

An Assessment of the Effects of Social Media Marketing on the Marketing Performance of Firms in the Cosmetic Industry in Zambia: A Case of Naddies Beauty Salon

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ABSTRACT

This research evaluates the impact of social media marketing on the marketing performance of companies within Zambia's cosmetic sector, specifically examining Naddies Beauty Salon. The study examines the impact of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp on consumer interaction, brand recognition, and sales expansion. A mixed-methods approach was used, including surveys and interviews with salon clientele and personnel. Research indicates that social media markedly improves marketing efficacy by augmenting exposure, recruiting new clientele, and cultivating consumer loyalty. Nonetheless, issues such as content uniformity and insufficient digital proficiency were observed. The research indicates that judicious use of social media may stimulate growth in the beauty industry and advocates for augmented digital training and continuous content creation to get better results.

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Introduction and Background

In the digital age, social media has become a formidable instrument for marketing, revolutionizing the way companies engage with customers. Worldwide, companies are progressively using platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to advertise items, interact with clients, and cultivate brand loyalty. The increase in mobile internet connectivity and social media utilization in Zambia offers novel prospects for enterprises in several sectors, including cosmetics. Social media marketing enables companies to access a wider audience at a comparatively cheap expense, facilitating immediate connection and tailored engagement.

The cosmetic sector in Zambia is seeing significant expansion, driven by heightened consumer interest in personal care and beauty trends. Small and medium companies (SMEs), including beauty salons, are using social media as an economic method to remain competitive in a fluctuating market. Naddies Beauty Salon, a prominent local enterprise in the sector, has used social media channels to promote its services and interact with consumers. Nonetheless, the degree to which this method influences its total marketing success remains inadequately examined.

This research seeks to evaluate the influence of social media marketing on the marketing efficacy of companies within the Zambian cosmetic sector, using Naddies Beauty Salon as a case study. The study will concentrate on critical performance metrics like customer acquisition, brand visibility, customer engagement, and revenue growth. The research aims to provide practical insights for cosmetic companies seeking to improve their marketing strategy in a competitive digital environment by examining the correlation between social media activity and business success.

Research Objectives

To establish the factors that affect the marketing performance at Naddies.

Research Questions

What are the key factors influencing the marketing performance of Naddies Beauty Saloon?

Literature Review

The influence of social media on modern marketing and communication has become essential to contemporary business practices with platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn significantly reshaping how organizations engage with their audiences and promote brands. With over 4.66 billion internet users as of January 2021, (Statista, 2021) social media has become an indispensable tool for global business outreach. Notably, social media enables two-way communication fostering active consumer participation through commenting, sharing, and feedback (Moorman & Mutinga, 2011). This interactivity has redefined engagement while studies highlight the impact of social media on brand perception where content and tone shape consumer opinions (Eileen, 2013). This literature review delves into pivotal studies, theories, and concepts associated with the transformative effect of social media on contemporary marketing and communication strategies while also examining key challenges such as privacy concerns and data analytics and highlighting gaps in the current research. The review provided an overview effect of social media marketing on the marketing performance of firms in the cosmetics industry in Zambia with a focus on Naddies beauty salon.

The Evolution of Social Media

Social media has undergone significant transformation since its inception, evolving from early networking platforms into powerful tools for communication, and marketing (Danah, 2007) Over time, social media began integrating features that supported broader interactions, such as group discussions, photo sharing, and customizable profiles, which attracted not only individual users but also communities, influencers, and, eventually, businesses. This shift reflected a growing demand for digital spaces that could accommodate large-scale social exchanges and create virtual communities, setting the foundation for social media's development as a marketing channel (Kaplan, 2010).

