



Midocean university

Management college

Section: Business Management

Title of research

**Social media marketing as a strategic tool and
challenges that impact brand building: A
literature review**

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Introduction

Recent years have shown a significant shift in marketing methods, particularly e-marketing via social media, following the widespread adoption of the internet. It has become a key tool for promoting brands and communicating with consumers across social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.)

This research offers a unique perspective on e-marketing strategies, focusing on the relationship between digital marketing via e-communications and brand building. It aims to provide a comprehensive review of previous studies in this area

First, we need to understand the definitions of marketing, social media marketing, and branding, as well as their relationship.

Marketing

Marketing refers to any actions a company takes to attract an audience to the company's products or services through high-quality messaging. Marketing aims to deliver standalone value for prospects and consumers through content, with the long-term goal of demonstrating product value, strengthening brand loyalty, and ultimately increasing sales.

Social Media Marketing (SMM)

SMM is the process of marketing products or services to companies through social media advertising to attract the most significant possible number of customers for profit

Social media marketing involves utilizing social media platforms where users create social networks and share information to establish a company's brand,

boost sales, and drive website traffic. In addition to providing companies with a way to engage with existing customers and reach new ones, SMM offers purpose-built data analytics that enable marketers to track the success of their efforts and identify even more effective ways to engage

According to DataReportal and Kepios, there were 5.31 billion social media identities worldwide as of April 2025.¹ Consequently, SMM has an extensive reach to consumers.

Branding

The process of creating a unique identity for a product, service, or company to differentiate it from competitors and build customer recognition and loyalty

A brand is how your company is perceived by the public, heavily influenced by design and copy choices that make a company or product recognizable and memorable

A brand is composed of a color scheme, font choices, a logo and its variants, and any other design elements that you build into your website, social pages, packaging, and any other company materials. A company's voice and tone are also integral to its brand, as they are showcased through word choices and the various emotions it aims to evoke in its content

A brand identity is the combination of the name of your company, an overall look and feel, what you do, and what makes you stand out — it's the elevator pitch that you want your community to be able to give on your behalf.

Consumers will form perceptions of your company, whether or not you invest in your brand. Therefore, proactively and strategically building your brand is the

best way to ensure that your company's mission and values are effectively .communicated

A brand's presence on social media requires a consistent profile and brand image across all social media platforms, as well as direct connections with followers that align with the brand's voice and tone. Typically, a strong brand presence on social is associated with an engaged audience and loyal brand followers.

The relation between social media marketing and branding

Social media marketing is a crucial tool for building and enhancing a brand's identity and reputation. It enables brands to connect with their target audience, boost brand awareness, and cultivate customer loyalty through targeted engagement and content sharing.

Research problem

Despite the widespread use of social media marketing and the rapid delivery of satisfactory results, many brands struggle to translate their social media presence into substantial brand equity effectively. This research aims to identify and address the key challenges that marketers face in brand building, including strategic alignment, consistent messaging, and measuring the direct impact of social media efforts on brand perception.

1. Content-related issues

As we know, content is the foundation of marketing, meaning it must be both attractive and valuable to the customer, whether in traditional or digital marketing.

In social media marketing, it is essential to ensure that content is tailored to the platform's audience and tone. Each platform has its unique content that isn't suitable for other platforms. somebody must take care to ensure that the content is tailored to the needs of customers and designed distinctively. It must also be monitored daily and continuously.

2. Problems of rapid development

In an era of rapid development and advancement, this growth is occurring extensively on social media platforms. Therefore, it is essential to stay informed about this development. It is also necessary to regularly monitor and follow these developments and then update the content accordingly.

3. Competition Issues

It's noticeable that there's a lot of competition in the marketing field, as each company strives to showcase its best in content enhancements and offer diverse offerings to attract and increase customer numbers. This creates intense competition between companies.

In the field of social media marketing, it is crucial to select high-quality and distinctive content, stay current with industry developments, and closely monitor competitors, particularly those within the same industry.

4. Poor planning

Failure to plan can lead to marketing failure.

Every company must develop a solid marketing plan that incorporates its core objectives and a comprehensive understanding of its target customers' needs. Then, rely on experts specializing in content creation, as well as others

with experience in marketing and knowledge of each social media site's specific needs and the types of content that are most effective. Employees must also be provided with all the necessary tools and devices for their work.

5. Problems with slow investment

Social media marketing is an effective and convenient method, but it requires significant effort and time to achieve satisfactory results. Therefore, its results are not immediate and require patience to achieve acceptable results.

6. Brand tarnishing

You must take care of your brand and protect its reputation by engaging with followers' comments and responding to their complains. You must address any complaints related to the product or service provided and resolve them by responding to the inquiries promptly. In doing so, you will have protected and preserved your brand.

