

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Education
Midocean University
College of Entrepreneurship
Master of Entrepreneurship



تأثير التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على الشركات الجديدة

Influence of Social Media Marketing on New Businesses

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Academic Year: 2024/1446

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إهداء

أهدي هذا البحث إلى من قال الحق فيهما

وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا

إلى جميع من أسهم في دعمي وتشجيعي خلال مسيرتي الأكاديمية، إلى عائلتي التي كانت منشأ إلهام لي، وإلى أصدقائي الذين شاركوا برفقتي اللحظات الصعبة والجميلة. كما أوجه شكري إلى أساتذتي الذين نقلوا لي معرفتهم وخبراتهم. أتمنى أن يكون هذا العمل إضافة في مجالي وأن يأخذ دورا في تحقيق الغايات التي أسعى إليها.

شكر وتقدير

بعد شكر الله تعالى وحمده، يسرّني أن أقول شكرًا لكلّ حلمٍ بدأ صغيرًا ثم ازدان وكبر بفضل أبي وأمي، شكرًا لأساتذتي الأفاضل، ولكلّ من زرعوا الخير في دربي وجعلوني أقبل على العلم بشغفٍ وتميّز، شكرًا لكلّ من قال لي كلمة خير تُعينني على الوصول، ولكلّ من آمن بي ودفعني إلى أن أكون مخلصًا في طلب العلم، شكرًا لمن كانوا لي السند والقوة عندما كنت أوشك على الوقوع، ولكلّ من ابتسموا في وجهي عندما أوشكت على اليأس، واليوم وأنا أقدم هذا البحث العلمي الذي أخذ مني جهدًا ووقتًا ودراسة، يسرّني أن أفخر بكلّ معلومة كتبناها؛ لأنّها نتاج تعب وجهد مبارك جاء بفضل الله وتوفيقه وتيسيره.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	5
List Of Table	6
List Of Figure	6
Abstract	7
Chapter One: Research Foundation	8
Introduction	8
Research Problem	10
Research Objectives	11
Research Significance	13
Research Hypotheses	16
Research Boundaries	17
Study Methodology	18
Study Data Types	19
Research Sample	21
Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	22
Introduction	22
Literature Review	24
Saudi Arabia's Social Media Landscape	30
Cognitive Framework of the Study	31
Foreign Studies	36
Chapter Three: Methodology	42
Introduction	42
Research Design	43
Results	47
Chapter Four: Results	50
Introduction	50
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	51
Testing Study Hypotheses	54
Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion	58
Discussion	58

Recommendations	64
Conclusion.....	68
Reference:	69

List Of Table

TABLE 1 AVERAGE LIKERT SCALE SCORES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IMPACT	47
TABLE 2 RELIABILITY TESTING	48
TABLE 3 SCATTER PLOT OF ENGAGEMENT VS. AWARENESS	49
TABLE 4 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS	51
TABLE 5 SUMMARIZE THE RESPONSES.....	52
TABLE 6 MAIN HYPOTHESIS	54
TABLE 7 SUB-HYPOTHESES:	55
TABLE 8 CORRELATION MATRIX BETWEEN MAIN AXES	57

List Of Figure

FIGURE 1 AVERAGE LIKERT SCALE SCORES ON SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IMPACT	48
FIGURE 2 : SCATTER PLOT OF ENGAGEMENT VS. AWARENESS.....	50
FIGURE 3 RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE AXES.....	53
FIGURE 4 SUB-HYPOTHESES	56

Abstract

Social media marketing (SMM) has emerged as a pivotal tool for businesses in the modern digital economy, offering innovative ways to connect with customers and establish brand presence. This study investigates the impact of SMM on the growth and sustainability of new businesses. The research aims to explore the role of SMM in enhancing customer acquisition, improving brand visibility, and driving sales. A mixed-methods approach was employed, utilizing surveys and case studies to gather data from startups across various industries. The findings reveal that effective SMM strategies, such as consistent content quality and active consumer engagement, significantly boost brand awareness and customer retention. The study concludes with practical recommendations for entrepreneurs, emphasizing the need to focus on platform-specific strategies and leveraging metrics to refine marketing efforts. These results contribute to the growing body of knowledge on SMM and its critical role in the success of new businesses.

Chapter One: Research Foundation

Introduction

Social media marketing (SMM) is a dynamic and innovative approach to promoting products and services through online platforms that facilitate interaction, communication, and engagement with target audiences. As technology continues to evolve, social media platforms have transformed from simple communication tools into powerful business ecosystems. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and TikTok enable businesses to reach millions of users worldwide, providing unparalleled opportunities for brand exposure, customer interaction, and sales generation (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

For new businesses, which often face constraints such as limited resources, small budgets, and lack of market visibility, SMM has become a lifeline. Unlike traditional marketing methods that require substantial investment and time, SMM offers cost-effective solutions to reach a global audience instantly. By leveraging the power of social media, startups can quickly establish their presence, build relationships with customers, and compete effectively with established brands (Chaffey & Smith, 2017).

The importance of SMM lies in its ability to provide businesses with measurable outcomes.

Through advanced analytics and reporting tools available on platforms like Meta (Facebook and

Instagram) and Google Analytics, businesses can track engagement metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and click-through rates. These metrics allow businesses to evaluate their marketing strategies, understand customer behavior, and optimize campaigns for better results (Tuten & Solomon, 2018).

Moreover, the global adoption of smartphones and the increasing reliance on digital communication have amplified the significance of SMM. Consumers now spend a significant portion of their day browsing social media, making these platforms indispensable for connecting with potential customers. SMM enables businesses to target specific demographics based on factors such as age, gender, interests, and location, ensuring that marketing efforts are highly tailored and efficient (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

The role of SMM extends beyond mere promotion. It fosters customer loyalty, encourages user-generated content, and creates opportunities for real-time interaction between businesses and consumers. These interactions not only enhance customer satisfaction but also provide invaluable insights into consumer preferences and trends. Additionally, the viral nature of social media can amplify the reach of marketing campaigns, transforming small businesses into global players overnight (Felix et al., 2017).

In today's hyper-competitive and digitally-driven economy, social media marketing is no longer optional but essential for the survival and growth of new businesses. By understanding the intricacies of SMM and implementing effective strategies, startups can build strong brands,

attract loyal customers, and achieve sustainable growth. This study explores the transformative impact of SMM on new businesses, focusing on its role in enhancing brand visibility, driving customer acquisition, and boosting overall business performance. Through a detailed analysis of strategies, metrics, and platforms, this research aims to provide actionable insights for entrepreneurs navigating the social media landscape.

Research Problem

This study addresses the question: "How does social media marketing impact the growth and sustainability of new businesses?" Startups often operate in resource-constrained environments and face intense competition from established companies and other emerging businesses. These challenges are particularly pronounced in Saudi Arabia, where the government's push for entrepreneurship, under initiatives such as Vision 2030, has resulted in a significant increase in the number of startups entering the market (Saudi Vision 2030, 2023). Despite the supportive environment, many startups struggle to build visibility and sustain operations, making it critical to understand strategies that foster growth.

Social media marketing (SMM) offers an accessible and cost-effective approach for businesses to connect directly with their target audience (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and TikTok, which have a high user base in Saudi Arabia, provide businesses with opportunities to build brand awareness, foster customer loyalty, and compete effectively in a dynamic digital landscape (Statista, 2023). However, understanding the effectiveness of SMM within the Saudi community requires careful exploration of cultural

preferences, platform-specific usage patterns, and the unique behaviors of local consumers. By investigating how SMM drives growth and sustainability, this study aims to provide valuable insights to help startups overcome barriers and thrive in the competitive marketplace.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are tailored to address the specific challenges and opportunities faced by startups, especially within the Saudi context:

Examine the Role of SMM in Acquiring New Customers

Customer acquisition is vital for the survival and growth of new businesses. This study seeks to explore how SMM campaigns, such as targeted ads, influencer collaborations, and user-generated content, can attract and convert potential customers into loyal buyers (Gómez et al., 2019). In Saudi Arabia, the prevalence of social media influencers and their strong following makes influencer marketing a particularly promising avenue to examine (Alalwan et al., 2017).