As the digital landscape expanded, businesses recognized the potential of social media to reach larger audiences in interactive and personalized ways (Faulds, 2009). Platforms like Facebook and Twitter

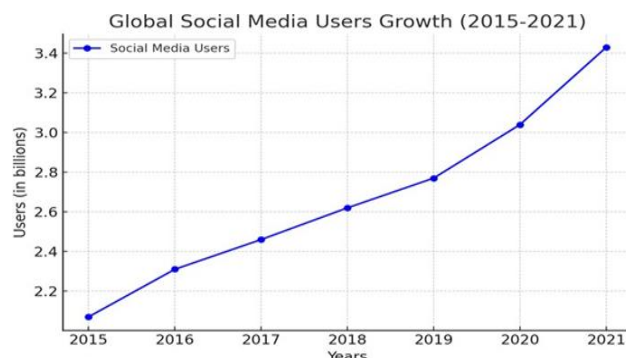
launched in 2004 and 2006 respectively, introduced business-friendly features such as brand pages, targeted advertisements, and real-time engagement capabilities. This marked the beginning of social media's transformation into a dynamic marketing tool that could engage consumers directly, allowing for more tailored interactions compared to traditional media channels (Faulds, 2009). The "like," "share," and "comment" functions on these platforms created unprecedented opportunities for user engagement, with consumers able to interact with brands, share experiences within their networks, and even influence others' perceptions through endorsements and reviews (Danah, 2007).

The widespread adoption of mobile technology further accelerated social media's integration into everyday life. With the advent of smartphones and mobile applications, social media became readily accessible to users on the go, allowing businesses to reach audiences virtually anywhere. Instagram, launched in 2010, capitalized on this trend by focusing on visually engaging content, which attracted businesses eager to explore new forms of visual marketing, such as photo-based campaigns and influence partnerships (Heath, 2010). Platforms like YouTube and LinkedIn also adapted to meet specific business needs: YouTube evolved into a central hub for video marketing, while LinkedIn became a networking tool for professionals, allowing B2B marketers to connect with industry-specific audiences.

The Rise in Social Media Users

The chart below shows the rise in social media users since the year 2015 as the use of social media increased significantly in that year.

Figure 1 Global Social Media Growth



Historical Development of Social Media

The historical evolution of social media platforms provides valuable context for understanding their current role in marketing and communication. Early platforms such as Friendster, launched in 2002, and MySpace, which gained prominence in 2003, were among the first to introduce users to the concept of virtual social networking (Kaplan, 2010). Friendster allowed users to connect based on mutual friends and shared interests, while MySpace enabled highly customizable profiles, incorporating music, images, and personal blogs. This ability to personalize one's online presence attracted millions of users, particularly teenagers and young adults, and laid the groundwork for the rapid expansion of social media as a digital space for both personal and community interaction (Danah, 2007).

As social media continued to evolve, platforms like Facebook, launched in 2004, and Twitter, founded in 2006, built on these foundational concepts while introducing innovative features such as status updates and real-time interactions. Facebook initially targeted college students, allowing them to connect and share updates within a structured, easy-to-navigate platform. With its shift to a broader audience, Facebook's user-friendly design and privacy settings quickly attracted a global user base, transforming it into a digital hub for social interaction. Twitter introduced a new model of communication with its concise 140-character format, which emphasized brevity and immediacy. This approach appealed to users seeking real-time information exchange, enabling instantaneous updates on global events, trends, and conversations (Kaplan, 2010).

The exponential growth of Facebook, which now boasts billions of users worldwide, signaled a new era of social connectivity that began to attract marketers seeking to leverage its vast and diverse user base. Companies recognized that Facebook's platform could be used to reach targeted audiences through ads and sponsored content, creating a direct link between brands and consumers that had previously been missing from traditional media (Faulds, 2009). Similarly, Twitter's format introduced new dynamics in information dissemination, enabling businesses, public figures, and news outlets to engage with global audiences in real-time. The ability to instantly share information and interact directly with followers allowed brands to adopt a more dynamic approach to customer engagement, shaping Twitter into a platform well-suited for customer service and brand reputation management.

