of social media marketing, some businesses still question its necessity. Measuring the ROI of social media marketing can be challenging, and some businesses need help to quantify the impact of social media on their bottom line. Another concern is the time and resources required for social media marketing. Creating engaging content, managing varying social media accounts, and responding to customer queries can be time-consuming. Some businesses may need more resources to manage social media effectively.

Conclusion

Social media marketing has become crucial for businesses to promote their products or services, engage with customers, and build brand awareness. While some businesses still question its necessity, most recognize social media's importance in today's digital age. Social media provides businesses cost-effectiveness to reach potential customers, build relationships, and create brand loyalty. However, measuring the ROI of social media marketing can be challenging, and businesses need to invest time and resources to manage their social media effectively.

Today, business owners have more marketing options than ever, so relying on just one or two is incredibly foolish. Plus, using multiple channels will increase brand awareness and name recognition. Each outlet will support the rest. Learning about every digital marketing tool and channel takes time and effort. Moreover, once done so, it is even more challenging to choose which are worth allocating time and money towards. Plus, there is always more that can be done, leaving many business owners stressed out and overwhelmed. Indeed, website design, eCommerce platforms, product images and descriptions, social media ads, content marketing, SEO tools, email marketing, search engine advertising, and video creation are just a few ways retail businesses should use digital marketing strategies (Chalberg, M. 2020).

Several researchers worked on related topics analyzed in the paper. Nevertheless, less focus is given to identifying whether to depend on social media mainly for marketing purposes or whether there can be a choice of other means how the marketers can ensure the best use of social media platforms. Therefore, the author has tried to identify and fill this gap for which published materials are based on social media marketing. The paper has a limitation in the availability of relevant literature as most papers focus on other areas rather than suggesting a suitable marketing medium in today's digital world.

The present study sheds light on the usefulness of social media and marketing through social platforms as well as the opposing sides of it to provide direction for future research on this topic. However, social media is evident today, whether in business or personal life, and measures should be taken to encourage responsible use and limit some of its adverse effects. Productive utilization should be the main priority for all, including marketers, companies, businesses, and end users. Thus, social media could generate a more noticeable positive impact for all.

Acknowledgement

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, M. T. K.; methodology, M. T. K.; validation, M. T. K.; formal analysis, M. T. K.; investigation, M. T. K.; resources, M. T. K.; writing—original draft preparation, M. T. K.; writing—review and editing, M. T. K.

Funding: There was no funding used in this research.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to restrictions.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Alalwan, A. A., Rana, N. P., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Algharabat, R. (2017). Social media in marketing: A review and analysis of the existing literature. *Telematics and Informatics*, 34(7), 1177-1190. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2017.05.008>.
- Ali, Z., Shabbir, M.A., Rauf, M., & Hussain, A. (2016). To Assess the Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Perception. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Sciences*, 6, 69-77.
- Anwar, M. (2019). Social Media Makes Things Possible for Librarians: A Critical Note. *Am J Biomed Sci & Res*. V 6(1). AJBSR.MS.ID.000985. <https://doi.org/10.34297/AJBSR.2019.06.000985>
- Appel, G. et al. (2019). The future of social media in marketing, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00695-1>
- Ara Eti, I., Horaira, M. A., & Bari, M. M. (2021). Power and stimulus of social media marketing on consumer purchase intention in Bangladesh during the COVID-19. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147- 4478)*, 10(1), 28–37. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v10i1.1011>.
- Arrigo, E. (2018). Social media marketing in luxury brands. *Manag. Res. Rev.* 41, 657–679. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-04-2017-0134>.
- Bharti, P. K. and Kumar, A. (2020). *Traditional vs. Digital Marketing: A Comparative Study*. *ZENITH International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 10 (12), December (2020), Impact Factor: 7.188.