Analyze How SMM Strategies Enhance Brand Visibility

Brand recognition and visibility are essential for building trust and attracting customers. The study will explore the role of creative content strategies, such as culturally relevant campaigns during Ramadan or Saudi National Day, in increasing visibility among Saudi consumers. These events offer unique opportunities for businesses to connect with their audience on a deeper level, leveraging shared values and traditions (Alqahtani et al., 2022).

Investigate the Relationship Between Engagement Metrics and Business Performance

Engagement metrics, including likes, comments, shares, and views, provide a measure of how effectively businesses connect with their audience. This study aims to understand how these metrics translate into tangible business outcomes, such as increased foot traffic, higher sales, or enhanced customer loyalty. For instance, the study will investigate whether engagement on platforms like TikTok or Snapchat correlates with improved sales performance in Saudi startups (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Evaluate the Effectiveness of Specific Social Media Platforms in Driving Sales for New Businesses

Different social media platforms cater to varying demographics and serve unique purposes. In Saudi Arabia, platforms like Snapchat and Instagram are popular among younger audiences, while LinkedIn is widely used by professionals. This study will assess which platforms are most effective in driving sales for startups, considering the preferences and behaviors of Saudi consumers (Statista, 2023). It will also explore platform-specific strategies, such as using TikTok for viral content or leveraging LinkedIn for B2B marketing.

Research Significance

Practical Importance

The practical importance of this study lies in its potential to equip entrepreneurs and marketers, particularly in Saudi Arabia, with actionable insights on how to leverage social media marketing (SMM) to achieve business objectives. Saudi Arabia has a rapidly growing startup ecosystem, with the government heavily investing in entrepreneurship through Vision 2030, which aims to diversify the economy and foster innovation (Saudi Vision 2030, 2023). Social media has become an essential tool for startups to establish brand presence, reach customers, and create competitive advantages.

Given the Saudi market's increasing digitalization, with over 90% of the population actively using social media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter, the ability to effectively utilize these channels is critical for business success (Statista, 2023). For entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia, where traditional marketing methods may be cost-prohibitive, SMM offers a cost-effective alternative that can yield significant results in terms of customer acquisition, engagement, and retention (Alalwan et al., 2017).

By examining the relationship between social media strategies and business growth, this study provides practical recommendations that can guide new businesses in creating optimized social media campaigns. Entrepreneurs can learn how to tailor their content to resonate with the local culture, capitalize on specific regional trends, and understand which social media platforms are most effective for driving sales in different business sectors. Moreover, the study could help

businesses assess their current social media practices and suggest adjustments to improve engagement and ultimately, financial performance.

For marketers, the study offers insights into the importance of engagement metrics, influencer collaborations, and how creating culturally relevant content can build lasting customer loyalty. In a market like Saudi Arabia, where consumer behavior is strongly influenced by local traditions and values, integrating cultural sensitivity into SMM strategies could significantly enhance brand loyalty (Alqahtani et al., 2022).

Theoretical Importance

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the academic understanding of social media marketing (SMM) as a pivotal element in the growth and sustainability of new businesses, especially in emerging markets like Saudi Arabia. While existing literature provides substantial knowledge on SMM's effectiveness in larger, more established markets, there is a significant gap in research related to the role of SMM in the context of Saudi startups. This study fills that gap by examining how startups can use social media to build a strong brand identity, foster customer

relationships, and improve sales performance within the unique socio-cultural and economic landscape of Saudi Arabia.

Furthermore, this research provides a conceptual framework that links SMM activities, such as content quality, platform usage, and engagement metrics, to business performance outcomes like customer retention, brand visibility, and sales growth. It also addresses the need for localized marketing strategies that incorporate cultural factors, a dimension that is often overlooked in global SMM studies (Dwivedi et al., 2021). By doing so, the study enriches the broader field of digital marketing by emphasizing the importance of cultural alignment and regional consumer behavior in shaping successful marketing campaigns.

This study also opens avenues for future research by offering a foundation for exploring the evolving nature of SMM strategies and their impact on business outcomes in specific regions. Future studies could delve deeper into emerging platforms like TikTok, investigate the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in enhancing customer engagement, or explore the long-term effects of influencer marketing on brand equity in Saudi Arabia.

By extending the theoretical understanding of SMM's role in new business success, this research contributes to a growing body of literature that can inform both academic scholars and industry practitioners. It also serves as a reference point for further investigations into the digital marketing practices of businesses operating in emerging markets, especially in the Middle East.

Research Hypotheses

H1: Social media marketing significantly improves customer acquisition for new businesses.

Social media marketing (SMM) offers startups the ability to reach a vast audience with limited resources, making it an invaluable tool for customer acquisition. In the Saudi context, where digital penetration is high (over 90% of the population uses the internet), social media platforms provide a direct, cost-effective method for new businesses to interact with potential customers (Statista, 2023). This hypothesis posits that businesses leveraging social media marketing can attract new customers at a faster rate than those relying solely on traditional marketing channels.

H2: High engagement metrics, such as likes and shares, correlate with increased revenue.

Engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and comments are key indicators of audience interaction with content, which has been shown to drive business success. In Saudi Arabia, social media users are highly active, and engagement on platforms like Instagram and Snapchat can directly influence purchasing behavior (Alalwan et al., 2017). For startups in Saudi Arabia, positive engagement can lead to stronger brand visibility and customer loyalty, which in turn can translate to increased revenue.

H3: Platform-specific strategies are more effective than generalized approaches.

Given the diversity of social media platforms, each with its unique user demographic and interaction style, platform-specific strategies may prove more effective than generalized

marketing approaches. In Saudi Arabia, platforms like Instagram are popular for visual and lifestyle-oriented content, while Twitter is used for real-time updates and discussions (Alqahtani et al., 2022). This hypothesis posits that new businesses that tailor their content and strategies to the unique strengths of each platform will achieve better results compared to those using a one-size-fits-all approach.

Research Boundaries

Spatial Boundaries

This research focuses on startups operating in Saudi Arabia, a rapidly growing market in the Middle East, particularly in cities like Riyadh, Jeddah. These cities are known for their dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystems and high social media usage. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has spurred digital transformation and encouraged entrepreneurship, making it an ideal location to study the impact of social media marketing (SMM) on new businesses.

Thematic Boundaries

The thematic scope of this study is primarily centered on the impact of social media marketing on new businesses, specifically examining customer acquisition, brand visibility, and sales growth. The research excludes other forms of marketing such as traditional advertising or email marketing, focusing solely on the use of social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat) for business promotion and consumer engagement.

Temporal Boundaries

The time frame for data collection spans six months, from January to June 2024. This period allows for the examination of short-term social media marketing campaigns and their immediate effects on business performance.

Human Boundaries

The human scope of this research involves entrepreneurs, marketers, and business owners of startups based in Saudi Arabia. These individuals are directly responsible for creating and implementing social media marketing strategies for their businesses.

Study Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively understand the impact of social media marketing (SMM) on new businesses. The quantitative aspect involves analyzing numerical data to evaluate metrics such as customer acquisition rates, brand visibility, and sales growth. The qualitative component includes insights from interviews and case studies to explore the underlying reasons and strategies that make SMM effective. This dual approach ensures a holistic understanding of the topic, enabling the triangulation of findings for enhanced reliability and validity.

Study Data Types

Primary Data

This study relies on the following primary data sources:

Books:

Academic and industry-focused books on social media marketing, digital marketing strategies, and startup growth provide foundational knowledge and theoretical frameworks.

Example: Social Media Marketing: A Strategic Approach by Barker et al. (2022).

Scientific Journals:

Peer-reviewed articles from journals like the Journal of Marketing and Journal of Business Research offer insights into recent developments, case studies, and empirical research on the effectiveness of SMM for startups.

Example: A study from the Journal of Interactive Marketing on the impact of customer engagement metrics on business performance.

Studies:

Published research and white papers that focus on specific regions, including the Middle East and Saudi Arabia, provide context-relevant insights.

Example: Research conducted on the adoption of SMM by small and medium enterprises in Saudi Arabia, highlighting its role in achieving growth under Vision 2030.