Objectives

This research aims to explore how SMM is used as a strategic tool to enhance brand building and to understand the challenges that impact brand building.

Importance of the Study

The importance of the study lies in its coverage of a vital topic in the modern social media era. We will examine the significance of the study from both its scientific and practical aspects.

1. Scientific perspectives

a. Understanding consumer behavior

Marketing relies on understanding customers' needs and desires, as well as the factors that influence their purchasing decisions. This enables companies to develop products and services for consumers and offer tailored offers to each customer segment.

b. Developing Marketing Strategies

Marketing relies on developing comprehensive marketing plans, which include setting objectives, selecting appropriate marketing channels, allocating budgets, and measuring performance.

c. Big data analysis

Big data analysis offers an opportunity to examine large datasets collected from social media platforms and extract valuable insights into consumer behavior and market trends.

d. Performance measurement and evaluation

Performance measurement and evaluation measure the performance of various social media marketing campaigns, assess the extent to which desired objectives are achieved, and identify strengths and weaknesses to improve future performance.

5. Predicting future trends

Predicting future trends helps in digital marketing and identify new opportunities that can be exploited.

2. Practical perspective

a. Increasing brand awareness

Social media is one of the most cost-effective digital marketing methods for gathering content and increasing your business's visibility. Implementing a social media strategy will significantly increase brand awareness, as it will help foster engagement with a target audience of consumers. Simply having people interact with your content will increase brand awareness and begin building your reputation as a business. Each post shared will introduce a new network of people, potentially leading to them becoming potential customers. The more people know about your business, the better.

b. Customer awareness and engagement

Marketing is the primary driver of brand awareness. Through advertising, social media, content creation, and targeted campaigns, businesses can effectively reach their target audience, inform them about their products or services, and emotionally engage them. In today's digital world, interactive marketing builds relationships and brand loyalty.

c. Business growth and revenue generation

Effective marketing strategies lead to increased sales, market expansion, and customer retention. By identifying customer needs and delivering value, marketing enables organizations to grow their customer base and enhance profitability.

d. Competitive advantage

Marketing provides insights into market trends, competitor actions, and customer preferences. These enable companies to differentiate their offerings, enhance product positioning, and remain competitive in rapidly evolving markets.

e. Building brand equity

Marketing helps build strong brand identity and equity by consistently delivering a brand message, story, and experience. A strong brand fosters customer trust, enables premium pricing, promotes customer loyalty, and facilitates easier market entry for new products.

f. Innovation and product development

Through market research and customer feedback, marketing identifies unmet needs and emerging demands. This guides product innovation, helping companies develop offerings that are more likely to succeed in the market.

g. Relationship building and customer retention

Modern marketing emphasizes long-term customer relationships, not just transactions. CRM systems, loyalty programs, and personalized campaigns enable companies to build stronger connections with customers, thereby increasing retention and lifetime value.

h. Supporting other business functions

Marketing supports sales, operations, finance, and even human resources by aligning business strategies with market realities. For example, sales rely on marketing leads, while finance depends on marketing forecasts for revenue projections.

Research questions

1. How is the SMM used as a strategic tool to enhance brand building?

2. What are the challenges that impact SMM?

Study hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework and the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

The primary hypothesis of this study is that social media has a significant impact on building a brand.

These are sub-hypotheses:

1. Customer interaction on social media platforms can positively contribute to brand building.
2. Perfect marketing through platforms impact consumers.
3. The strategic and consistent content posted on social media increases brand awareness among consumers.

Previous studies:

1- The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty: An Arab Perspective (6).

Sohail, M.S, Hasan. M and Sohail, A (2020). The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty: An Arab Perspective. International Journal of Online Marketing, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 15-31. (6)

This study examines the relationship between social media marketing and its impact on brand trust and brand loyalty, particularly within the Arab context.

The researchers developed and tested a conceptual model that incorporates

elements of social media marketing, including brand communities,
.entertainment, interaction, and customization

By analyzing data from 242 social media users in Saudi Arabia using structural equation modeling (SEM), the study found that these social media elements have a significant and positive impact on both brand trust and brand loyalty. The results underscore the strategic importance of social media in cultivating customer relationships and provide practical guidance for marketers seeking to enhance brand equity through trust and loyalty.

2. Social Media as a Marketing Tool: A Literature Review”

Author: Holly Paquette

Institution: University of Rhode Island

Year: 2013

Program: TMD Master of Science – Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design

This literature review by Holly Paquette examines the use of social media as a marketing tool, with a focus on its increasing significance in digital marketing strategies. Given that it's a Master's paper in the field of fashion merchandising and design, it likely includes:

1. Overview of Social Media Platforms

– How platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are used in marketing.