These advancements marked the beginning of social media's role as a critical tool in shaping modern communication and marketing strategies. By 2010, the integration of visual content through platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest further expanded social media's potential. Instagram, launched in 2010, focused on photo-sharing and visual storytelling, quickly gaining popularity among younger users and brands seeking to create aesthetically appealing content. This shift toward image-centric social media enabled businesses to showcase their products and values in a more visually engaging way, appealing to consumer emotions and preferences (John, 2018).

Over the years, the introduction of algorithm-driven content distribution and targeted advertising capabilities has allowed platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to refine their role as sophisticated marketing tools. These platforms enable businesses to segment audiences based on demographics, interests, and behaviors, making it possible for brands to deliver highly targeted ads that appeal to specific consumer groups. This personalized advertising approach, which has become a hallmark of social media marketing, has proven to be highly effective in driving engagement and fostering customers' social media's historical development reflects a progression from simple networking sites to complex ecosystems that support a diverse range of interactions, influencing how people connect, communicate, and make purchasing decisions (Sikalumbi, 2023)

Rise of Social Media in Marketing

The integration of social media into marketing strategies has led to a paradigm shift in how businesses engage with their target audiences. Traditionally, marketing involved one-way communication through mediums such as television, print, and radio, where brands pushed messages to a largely passive audience. This traditional model limited interaction and personalization, relying on mass messaging strategies aimed at reaching broad demographics without much feedback from consumers (Eileen, 2013). However, the rise of social media has introduced a two-way communication model that allows brands and consumers to interact in real time. This shift has enabled businesses to transform static marketing campaigns into dynamic dialogues, where consumers feel more engaged and involved with the brands they support.

Social media platforms allow businesses to communicate directly with consumers, receive immediate feedback, and engage in conversations that foster long-term relationships (Moorman & Mutinga, 2011). Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have embedded features like comment sections, direct messaging, and live streaming, enabling brands to provide timely responses, address consumer inquiries, and even handle complaints publicly. This level of accessibility enhances consumer trust and satisfaction, as customers feel they have a voice and can connect with brands on a personal level. Moreover, social media enables businesses to collect and analyze valuable data on consumer preferences, behaviors, and sentiments, which can inform future marketing strategies and product development (Sikalumbi et al, 2021).

The rise of user-generated content (UGC) and the increasing influence of social media influencers have further expanded the scope of social media marketing, offering businesses unique opportunities to enhance brand visibility and credibility. UGC, such as reviews, testimonials, and posts shared by consumers, provides organic, peer-generated content that often resonates more with audiences than traditional brand advertisements. Brands have learned to leverage this type of content to build authenticity and trust, as consumers are more likely to trust the opinions and experiences of other users over direct brand messaging (Heath, 2010) additionally, social media influencers individuals with significant online followings who often specialize in a particular niche can act as intermediaries between brands and consumers. Influencer partnerships allow brands to reach specific, engaged audiences through trusted voices, often resulting in higher engagement rates and stronger brand loyalty.

This adaptation to the social media landscape has also transformed traditional marketing approaches by enabling the development of more personalized, data-driven strategies. Social media platforms provide advanced targeting tools that allow businesses to segment audiences based on demographics, interests, behaviors, and even past interactions with the brand. This level of precision enables marketers to deliver tailored content that resonates more effectively with specific consumer groups, fostering deeper consumer relationships and driving brand loyalty (Verissimo T.

M., 2014). Furthermore, social media's real-time data and analytics capabilities allow businesses to measure the effectiveness of campaigns instantly, making it easier to adjust strategies based on performance metrics such as engagement rates, reach, and conversion rates.

Furthermore, the rise of social media in marketing has not only expanded the reach and scope of marketing strategies but has also empowered businesses to create more meaningful, reciprocal relationships with consumers. By adopting a consumer-centric approach, brands can use social media to foster communities, gain loyal advocates, and maintain relevance in a fast-evolving digital marketplace.