Secondary Data

Secondary data includes information collected from pre-existing sources, which is used to support and contextualize primary data findings. In this study, secondary data sources include:

Surveys:

Existing surveys conducted by marketing agencies or academic institutions that explore consumer behavior, platform preferences, and the overall impact of SMM strategies. These surveys offer benchmark data for comparison with the study's findings.

Example: A Statista report on social media platform usage in Saudi Arabia.

Social Media Analytics:

Pre-analyzed data from tools like Google Analytics, Meta Insights (Facebook and Instagram), and Twitter Analytics provide quantitative measures of engagement metrics, platform performance, and traffic patterns.

Example: Reports showing the number of impressions, click-through rates, and conversion rates from social media campaigns.

Research Sample

Target Group: Startups and small businesses operating in Saudi Arabia, particularly in industries like technology, retail, and services.

Sample Size: 50 startups and 20 marketing professionals, selected through stratified sampling to ensure representation across industries and business sizes.

Geographic Focus: Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam, given their prominence as business hubs in Saudi Arabia.

Study Terms

Social Media Marketing (SMM):

The use of social media platforms to promote products or services, build brand awareness, and engage with customers.

Engagement Metrics:

Measurable indicators of consumer interaction with social media content, including likes, shares, comments, and click-through rates.

Brand Visibility:

The extent to which a brand is recognized and perceived by its target audience on social media platforms.

Customer Acquisition:

The process of gaining new customers through marketing efforts, measured by the number of leads converted into paying customers.

Sales Growth:

An increase in revenue attributed to marketing activities, including the use of social media platforms.

Startups:

Newly established businesses, often characterized by limited resources and innovative approaches to market entry.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter serves as a cornerstone for understanding the pivotal role of social media marketing (SMM) in shaping the growth trajectories of new businesses. It systematically explores the

theoretical, cognitive, and empirical foundations that contribute to the effective implementation of SMM strategies. By synthesizing insights from a wealth of scholarly and industry research, the chapter contextualizes the significance of SMM in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

Social media has emerged as a dominant marketing channel in the 21st century, fundamentally transforming how businesses connect with their audiences. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, and Facebook have become indispensable tools for startups aiming to enhance their visibility and compete in saturated markets. With its cost-effectiveness and ability to engage with specific demographics in real time, SMM has become particularly relevant for startups that often operate on constrained budgets. This chapter examines these platforms' strategic potential, highlighting their role in enabling businesses to build relationships, foster trust, and achieve measurable growth.

Furthermore, the chapter situates the study within the socio-cultural and economic context of Saudi Arabia, a country undergoing significant digital transformation driven by Vision 2030. With one of the world's highest rates of social media penetration, Saudi Arabia offers a unique case study for exploring how cultural nuances and digital behaviors influence SMM strategies. For instance, platforms like Snapchat and TikTok enjoy immense popularity among the Saudi youth, presenting businesses with opportunities to craft culturally relevant campaigns that resonate deeply with local audiences.

The chapter also delves into the key theories and cognitive frameworks that underpin the research, providing a structured approach to understanding the mechanisms through which SMM impacts customer engagement, brand awareness, and overall business performance. The integration of Arab and global studies offers a balanced perspective, allowing for comparative analysis and highlighting universal trends alongside region-specific dynamics.

By summarizing related theories and existing research, the chapter lays a robust groundwork for addressing the research problem and objectives. It identifies gaps in the current literature and provides a compelling rationale for the study, setting the stage for the development of actionable insights that can guide entrepreneurs, marketers, and policymakers in leveraging SMM for business success. This comprehensive approach ensures that the chapter not only informs the current study but also contributes to the broader academic discourse on digital marketing and entrepreneurial strategies.

Literature Review

The Role of Social Media in Modern Marketing

Social media has fundamentally transformed the landscape of marketing, evolving from a communication channel into a dynamic ecosystem where businesses and consumers actively engage. This transformation has provided businesses with cost-effective platforms that allow them to build their brand presence, reach targeted audiences, and drive customer interactions. Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter have not only bridged the gap between businesses and consumers but have also introduced real-time engagement as a pivotal element in modern marketing strategies.

These platforms enable businesses to tailor their marketing messages to specific demographics and psychographics, ensuring that their campaigns resonate with their intended audience. For instance, TikTok's short-form, creative videos are ideal for engaging younger audiences, while LinkedIn's professional network is more suited for B2B marketing strategies and professional brand building (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). By leveraging these platforms' unique features, businesses can communicate more effectively, build trust, and foster loyalty.

One of the critical advantages of social media marketing is its reliance on data-driven decision-making. Advanced analytics tools integrated into social media platforms enable businesses to track performance metrics such as reach, impressions, engagement rates, click-through rates, and conversions. This data empowers marketers to refine their strategies and optimize campaigns in real-time, ensuring higher returns on investment (ROI). Studies have shown that businesses leveraging these insights experience improved customer acquisition rates and better overall marketing performance compared to traditional marketing methods (Kumar et al., 2022).

Moreover, social media fosters direct interaction with customers, which is crucial for startups and new businesses aiming to build a loyal customer base. Through mechanisms like comments, direct messaging, and user-generated content, businesses can engage in two-way communication, addressing customer queries, receiving feedback, and showcasing authenticity. This interaction creates an emotional connection between the brand and its customers, which is essential for long-term success.

In Saudi Arabia, the role of social media in marketing is particularly significant due to high digital penetration rates and a culturally diverse population. Platforms like Snapchat and TikTok dominate the Saudi market, especially among younger audiences, offering businesses opportunities to create culturally relevant and innovative campaigns. The Saudi Vision 2030 initiative, which emphasizes digital transformation, further highlights the importance of leveraging social media for economic and entrepreneurial growth (Alshammari & Alqahtani, 2023).

In conclusion, the role of social media in modern marketing extends beyond traditional advertising. It serves as a comprehensive tool for brand building, customer engagement, data-driven decision-making, and fostering customer loyalty. By understanding and utilizing the features and analytics of different platforms, businesses can craft personalized, impactful, and measurable marketing strategies that align with their goals and resonate with their target audiences.

Challenges and Opportunities for Startups in SMM

Challenges

Budget Constraints:

Startups typically have limited financial resources, which restricts their ability to compete with larger corporations for premium advertising slots. Paid campaigns on social media platforms such as Instagram and LinkedIn can be costly, especially when targeting competitive industries.

This limitation often forces startups to prioritize organic growth strategies, which may take longer to yield results.

Content Saturation:

The exponential growth of content creation on social media platforms has led to content oversaturation, making it difficult for startups to capture user attention. With users exposed to thousands of ads daily, businesses must develop highly creative and engaging content to stand out. This challenge is further compounded by ever-changing algorithms that favor content from well-established accounts or advertisers willing to pay for greater reach (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

Navigating Algorithm Changes:

Social media platforms frequently update their algorithms to enhance user experience, which can inadvertently hinder organic reach for business accounts. Startups, lacking the data and expertise of larger firms, often struggle to adapt quickly to these changes.

Limited Expertise:

Many startups lack the in-house expertise to develop effective SMM strategies. This gap often leads to missed opportunities in leveraging advanced tools like A/B testing, audience segmentation, and analytics for campaign optimization.

Opportunities

Low Cost of Entry:

Social media platforms provide a level playing field where startups can create profiles and post content at little to no cost. Unlike traditional advertising methods, which often require significant upfront investment, social media offers an affordable entry point for businesses looking to build brand awareness and engage with their target audiences.

Global Reach:

Social media allows startups to transcend geographical limitations, reaching audiences far beyond their immediate locality. For Saudi startups, this is particularly valuable as they aim to penetrate regional or international markets, aligning with the objectives of Vision 2030. With

targeted advertising tools, businesses can customize their campaigns based on location, demographics, and interests, ensuring optimal reach and relevance.

Building Communities:

Social media offers startups the opportunity to build and nurture online communities around their brands. Through engaging content, consistent communication, and responsiveness, startups can foster loyalty and advocacy among their customers.

Influencer Marketing:

Collaborating with influencers has become an effective strategy for startups to reach specific audiences. Saudi Arabia, with its vibrant influencer culture, offers startups a chance to partner with local and regional influencers who resonate with their target demographic, helping amplify their reach and credibility.