2. Benefits of Social Media Marketing

– Building brand awareness

- Customer engagement

- Cost-effectiveness

- Instant feedback and communication

3.Challenges of Social Media Marketing

- Managing negative feedback

- Time and resource investment

- Measuring ROI

4.Impact on Consumer Behavior

- Influence on purchase decisions

- Role in building brand loyalty

5.Strategic Use in Fashion & Design

- How visual platforms (like Instagram and Pinterest) are instrumental in the fashion industry.

His work is a valuable early contribution to the field of social media marketing, especially considering it was written in 2013 when platforms were growing rapidly but still developing into the powerful tools they are today.

Strengths:

- Well-timed and relevant to marketers in fashion and retail.
- Likely provides a foundational framework for understanding how social media fits into broader marketing strategies.

Limitations:

- Since it was written in 2013, some platforms (like TikTok or Threads) and features (like Reels or Stories) did not exist or weren't widely used so the study might be outdated for current strategies.

- Possibly lacks advanced data analytics or AI-powered marketing tools now standard in the field.

3- Proceedings of Innovative Strategies in Microeconomic Business

Management - ICEMGD 2024 DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/114/2024BJ0142

The Influence of Social Media on Brand Marketing

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This study examines the impact of the rapid growth of digital technology and social media on brand marketing. Social media platforms offer significant opportunities by allowing businesses to access detailed consumer data, which helps in segmenting target audiences, personalizing marketing efforts, and creating products that better meet customer needs.

Social media marketing helps brands:

- Build a unique presence in the marketplace.
- Rapidly increase brand visibility.
- Reach large and diverse audiences.
- Strengthen customer loyalty ("customer stickiness").

However, two significant challenges are highlighted:

1. Consumer distraction – due to the overwhelming amount of content online.
2. Fierce competition in homogenized marketing – many brands using similar strategies, making it harder to stand out.

The paper aims to help brands address these issues through case studies and suggests ways to enhance strategic awareness for sustainable development.

Theoretical framework:

1. Social influence theory

Social influence theory focuses on how the opinions and actions of others influence individuals. Social media marketing and influencer marketing are used to encourage engagement and purchases. This theory will be used to explore social media strategies for enhancing brand building.

2. SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool used to assess the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or business venture. It helps in identifying internal and external factors that can impact success, allowing for informed decision-making and strategic planning.

However, we will use this theory to explore the weaknesses and the threats.

Research methodology and methods:

This study employs a literature review research methodology, which is suitable for exploring conceptual relationships and patterns within the existing academic literature. Rather than conducting primary data collection through surveys, interviews, or experiments, the study relies on secondary sources and

established academic models to examine how social media marketing contributes to building brand equity.

Research tools:

As this study adopts a theoretical and analytical approach, it does not utilize traditional data collection instruments such as questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups. Instead, it relies on a set of secondary research tools designed to support a systematic and structured analysis of existing academic literature.

The primary tools used in this research are:

1. Academic Databases and Digital Libraries

Peer-reviewed articles, case studies, and conceptual papers were retrieved from reputable academic databases.

These platforms serve as the primary sources for collecting high-quality and up-to-date research materials relevant to social media marketing and brand equity.

2. Thematic Analysis Framework

Findings were categorized into major themes based on Aaker's Brand Equity Model, enabling a structured presentation of how various social media strategies impact different dimensions of brand equity.

These research tools enable a thorough and academically grounded exploration of the topic, providing a strong foundation for theoretical analysis and future empirical research.

Study limitations:

Although this study provides valuable theoretical insights into the role of social media marketing in building brand equity, it is not without limitations. These limitations should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results and their implications:

1. Lack of Primary Data Collection:

This research is based on a theoretical and analytical review of secondary sources, no primary data were collected through surveys, interviews, or experiments. As a result, the findings are dependent on existing literature and may lack real-time consumer or market perspectives.

2. Time Range of Literature

The study focuses primarily on academic publications from 2010 to 2024. While this ensures the inclusion of recent developments in digital marketing, it may exclude older yet still relevant foundational studies or newly emerging research after the cutoff period.

3. Language and Regional Constraints

Only studies published in English were reviewed. This excludes potentially valuable research written in languages other than English, especially Arabic, which may offer deeper insights into consumer behavior in the Gulf region or other Arab markets.

4. Contextual Limitations

Brand equity and social media marketing strategies can vary significantly across industries and cultural settings. While the study aims to present generalizable concepts, some findings may not be equally applicable across all sectors or geographic locations.

5. Framework Dependence

The study is built on Aaker's Brand Equity Model, which, although well-established, does not capture all possible dimensions of brand equity.

Alternative models (e.g., Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity model) may offer additional perspectives that are not explored in this study.

Despite these limitations, the study lays a strong theoretical foundation and provides meaningful insights that can guide future empirical research in this field.

References :

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