Social Media Platforms and Marketing Channels

Different social media platforms offer unique opportunities and challenges for marketers, each with distinct characteristics that can be utilized to achieve various marketing objectives. Understanding these differences is essential for businesses seeking to maximize their reach and engagement with target audiences. By tailoring marketing strategies to each platform's specific features, brands can create impactful platform-optimized campaigns (Kayangula, 2025).

For instance, Instagram's emphasis on visual content makes it particularly suitable for industries such as fashion, beauty, and lifestyle, where brands rely heavily on high-quality images and videos to showcase products. The platform's features, such as Stories, Reels, and shoppable posts, provide businesses with creative ways to engage consumers and facilitate a seamless path from discovery to purchase. Additionally, Instagram has become a hub for influencer marketing, where businesses collaborate with popular personalities to leverage their influence and reach specific demographics. Influencers create authentic content that resonates with their followers, enabling brands to achieve more organic engagement and higher conversion rates (Eileen, 2013).

LinkedIn, on the other hand, serves as a professional networking platform, making it ideal for business-to-business (B2B) marketing, recruitment, and thought leadership activities. Through LinkedIn, companies can share industry insights, promote business

solutions, and establish themselves as authorities in their fields. LinkedIn's tools, such as Sponsored Content and In Mail, allow for targeted engagement with decision-makers, which is essential for B2B marketing. Furthermore, LinkedIn is widely used for recruiting, where businesses can attract top talent by showcasing company culture, achievements, and career opportunities (Kaplan, 2010).

YouTube, with its video-centric model, enables brands to produce and share longer-form content, ranging from tutorials and product reviews to interviews and behind-the-scenes videos. This format provides an excellent opportunity for brands to educate consumers and build trust, especially for complex products that require detailed explanations or demonstrations. YouTube's algorithm favors content that retains viewers' attention and encourages interaction, making it important for brands to focus on creating engaging and informative videos. This platform has proven influential in the purchasing decisions of consumers, with many users turning to YouTube for product reviews and recommendations before making a purchase (Moorman & Mutinga, 2011).

Marketers must understand the nuances of these platforms to craft effective strategies tailored to their specific target audiences. For example, YouTube's algorithm promotes content with high viewer retention and engagement, rewarding creators whose content keeps users on the platform longer. In contrast, Instagram engagement often relies heavily on aesthetic appeal, concise messaging, and the ability to tell a story visually. Businesses targeting LinkedIn audiences need to prioritize professionalism, value-driven content, and networking capabilities to resonate with professionals and industry leaders. By recognizing these platform-specific characteristics, businesses can optimize their marketing efforts to ensure that their content not only reaches but resonates with the intended audience (Sikalumbi et al, 2021).

Each platform presents unique metrics of success, such as likes, shares, comments, and conversion rates that marketers can use to measure campaign effectiveness. Understanding how these metrics relate to specific business objectives enables brands to adjust their strategies and achieve meaningful engagement. Thus, as the digital marketing landscape continues to

evolve, the ability to navigate multiple social media channels with precision becomes a critical component of successful marketing.

Impact on Consumer Behavior

The rise of influence in marketing has been one of the defining trends in the social media era. Influencers are individuals who have established credibility in a specific niche and can impact their followers' purchasing decisions due to their authority, knowledge, and perceived authenticity (Sandra, 2020). They act as mediators between brands and consumers, blending personal content with product recommendations in ways that feel natural to their followers. This model contrasts sharply with traditional celebrity endorsements, as influencers are often viewed as more relatable figures.

By sharing personal experiences, influencers create a sense of trust and connection with their audiences, enhancing their effectiveness in promoting products. Scholars have extensively examined the role of influencers in shaping consumer behavior, focusing on aspects such as trust-building, perceived authenticity, and impact on purchase intent. Research indicates that consumers often view influencers as trustworthy, everyday individuals who offer practical insights and recommendations, making them more relatable than traditional celebrities (Heath, 2010). This perceived authenticity is central to their success, as followers feel that influencers offer genuine opinions rather than purely promotional content. For instance, studies suggest that consumers are more likely to consider an influencer's product recommendations credible when they appear genuine and aligned with the influencer's brand.