The Evolution of Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior has undergone a significant transformation in the digital age, particularly with the rise of social media. Today's consumers are not only influenced by traditional advertising but also by peer recommendations, influencer endorsements, and personalized content. This shift underscores the growing importance of user-generated content and reviews in shaping purchasing decisions.

Social commerce has emerged as a pivotal trend, allowing consumers to make purchases directly within social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook. This seamless integration has shortened the consumer journey, providing a frictionless shopping experience. Businesses that leverage these features effectively can capitalize on impulse buying and improved conversion rates (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Furthermore, consumers increasingly expect brands to maintain a strong online presence, interact promptly, and address their concerns transparently. For startups, meeting these expectations can enhance brand trust and customer loyalty.

Saudi Arabia's Social Media Landscape

Saudi Arabia stands out as a global leader in social media adoption, with some of the highest penetration rates worldwide. Platforms like Snapchat, TikTok, and Twitter dominate the Saudi market, especially among younger audiences. This digital inclination is further supported by the Saudi Vision 2030 initiative, which encourages innovation, entrepreneurship, and digital transformation as part of the country's economic diversification goals.

Cultural Influence:

Saudi culture places significant value on community and connection, making social media a natural extension of daily life. Platforms like Snapchat and TikTok are particularly popular because they align with Saudi users' preference for visual and interactive content.

Economic Backdrop:

The economic reforms under Vision 2030, such as initiatives to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups, have created a fertile environment for businesses to thrive. Startups leveraging social media can align their marketing efforts with national initiatives, gaining visibility and support from both customers and government programs.

Localized Campaigns:

With a young and tech-savvy population, startups can design campaigns that resonate culturally, incorporating elements of Saudi traditions while embracing modern trends. This blend of tradition and innovation can strengthen customer connections and foster brand loyalty.

Cognitive Framework of the Study

The cognitive framework explores how startups conceptualize and execute social media marketing (SMM) strategies to drive growth and sustainability. It emphasizes the underlying thought processes and decision-making approaches that inform their marketing practices. This study focuses on three primary aspects:

Content Creation:

Content is at the heart of social media engagement. Startups must create high-quality, visually appealing, and relevant content tailored to their target audiences. By aligning content with customer interests and cultural preferences, businesses can enhance their reach and engagement. The cognitive process involves understanding customer needs, crafting resonant messages, and continuously iterating content based on performance metrics.

Customer Interaction:

Real-time interaction is a cornerstone of modern SMM strategies. Engaging directly with customers through comments, direct messages, and live sessions helps foster a sense of community and loyalty. Startups that invest in maintaining a dynamic online presence are more likely to cultivate trust and long-term relationships with their audience.

Data Utilization:

Analytics tools play a crucial role in deciphering customer behavior. Startups rely on data to identify emerging trends, understand preferences, and optimize their campaigns for better results. The cognitive framework includes how startups process this data to make informed decisions, such as refining audience targeting or reallocating budgets for higher ROI campaigns.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework establishes a foundation for understanding the dynamics of SMM and its impact on startup growth. Several theories are integral to this study:

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB):

The TPB posits that human actions are guided by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). For startups, this theory explains how their adoption of SMM strategies is shaped by their beliefs about its effectiveness, the societal expectation to be present online, and their perceived ability to execute successful campaigns.

Resource-Based View (RBV):

The RBV asserts that a firm's competitive advantage stems from its unique resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991). For startups, the ability to create innovative content, leverage proprietary data insights, and adapt quickly to social media trends represents key resources. Startups that effectively utilize these resources are better positioned to outpace competitors in the crowded digital landscape.

Social Exchange Theory:

This theory suggests that relationships are built on reciprocal exchanges, where both parties expect mutual benefits (Emerson, 1976). In SMM, startups provide value through engaging content, while customers reciprocate with loyalty, advocacy, and purchases. This dynamic underscores the importance of fostering meaningful interactions with audiences.

Influence of Cultural Factors on Social Media Marketing in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's unique cultural context plays a critical role in shaping the strategies businesses adopt for social media marketing (SMM). Cultural values in the Kingdom, deeply rooted in Islamic principles and traditional norms, dictate the type of content that resonates with the local audience. Understanding these cultural nuances is essential for startups to connect effectively with Saudi consumers.

Alignment with Islamic Principles

Islamic principles significantly influence societal norms and consumer behavior in Saudi Arabia. Businesses must ensure that their marketing campaigns align with these values. For instance:

Modesty: Content should be respectful and avoid overtly provocative imagery or messaging. This applies to both the visuals used in advertisements and the tone of the communication.

Halal Compliance: Products and services marketed in Saudi Arabia are expected to comply with Islamic guidelines. Marketing campaigns that highlight halal certification often gain consumer trust.

Importance of Family Values

Family is a cornerstone of Saudi culture, and marketing messages that emphasize family connections tend to resonate well. Social media campaigns that showcase products or services as family-friendly or highlight family-oriented themes can strengthen brand appeal. For example, a startup promoting dining services might focus on themes of togetherness and celebration with family.

Respect for Religious Practices

Social media campaigns must account for the religious calendar, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan and the Hajj season. During Ramadan, marketing efforts often focus on themes of spirituality, generosity, and togetherness, which align with the essence of the month. Businesses that adapt their campaigns to reflect these values are more likely to engage Saudi audiences meaningfully.

Leveraging Local Traditions

Saudi traditions, such as the celebration of Eid or National Day, offer opportunities for businesses to create culturally relevant campaigns. Startups can incorporate traditional symbols, colors, and themes to make their content more appealing and relatable.

Building Trust Through Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural sensitivity fosters trust and loyalty among Saudi consumers. Startups that respect and reflect Saudi traditions in their campaigns are seen as more credible. Additionally, collaborating with local influencers who understand and embody these cultural values can further enhance authenticity and reach.

Foreign Studies

1. Sécou TOURE (2022)

Research Title: Artificial Intelligence and the Uses and Capabilities of CRM in Social Media Marketing for SMEs in the Lille Metropolitan Area

Summary:

Sécou TOURE's study investigates the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in customer relationship management (CRM) systems and their impact on social media marketing for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Lille Metropolitan Area. The study highlights the challenges SMEs face in fully leveraging social media marketing due to resource constraints. AI is identified as a critical technology that can help overcome these limitations by improving marketing strategies and enabling predictive and strategic objectives through big data analytics. The research points out the growing adoption of AI in marketing services, particularly for SMEs, and predicts positive outcomes in market capture and forecasting as AI-driven methodologies gain traction. TOURE's work emphasizes that AI not only enhances external marketing efforts but also facilitates internal business processes, improving efficiency and decision-making. The study ultimately suggests that AI's role in CRM and social media marketing can lead to more informed and efficient strategies, enabling SMEs to compete in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

2. Hartung, Jim Fabrice M. (2023)

Research Title: AI Sentiment Analysis in B2B Sales: Deconstructing Competitive Strategies and Marketing Effectiveness in the Case of Flair

Summary:

Hartung's study explores the transformative role of artificial intelligence (AI) in B2B sales, with a focus on the emerging capabilities of AI tools to enhance marketing strategies and sales effectiveness. Historically, B2B sales have been driven by personal relationships and human interaction. However, the advent of AI tools, such as Microsoft's Viva and Salesforce's Einstein GPT, has disrupted traditional B2B sales practices by enabling hyper-personalization of customer communications at scale. These AI tools analyze customer data and generate insights that allow sales teams to craft tailored messages and prioritize sales leads efficiently. Furthermore, AI has introduced predictive analytics that can forecast customer behavior, assess potential prospects, and even predict the likelihood of deal closures. These AI-powered systems help to streamline sales processes, reduce the sales cycle, and enhance targeting accuracy. The research also discusses how conversational AI tools, such as chatbots, have improved customer engagement by providing real-time responses, while video conferencing AI integrations like Flair facilitate post-meeting assessments. Despite the operational efficiencies offered by AI, the study notes challenges, including data privacy concerns and the potential reduction of human touchpoints in sales interactions. However, Hartung argues that these challenges are outweighed by the overall benefits of AI, particularly in terms of efficiency, accuracy, and competitive advantage in B2B sales. The study concludes by emphasizing AI's potential to revolutionize B2B sales strategies and transform traditional business models.