- Bhojarajal, and Muniraju, M. (2012). Challenges and Opportunities in Digital Marketing. *IAETSD journal for advanced research in applied sciences*. 5(1)<http://iaetsdjaras.org/gallery/23-january-402.pdf>.
- Chalberg, M. (2020). Digital Marketing Alternatives to Social Media for Retail Businesses. Retrieved from <https://koronapos.com/blog/digital-marketing-alternatives-to-social-media/>
- Chauhan, G. Is Internet Marketing an Opportunity for Modern Business. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/5887355/Is_Internet_Marketing_An_Opportunity_for_Modern_Business_
- Cheung, M. L., Pires, G. D., Rosenberger, P. J. III, Leung, W. K. S., and Ting, H. (2021). Investigating the role of social media marketing on value co-creation and engagement: An empirical study in China and Hong Kong. *Austral. Marke. J.* 29, 118–131. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2020.03.006>.
- Chowdhury, A. (2018). Facebook launches ads in the marketplace. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y8kf5g4t>.
- Coltman, T., (2007). Why build a customer relationship management capability? *J. Strategic Information Systems*. 16(3), 301–320.
- Di Minin, E., Fink, C., Hausmann, A., Kremer, J., and Kulkarni, R. (2021). How to address data privacy concerns when using social media data in conservation science. *Conservat. Biol.* 35, 437–446. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.13708>.
- Erlangga, H. (2021). Effect Of Digital Marketing and Social Media on Purchase Intention of SMEs Food Products. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education*. 12(3): 3672–3678, <https://doi.org/10.17762/turncoat.v12i3.1648>.
- Faruk, M., Rahman, M., & Hasan, S. (2021). How digital marketing evolved: A bibliometric analysis on Scopus database. *Heliyon*, 7.
- FTC Warns Social Media Users About Advertising Scams, Retrieved from <https://www.pymnts.com/news/security-and-risk/2022/ftc-looks-to-stop-dk-automation-selling-alleged-fake-business-opportunities/>
- Grewal, L., Stephen, A. T., & Coleman, N. V. (2019). When Posting About Products on Social Media Backfires: The Negative Effects of Consumer Identity Signaling on Product Interest. *Journal of Marketing Research*. 56(2), 197–210. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022243718821960>
- Hafez, M. (2021). The impact of social media marketing activities on brand equity in the banking sector in Bangladesh: the mediating role of brand love and brand trust. *International J. Bank Marke.* 39, 1353–1376. <https://10.1108/IJBM-02-2021-0067>.
- Hafez, M. (2022). Unpacking the influence of social media marketing activities on brand equity in the banking sector in Bangladesh: A moderated mediation analysis of brand experience and perceived uniqueness. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights*, 2(2), 100140. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jjime.2022.100140>.
- Ibrahim, B. (2022). Social media marketing activities and brand loyalty: A meta-analysis examination. *J. Promot. Manag.*, 28(1), 60–90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2021.1955080>
- Jamil, K., Dunnan, L., Gul, R. F., Shehzad, M.U., Gillani, S. H. M., and Awan, F.H. (2022). Role of Social Media Marketing Activities in Influencing Customer Intentions: A Perspective of a New Emerging Era. *Front. Psychol.* 12:808525. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.808525>.
- Karl, (2022). The 15 Biggest Social Media Sites and Apps. Retrieved from <https://www.dreamgrow.com/top-15-most-popular-social-networking-sites/>
- Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(10), 1480-1486. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.10.014>.
- Kumar, R. T., and Marimuthu, K.N. An Overview of Digital vs. Traditional Marketing Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/36424984/An_overview_of_Digital_vs_Traditional_marketing_doc.
- Liu, X., Shin, H., & Burns, A. C. (2021). Examining the impact of luxury brand's social media marketing on customer engagement: Using big data analytics and natural language processing. *J. Bus. Res.* 125, 815–826. <https://doi.org/10.1016/2019.04.042>.
- Murugan T. and Richard, A. (2022). The Positive and Negative Aspects of Social Media. *International Journal of Social Sciences: Current and Future Research Trends* (IJSSCFRT)9. 13(1, pp 95-103.
- Nugroho, S. D. P., Rahayu, M., & Hapsari, R. D. V. (2022). The impacts of social media influencer's credibility attributes on gen Z purchase intention with brand image as mediation: Study on consumers of Korea cosmetic product. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science* (2147- 4478), 11(5), 18–32. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v11i5.1893>.
- Nyagadza, B. (2020). Search engine marketing and social media marketing predictive trends. *Journal of Digital Media & Policy*.
- Parsons, A. L., & Lepkowska-White, E. (2018). Social media marketing management: A conceptual framework. *J. Internet Commerce*. 17, 81–95. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332861.2018.1433910>.
- Pascalau, V. S. and Urziceanu, R. M. (2020). Traditional Marketing Versus Digital Marketing. *Agora International Journal of Economical Sciences*. AIJES. ISSN 2067-3310, E - ISSN 2067 – 7669, VOL. 14.
- Sabahat, W. Shabbir, S. and Musavir, M. (2022), *SMW FINAL DOC. | PDF | Popular Culture & Media Studies | Social Media*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.scribd.com/document/606981282/SMW-FINAL-DOC>.
- Shibani, D., & Jyoti. (2016). Digital Marketing: As an Opportunity or Problem in today Competitive Era. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/32444416/Digital_Marketing_As_an_Opportunity_or_Problem_in_today_Competitive_Era_
- Siddiqui, S. & Sing, T. (2016). Social Media its Impact with Positive and Negative Aspects. Retrieved from *International Journal of Computer Applications Technology and Research*. 5(2) 71–75

- Sirola, A., Kaakinen, M., Savolainen, I., Paek, H.-J., Zych, I., and Oksanen, A. (2021). Online identities and social influence in social media gambling exposure: A four-country study on young people. *Telematics Inform.* 60:101582. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2021.101582>.
- Suman, C., Chaudhary, R. S., Saha, S., & Bhattacharyya, P. (2021). An attention based multi-modal gender identification system for social media users. *Mult. Tools Appl.* 1183. pp. 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1109/access.2021.3136552>.
- Tafesse, W., and Wien, A. (2018). Implementing social media marketing strategically: an empirical assessment. *J. Marke. Manag.* 34. 732–749. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257.2018.x.1482365>.
- Teens and social media use: What is the impact?* Retrieved from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/tween-and-teen-health/in-depth/teens-and-social-media-use/art-20474437>.
- Vinerean, A. O. (2015). A New Development in Online Marketing: Introducing Digital Inbound Marketing. *Expert Journal of Marketing.* 3 (1). 29-34.

Publisher's Note: SSBFNET stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



© 2023 by the authors. Licensee SSBFNET, Istanbul, Turkey. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147-4478) by SSBFNET is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.