Influencer marketing allows brands to engage with their target audiences in ways that foster meaningful connections and resonate on an emotional level. Sponsored content created in collaboration with influencers not only promotes a product but also taps into the influencer's existing audience, creating a sense of community and shared values (Sandra, 2020). This connection fosters brand loyalty, as consumers are more likely to purchase products recommended by someone they admire and trust. Influencers often use storytelling techniques to integrate products into their

lives, showing followers how the product fits naturally into their routines or lifestyles. This approach enhances brand relatability and helps consumers envision how the product might benefit them, ultimately encouraging purchase.

Furthermore, research has shown that influencer marketing can enhance brand awareness by leveraging the reach and engagement of influencers' platforms. Many influencers have large, dedicated followings, allowing brands to increase their visibility and connect with potential customers who may not have been aware of the brand before (Khamis, 2017). The visual and interactive nature of social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube also allows influencers to create engaging content that generates immediate feedback from followers through likes, comments, and shares. This level of engagement contributes to greater brand recall and, in many cases, leads to higher conversion rates compared to traditional marketing methods.

Studies have further highlighted that influencer marketing when executed effectively can drive higher conversion rates by tapping into the trust and influence that influencers wield over their audiences (De Veirman, 2017). When followers see influencers using and endorsing products, they are more likely to be persuaded to try the product themselves. For example, a well-known beauty influencer endorsing a skincare product often results in an uptick in sales, as followers trust the influencer's opinion and view the endorsement as a credible recommendation. This impact is particularly pronounced among younger consumers, who often see influencers as relatable role models and are more likely to be influenced by their opinions.

Influencer Marketing

The rise of influencer marketing has been a significant and transformative development in the social media era, reshaping how brands connect with consumers. Influencers are individuals who have built a strong online presence and gained credibility within a particular niche or industry. These influencers possess the ability to impact the purchasing decisions of their followers through their authority, trustworthiness, and personal appeal (Sandra, 2020). Unlike traditional celebrities, influencers are often seen as more relatable

figures, which enhances their ability to influence consumer behavior.

Research has shown that consumers tend to view influencers as authentic and trustworthy, often more so than traditional advertising sources. Influencers engage with their audiences on a personal level, offering relatable content, lifestyle tips, or expertise on specific subjects, which creates a sense of intimacy and rapport with their followers (Freberg, 2011). This relatability plays a crucial role in influencer marketing's effectiveness because consumers are more likely to trust the opinions and recommendations of individuals they follow closely and who appear more "down-to-earth" compared to traditional celebrity endorsements (Kaplan, 2010). For example, Instagram has become a central platform for influencer marketing, particularly in sectors like fashion, beauty, and lifestyle. Popular influencers on Instagram, such as Huda Kattan (founder of Huda Beauty) and Chiara Ferragni (fashion influencer and entrepreneur), have leveraged their extensive followings to promote products and brands authentically. Kattan, for example, frequently uses her personal beauty experiences to introduce new products from her line or other brands she partners with. Her followers trust her recommendations because they see her as a credible source within the beauty industry. This type of collaboration benefits brands as it allows them to tap into the influencer's loyal audience, ensuring their product is seen by potential customers who already trust the influencer's judgment (Sandra, 2020).

Influencer marketing allows brands to create sponsored content that resonates with target audiences more organically compared to traditional advertisements. By working with influencers, brands can reach a dedicated and engaged audience who values the influencer's content, making it easier to drive conversions. This model is highly effective because it emphasizes authentic engagement rather than straightforward promotion. For instance, when an influencer like James Charles (a beauty influencer) creates makeup tutorials or shares product reviews, his followers are more likely to trust the recommendation because of the transparency and personal connection involved (Freberg, 2011).