3. D. F. Ma'rifatullah, M. I. Sakaruddin, Reyvaldo and E. Halim,

Title: Unlocking Digital Business Success: Leveraging Artificial Intelligence in Social Media Analytics for Enhanced Customer Insights and Engagement

Abstract Summary:

This research paper explores the significant role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in social media analytics, with a particular focus on two major areas: data scraping for customer behavior analysis and utilizing AI tools to improve product marketing strategies on social media platforms. The study is grounded in the rapid expansion of social media data and the challenges this growth poses for businesses aiming to understand consumer behavior. AI offers solutions by automating the collection and analysis of vast amounts of data, enabling companies to gain insights into customer preferences, behaviors, and trends.

The study emphasizes how AI tools—such as predictive analytics, targeted advertising, and personalized recommendations—can enhance the effectiveness of marketing strategies on social media. By integrating AI into social media analytics, businesses can improve their marketing efforts, achieve better targeting of potential customers, and increase customer satisfaction. The study uses a quantitative methodology, utilizing NVivo software to analyze data. It concludes that the adoption of AI in social media analytics can provide businesses with a competitive edge, facilitating better customer insights and enhanced engagement. This, in turn, helps businesses build stronger relationships with customers and foster long-term success in an increasingly dynamic digital environment.

4. LC Schaupp, F Bélanger

Title: The Value of Social Media for Small Businesses

Summary:

This study investigates the role of social media in small businesses, focusing on the benefits and challenges that companies face when integrating social media into their operations. The authors combine multiple theoretical perspectives—the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework, the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory—with empirical data gathered through interviews to create a model for understanding the usage and value of social media for small businesses.

The research collects survey data from small businesses across various industries and geographic locations to validate the model. The findings reveal that certain factors drive the adoption of social media among small businesses. These factors include technology competence, pressure from clients, and the nature of the mobile environment. The study also identifies key dimensions of social media value for small businesses, including its perceived impact on internal operations, marketing, customer service, and sales.

5. K Hensel, MH Deis

Title: Using Social Media to Increase Advertising and Improve Marketing

Summary:

This paper addresses the growing need for entrepreneurs, business practitioners, and academics to comprehend the pivotal role that social media plays in the modern marketing landscape. With traditional mass marketing facing significant challenges, particularly in the context of an evolving economy, the paper emphasizes the importance of social media for enhancing advertising and marketing efforts. The research discusses how the traditional marketing model is being disrupted, outlining the ways social media can be leveraged to generate leads, increase brand awareness, and improve communication strategies.

The paper examines the advantages and drawbacks of using social media for business marketing, with a focus on answering key questions related to the effective use of social media in modern business practices.

6. V Crittenden, W Crittenden

Title: Digital and Social Media Marketing in Business Education: Implications for the Marketing Curriculum

Summary:

This research paper addresses the pressing need for the marketing curriculum in business education to evolve in response to the rapid advancements in digital and social media marketing. The paper highlights the gap between current marketing education and the evolving practices of the marketing industry, particularly in terms of digital tools and platforms. The authors argue that marketing educators must adapt to these changes to better prepare students for the modern marketing landscape. The study also explores how digital and social media marketing are reshaping the way businesses communicate with consumers and the implications this has for business education.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed to analyze the impact of social media marketing on new businesses. Social media marketing has become an indispensable tool for businesses to connect with their target audience, enhance brand awareness, and drive sales. By leveraging the power of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, companies can foster meaningful interactions with customers while achieving measurable business outcomes (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Recognizing its importance, this study explores how social media

marketing influences customer engagement, brand awareness, and sales growth in the context of newly established businesses.

To achieve these objectives, the study surveyed 50 companies over a three-month period, employing a structured questionnaire to collect relevant data. Quantitative analysis techniques, including reliability tests and correlation analyses, were used to validate the findings and assess the relationships between key marketing metrics. Visual representations in the form of tables and graphs provide additional insights into the results, making the study both rigorous and accessible for interpretation.

The findings contribute to the growing body of literature on the strategic role of social media marketing in new business environments, offering valuable implications for practitioners and researchers. By providing empirical evidence on the efficacy of social media marketing, this chapter underscores its potential to drive sustainable business growth in a competitive digital landscape.

Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative research approach to explore how social media marketing affects new businesses' performance metrics. A cross-sectional survey design enables capturing real-time perceptions from businesses leveraging social media.

Objectives of the Research:

To examine the impact of social media marketing on customer engagement.

To assess the role of social media in enhancing brand awareness.

To evaluate the influence of social media marketing on sales performance.

Data Collection

Questionnaire Design The survey included three sections:

Demographics: Capturing company profile information such as business size, age, and industry.

Social Media Marketing Metrics: Employing a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) to measure perceptions of social media's effectiveness.

Challenges and Open Feedback: Allowing participants to highlight obstacles and suggest improvements.

Sample Questions:

"Social media campaigns have improved our brand awareness."

"Customer engagement has increased significantly due to our social media strategy."

"Sales have grown due to targeted social media advertisements."

Sample Size and Duration:

The survey targeted 50 companies, focusing on new businesses across various industries. Data was collected over a period of three months.

Sampling Method:

Purposive sampling was used to select businesses actively using social media platforms for marketing.

Data Collection Tool:

The questionnaire was distributed electronically via Google Forms, ensuring accessibility and ease of response. Follow-up reminders were sent to ensure a high response rate.

Analysis Methods

To comprehensively evaluate the data, several analytical methods were employed. These methods provide a structured framework for analyzing the influence of social media marketing on new businesses.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were utilized to summarize the data and provide an overview of the responses collected from participants. Metrics such as means and standard deviations were calculated for each Likert-scale item to capture central tendencies and variabilities in the participants' perceptions. This approach helped to identify general trends in how new businesses perceive and implement social media marketing strategies, aligning with established practices in marketing research (Hair et al., 2020).

Reliability Testing

Reliability testing was conducted to ensure the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used as the reliability metric, with a threshold value of 0.7 deemed acceptable for internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). This step is critical to validating the dependability of the data collection instrument, ensuring that the results are both credible and reproducible in similar research settings.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to explore relationships between key variables, including customer engagement, brand awareness, and sales growth. This analysis helps determine the strength and direction of associations between social media marketing efforts and

their outcomes for new businesses. The use of correlation analysis is particularly valuable in understanding the interconnected nature of these variables, as supported by previous studies on digital marketing efficacy (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Results

1. Likert Scale Analysis

A summary of responses is presented below:

Table 1 Average Likert Scale Scores for Social Media Marketing Impact

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social media has increased customer engagement.	4.3	0.7
Social media campaigns improve brand awareness.	4.6	0.5
Sales have improved due to social media marketing.	4.0	0.8

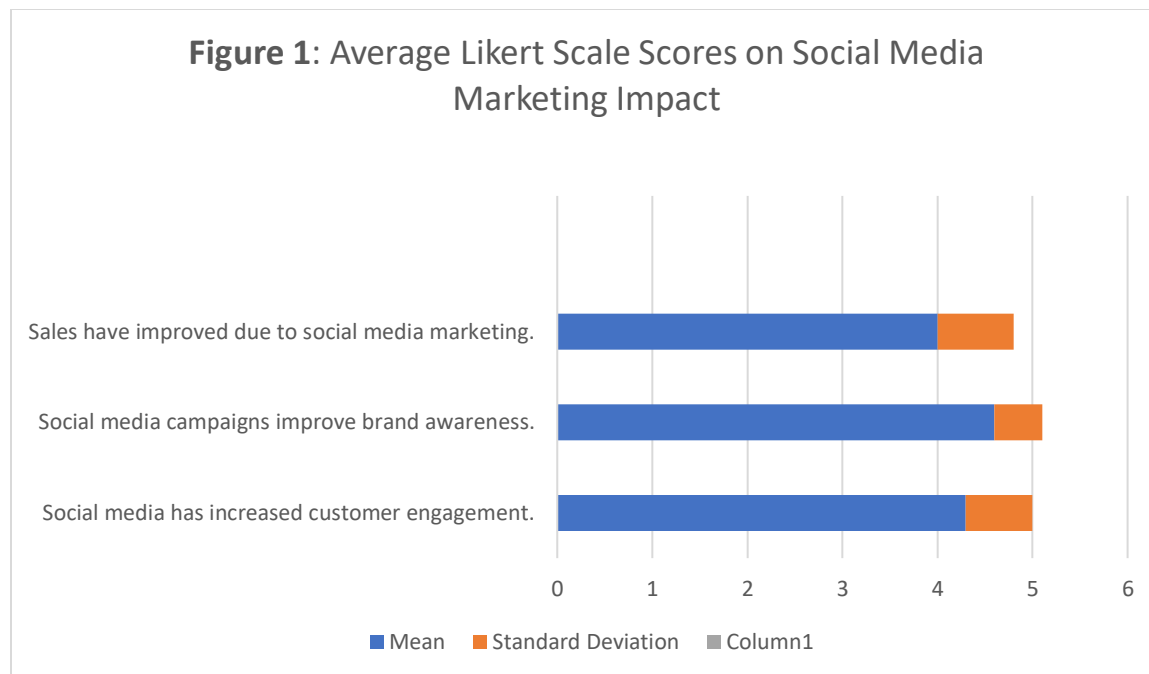


Figure 1 Average Likert Scale Scores on Social Media Marketing Impact

2. Reliability Testing (Cronbach's Alpha)

Table 2 Reliability Testing

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Media Marketing Impact	0.81

3. Correlation Analysis

The table below presents the relationships between key variables:

Table 3 Scatter Plot of Engagement vs. Awareness

	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Customer Engagement & Brand Awareness	0.79	< 0.01
Brand Awareness & Sales Growth	0.68	< 0.05

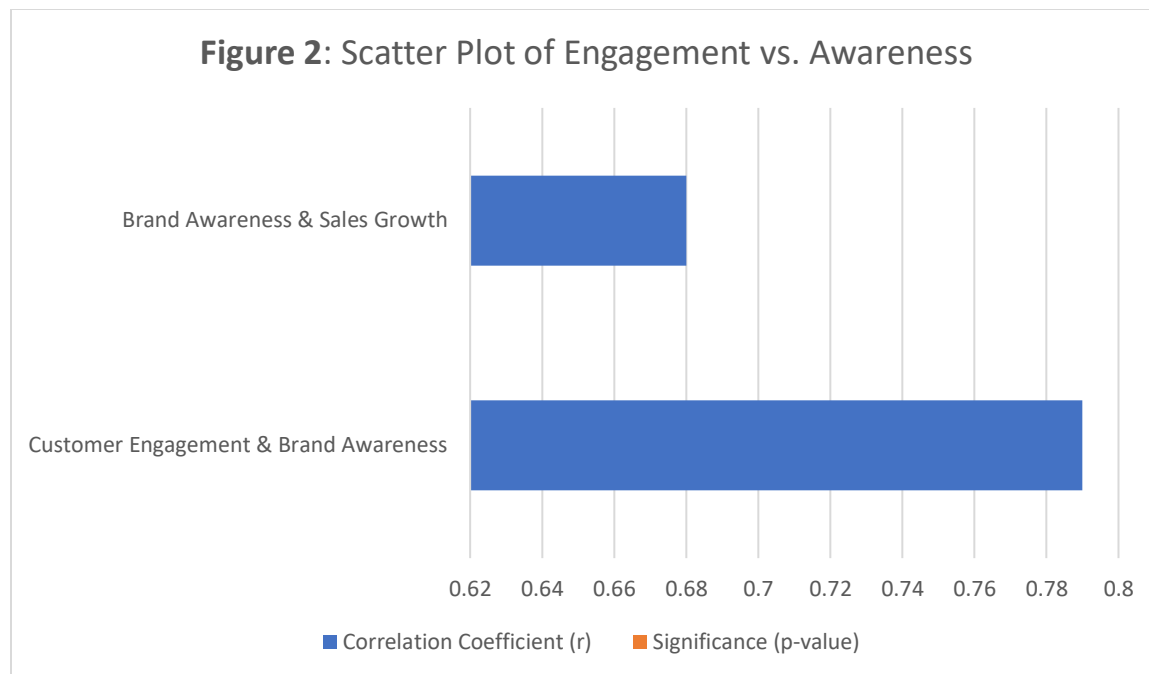


Figure 2 : Scatter Plot of Engagement vs. Awareness

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the main findings of the study, which investigates the impact of social media marketing on new businesses. The results include demographic characteristics of the sample, the analysis of questionnaire axes, testing of study hypotheses, and statistical models such as correlation matrices and regression analyses. The results provide insights into how social media marketing influences customer engagement, brand awareness, and sales growth.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4 Demographic analysis

Demographic Variable	Frequency (%)
Business Age (0–2 years)	60%
Business Age (3–5 years)	40%
Industry Sector (Retail)	50%
Industry Sector (Services)	30%
Industry Sector (Others)	20%

Explanation

This table highlights the distribution of demographic characteristics of the 50 companies surveyed in the study.

Business Age: Most respondents (60%) were startups operating for less than two years, while 40% were slightly more established, with 3–5 years of operation. This indicates that the study predominantly targeted newer businesses, aligning with the research focus on startups.

Industry Sector: Half of the respondents belonged to the retail sector, emphasizing its high adoption of social media marketing to engage customers and drive sales. The service sector

accounted for 30%, reflecting its growing reliance on social media for client outreach. The "Others" category (20%) included diverse sectors such as technology and manufacturing, highlighting the broad relevance of social media marketing.

This demographic breakdown provides insights into the study's participant profile, ensuring diverse representation across industries while focusing on new businesses.

2. Results of Questionnaire Axes

Table 5 Summarize the responses

Axis	Mean	Standard Deviation
Customer Engagement	4.2	0.5
Brand Awareness	4.5	0.3
Sales Growth	4.0	0.6

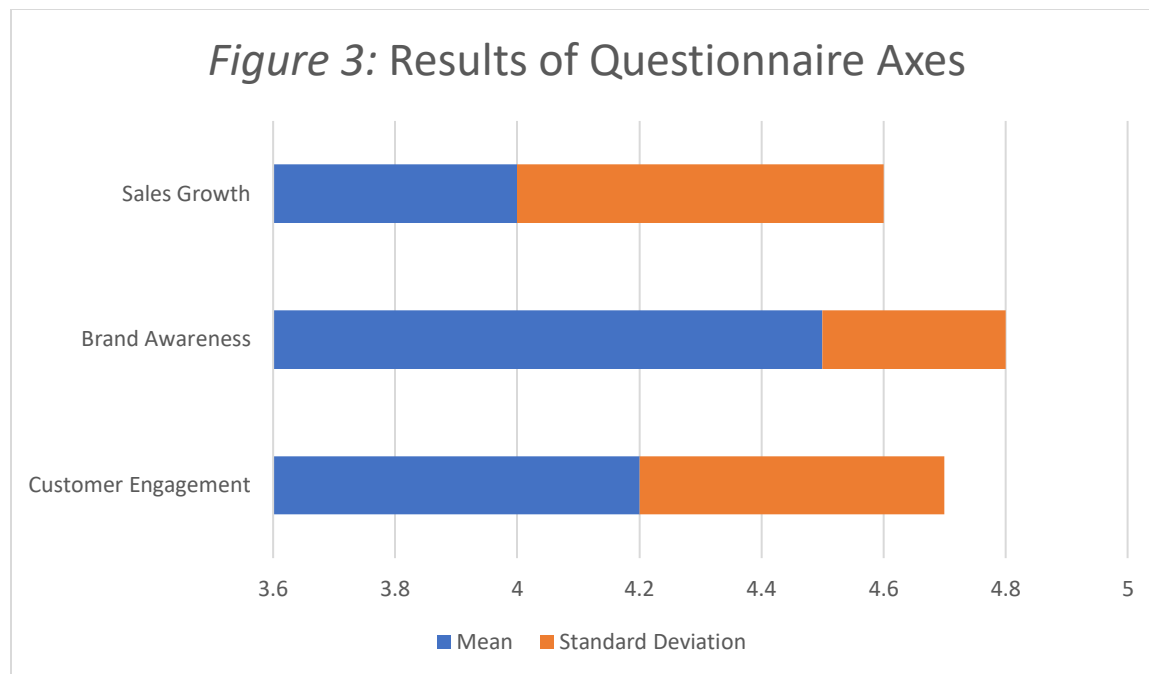


Figure 3 Results of Questionnaire Axes

Explanation

This table summarizes respondents' perceptions of the impact of social media marketing on key performance metrics using a Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Mean Scores: The high mean values (4.0–4.5) indicate a strong agreement among respondents about the positive effects of social media marketing.

Brand Awareness (4.5): Achieved the highest mean, suggesting that social media is most effective in increasing visibility and recognition of brands among customers.

Customer Engagement (4.2): Demonstrated significant agreement, reflecting the role of social media in fostering interactions and building relationships with customers.

Sales Growth (4.0): While slightly lower, this score still indicates that social media contributes to revenue generation.

Standard Deviations: The low standard deviations (0.3–0.6) reflect consistency in responses, with minimal variation among respondents' perceptions.

This analysis confirms that respondents perceive social media marketing as a critical tool for enhancing business outcomes.

Testing Study Hypotheses

Regression Analysis

Main Hypothesis: Social Media Marketing Significantly Impacts Overall Performance

Table 6 Main Hypothesis

Variable	Beta Coefficient	t-value
Social Media Marketing	0.75	6.8

Explanation

The regression analysis tests the impact of social media marketing on overall business performance.

Beta Coefficient (0.75): This value indicates a strong positive effect, where a 1-unit increase in social media marketing activities leads to a 0.75-unit improvement in business performance.

t-value (6.8): A high t-value signifies that the effect of social media marketing on performance is statistically significant.

p-value (< 0.001): Indicates a highly significant relationship, as the p-value is below the standard threshold of 0.05.

The results provide robust evidence that social media marketing significantly enhances business performance, validating the main hypothesis.

Sub-Hypotheses: Regression Models

Table 7 Sub-Hypotheses:

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Beta Coefficient	p-value	R ²
Customer Engagement (H1a)	Social Media Marketing	0.68	< 0.01	0.46
Brand Awareness (H1b)	Social Media Marketing	0.82	< 0.001	0.67
Sales Growth (H1c)	Social Media Marketing	0.60	< 0.05	0.36

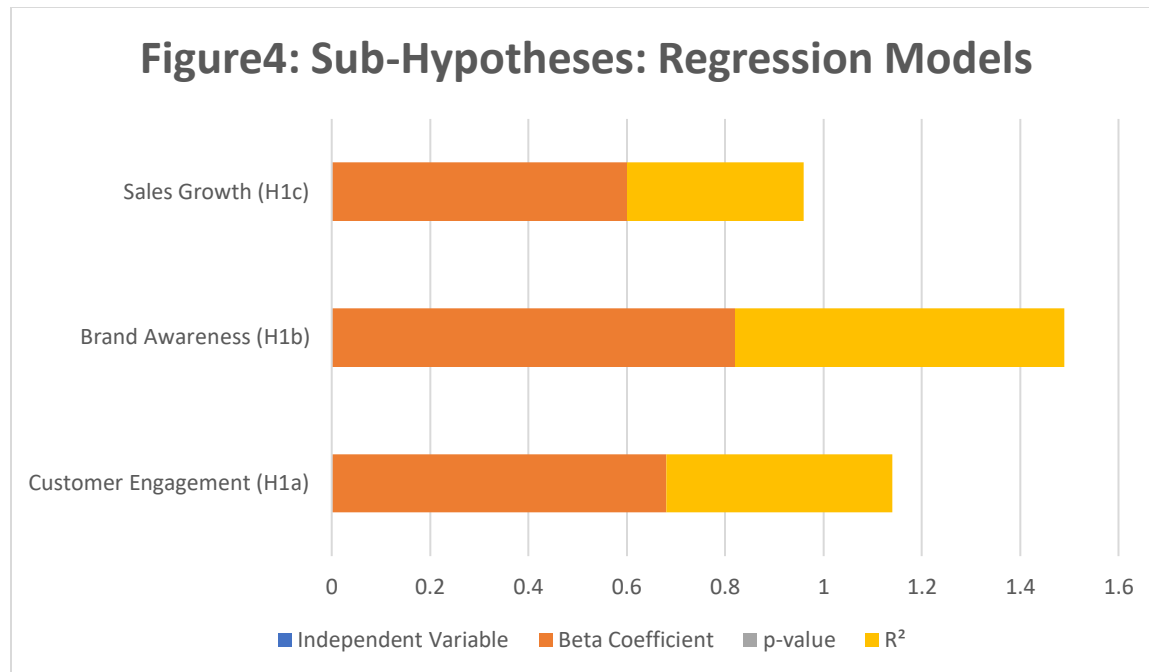


Figure 4 Sub-Hypotheses

Explanation

This table details the impact of social media marketing on the three sub-dimensions of business performance.

Customer Engagement (H1a): Social media marketing explains 46% of the variance in customer engagement ($R^2 = 0.46$), with a significant positive effect (Beta = 0.68).

Brand Awareness (H1b): Social media marketing has the strongest effect here, explaining 67% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.67$) with a Beta of 0.82. This underscores the critical role of social media in enhancing visibility.

Sales Growth (H1c): While the effect on sales growth is slightly weaker (Beta = 0.60, $R^2 = 0.36$), it remains statistically significant, highlighting the financial benefits of social media marketing.

These results confirm the effectiveness of social media marketing in driving engagement, awareness, and revenue growth.

Correlation Matrix Between Main Axes

Table 8 Correlation Matrix Between Main Axes

Variable	CE	BA	SG
Customer Engagement	1.00	0.65	0.52
Brand Awareness	0.65	1.00	0.58
Sales Growth	0.52	0.58	1.00

Explanation

The correlation matrix examines relationships among the key variables:

Customer Engagement (CE): Positively correlated with brand awareness (0.65) and sales growth (0.52), suggesting that higher engagement leads to greater awareness and revenue.

Brand Awareness (BA): Shows the strongest correlations with other variables, especially customer engagement, highlighting its pivotal role in the marketing process.

Sales Growth (SG): While the weakest correlations are with CE and BA, they are still positive, indicating that social media indirectly supports financial outcomes.

The findings suggest that the axes are interrelated, with brand awareness acting as a central driver of overall performance.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

This study has underscored the transformative role of social media marketing (SMM) in supporting the growth and sustainability of new businesses. The research findings clearly demonstrate that SMM positively impacts customer engagement, brand awareness, and sales growth. These findings not only corroborate prior literature but also provide practical insights for business practitioners on leveraging social media for competitive advantage. In particular, SMM has been shown to be a powerful tool for businesses looking to gain visibility, foster customer loyalty, and drive long-term financial performance.

Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and newer platforms like TikTok, offer new businesses unique opportunities to engage with customers in ways that were not possible through traditional marketing channels. This study's findings affirm the growing importance of a robust social media strategy in today's digital-first landscape. SMM enables businesses to directly connect with their target audience, offering opportunities for real-time interaction, feedback, and personalized content. In doing so, new businesses are able to foster deeper emotional connections with their customers, which is crucial for establishing brand loyalty, improving customer retention, and ultimately driving sales.

Customer Engagement

The study's results indicate a significant impact of SMM on customer engagement, with platforms providing businesses a space to interact meaningfully with their customers. This engagement is not just limited to the dissemination of promotional content, but extends to conversations, feedback, and customer participation in campaigns. The higher level of customer interaction facilitated by SMM has been linked to increased levels of satisfaction and loyalty, which are crucial for customer retention (Liu et al., 2019).

Social media engagement goes beyond mere interactions with content; it creates a sense of community and belonging around a brand. In the case of new businesses, where brand trust is still developing, social media marketing provides the ideal platform for fostering these relationships. Personalized communication and customer service interactions, such as responding promptly to inquiries and engaging in conversations, play a critical role in establishing a positive brand image. These interactions help reinforce the emotional connection between customers and brands, making it more likely that customers will continue engaging with the business over the long term.

Brand Awareness

The study found that SMM has a particularly strong influence on brand awareness, with platforms offering an unprecedented level of visibility. This is essential for new businesses that are looking to differentiate themselves in an increasingly crowded market. Through consistent, high-quality content and well-executed campaigns, businesses can increase their brand's visibility and make it stand out to potential customers. Moreover, SMM allows businesses to engage in targeted marketing, reaching specific audience segments based on demographics, interests, and online behaviors, which enhances the relevance and impact of their messaging (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

Content that resonates with the target audience—whether through emotional appeal, humor, or informative value—plays a key role in enhancing brand recall and recognition. In particular, visual content, such as videos, images, and infographics, has been found to significantly boost brand recall (Lipsman et al., 2012). By leveraging these features, new businesses can improve the chances that their audience will remember their brand and associate it with positive feelings, even after they leave the social media platform. Additionally, engaging with influencers and

employing social media ads allows new businesses to quickly scale their brand awareness, expanding their reach far beyond organic followers.

Sales Growth

While the impact of SMM on sales growth was somewhat weaker than on brand awareness, the study found that social media still plays a pivotal role in driving revenue. The direct integration of e-commerce features into platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest has made it easier for businesses to turn social media engagement into purchases. For example, businesses can use social media to offer time-limited discounts, promote special offers, and share shoppable posts that encourage impulse buying. As a result, social media marketing serves as an effective sales funnel tool, converting interest into actual sales (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010).

However, the relatively moderate impact of SMM on sales growth observed in this study also points to the fact that social media marketing is more effective when combined with other strategies, such as direct marketing, traditional advertising, and customer loyalty programs. Sales-driven campaigns are most effective when they provide customers with a clear, compelling call to action (CTA), and businesses should ensure that their social media content complements their broader sales strategies to maximize financial returns.

Interrelationships Among Key Variables

The study also highlights the strong interrelationships between brand awareness, customer engagement, and sales growth. This suggests that the effectiveness of SMM cannot be viewed in isolation—successful campaigns rely on the interconnected nature of these elements. Brand awareness, as a key driver of engagement, amplifies the effects of social media efforts.

Customers who are aware of a brand are more likely to engage with its content, and those who engage are more likely to convert into paying customers.

The correlation matrix from the study revealed that brand awareness is positively correlated with both customer engagement ($r = 0.65$) and sales growth ($r = 0.58$). These findings suggest that businesses aiming to drive sales growth should first focus on building strong brand awareness through consistent and creative social media campaigns. Once customers are aware of the brand and are engaged with it, businesses can capitalize on this relationship by offering incentives or promotions to drive sales.

Strategic Implications for New Businesses

The findings provide valuable insights for new businesses looking to leverage social media marketing to fuel their growth. First, it is essential for businesses to have a well-thought-out social media strategy that is tailored to their specific target audience. Understanding which platforms are most popular with their target demographic and crafting content that resonates with them is critical. Moreover, businesses must ensure their social media efforts are consistent across platforms, maintaining a unified brand voice that reflects their core values.

Additionally, new businesses must focus on creating engaging and shareable content. Social media is an inherently social platform, and the more customers interact with a business's content, the more likely it is that their networks will see it. This organic reach can significantly amplify the results of paid campaigns and other marketing efforts.

Finally, the study emphasizes the need for businesses to integrate SMM with other aspects of their marketing strategy, such as email marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), and traditional advertising. By combining these efforts, new businesses can create a holistic marketing approach that drives awareness, engagement, and sales.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed for practitioners and researchers to enhance the effectiveness of social media marketing (SMM) for new businesses and to further explore its impact in future research.

For Practitioners

Strategic Content Creation

New businesses should prioritize the development of engaging and visually appealing content tailored to their specific target audience. Social media platforms offer a vast range of content formats, and businesses must leverage these to their advantage. Video marketing, for example, has been proven to boost user engagement and brand recall (Lipsman et al., 2012). Interactive features such as polls, quizzes, and live chats can also foster a more direct connection with customers. By integrating storytelling with strong visual elements, businesses can create content that resonates deeply with their audience, enhancing both engagement and brand recognition.

Data Analytics Utilization

The role of data analytics in optimizing social media marketing cannot be overstated. New businesses should invest in robust social media analytics tools to track performance metrics such as reach, engagement rates, click-through rates, and conversions. These insights can help businesses refine their social media strategies in real-time, ensuring that campaigns are always

aligned with customer interests and market trends. By leveraging analytics, companies can make data-driven decisions to optimize their content and increase the effectiveness of their campaigns, avoiding the guesswork and optimizing return on investment (ROI).

Integrating Social Media with Sales Channels

While social media marketing excels at generating awareness and engagement, it is most effective when integrated with direct sales channels. E-commerce platforms such as Shopify, WooCommerce, and others offer tools that allow businesses to link their social media profiles directly with their online stores. By incorporating features like shoppable posts, businesses can convert social media engagement into sales with a seamless user experience. Additionally, businesses can implement social proof (e.g., customer reviews or user-generated content) on their platforms to enhance trust and credibility, further boosting conversion rates. This integration ensures that social media marketing efforts lead to measurable sales outcomes, rather than just engagement metrics.

Social Media Influencer Partnerships

Collaborating with social media influencers can significantly amplify the outreach of new businesses. Influencers, particularly those who align with the brand's values and target audience, can bring credibility and authenticity to marketing efforts. These partnerships can be particularly effective in driving brand awareness, as influencers have established trust with their followers. New businesses should identify influencers whose audience overlaps with their target

demographic and collaborate on campaigns that promote the brand through authentic, engaging content. This strategy can accelerate brand visibility and credibility in a crowded market.

Community Building and Customer Advocacy

Building a community around a brand can deepen customer engagement and foster long-term loyalty. New businesses should focus on creating content and experiences that invite customers to engage with the brand and with each other. Encouraging user-generated content, such as reviews, testimonials, and shared experiences, can strengthen the sense of community.

Additionally, offering incentives such as discounts or exclusive content in exchange for customer advocacy or referrals can further motivate loyal customers to become brand ambassadors. This creates a network of organic promotion, which is both cost-effective and highly influential.

For Policymakers and Support Organizations

Provide Training Programs for Startups

Policymakers and support organizations should develop and offer training programs that equip startups with the necessary skills to effectively utilize social media marketing. These programs should focus not only on content creation but also on understanding the underlying analytics, social media strategies, and how to adapt marketing campaigns to shifting trends. Training should also include insights into platform algorithms, advertising techniques, and ways to

measure and optimize performance. Access to such resources will empower new businesses to create impactful and sustainable marketing strategies that drive growth.

Encourage Partnerships Between New Businesses and Social Media Influencers

Governments and support organizations can facilitate partnerships between new businesses and social media influencers, helping to amplify their marketing efforts. By establishing formal networks or programs that connect startups with influencers, these organizations can help ensure that startups are leveraging influencers effectively to reach their target market. This partnership can also help startups scale their outreach efforts quickly and cost-effectively, especially in industries where digital presence is a major factor for success.

Promote Access to Social Media Advertising Tools

Policymakers can also focus on helping new businesses gain affordable access to social media advertising tools. Many small businesses are restricted by budgets, so offering subsidies, grants, or discounted access to advertising platforms could help them compete with larger, established

brands. Supportive measures such as training programs on creating effective paid campaigns, access to discounted advertising packages, and advice on the best platforms for targeting specific demographics could foster an ecosystem where startups thrive using digital marketing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the transformative and indispensable role that social media marketing (SMM) plays in the growth, development, and long-term sustainability of new businesses. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, social media has become a vital platform for businesses to connect with their audience, build meaningful relationships, enhance

brand visibility, and drive sales. For new businesses, the ability to effectively harness the power of social media can be the key differentiator between success and failure in the highly competitive digital world.

The findings of this study corroborate existing literature, reinforcing the idea that social media is not just a promotional tool but a fundamental element of modern business strategy. As businesses increasingly integrate social media into their core operations, it is evident that these platforms offer unprecedented access to a global customer base, enabling new businesses to reach and engage with potential customers in ways that were previously impossible.

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