Moreover, the power of influencer marketing extends beyond the immediate promotional benefits. By collaborating with influencers who share common values and interests with their followers, brands can foster a sense of community and alignment with their target audience. This deeper connection helps to build long-term relationships, contributing to increased brand loyalty and repeat sales. Brands like Gymshark, for example, have effectively utilized influencer marketing to create a community of fitness enthusiasts who feel personally connected to the brand. By collaborating with fitness influencers on social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube, Gymshark has cultivated a loyal following, significantly increased its brand awareness and driving consumer engagement (Evans, 2017).

Additionally, influencer marketing has proven to be an effective strategy for enhancing brand awareness. Influencers often have broad reach and high levels of engagement with their audiences, meaning that brands can benefit from increased exposure and credibility. For instance, a study by (De Veirman, 2017) found that influencer marketing campaigns that focus on influencers with many followers are more likely to generate high levels of brand awareness. This is particularly true for products or services that rely on visual appeal, such as fashion or beauty products, which are frequently promoted by influences through platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.

Influencer marketing can also drive higher conversion rates compared to traditional marketing methods. Since influencers create content that is closely aligned with their audience's interests and values, the likelihood of followers purchasing products that are endorsed by influencers increases. For example, when a travel influencer shares a post about a destination, accompanied by a sponsored hashtag or affiliate link to book a flight or hotel, their followers are more likely to make a purchase. A prime example of this is the partnership between the travel influencer @muradosmann and the global hotel chain Marriott. By showcasing luxurious destinations in his Instagram posts, Murad Osman's content led to an increase in bookings for Marriott hotels (De Veirman, 2017).

Social Proof and User-Generated Content

Social media platforms have given rise to user-generated content and the concept of social proof. Social proof refers to the phenomenon where individuals look to the actions and opinions of others to guide their own decisions, particularly in uncertain situations (John, 2018). Research has explored how user-generated content such as reviews, testimonials, and social media posts influences consumer perceptions and trust in brands and products. User-generated content often acts as a form of social proof that enhances the credibility of brands as consumers tend to trust the opinions of their peers over traditional advertising. This shift in consumer behavior underscores the importance of cultivating a positive online presence and encouraging satisfied customers to share their experiences on social media platforms (Kayangula, 2025; Hamilandu, 2025).

Moreover, studies indicate that brands that actively engage with user-generated content not only increase brand awareness but also foster a sense of community and loyalty among their customer base as a result, incorporating social proof and user-generated content into marketing strategies has become essential for brands aiming to build trust and enhance consumer relationships in the digital landscape.

Privacy Concerns in Social Media Marketing

Social media platforms enable businesses to gather detailed consumer insights, ranging from demographic information to online behavior and preferences. This data allows brands to create highly personalized and targeted marketing campaigns, improving the relevance of their messaging and increasing conversion rates. However, the extensive data collection necessary for these practices raises privacy concerns. Consumers are becoming more aware of how their data is collected, stored, and used by businesses. This awareness has led to heightened concerns about the potential misuse of personal information and a demand for greater transparency and control over data (Zeynap, 2014).

Research indicates that consumers are increasingly concerned about their digital privacy. Many are uncomfortable with the idea that their details—such as location, browsing history, and social media activity—

are being harvested for marketing purposes without their explicit knowledge or consent. A notable example of this is the Facebook-Cambridge Analytical scandal in 2018, where millions of users' data were improperly accessed and used for political advertising. This incident highlighted the potential risks to privacy in social media marketing and brought attention to the need for more stringent data protection practices. Following this, global regulations like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union were introduced to address these concerns, mandating that businesses gain explicit consent from users before collecting or using their data.

Ethical Issues in Data-Driven Marketing

As businesses increasingly rely on data-driven marketing techniques, ethical dilemmas have emerged, particularly regarding the collection and use of personal information. Ethical marketing requires companies to respect consumer privacy, adhere to data protection laws, and ensure that data collection practices align with societal expectations of fairness and transparency (Stuart, 2014). However, some marketers have been accused of exploiting consumer data without fully informing users or seeking their consent, which raises questions about whether these practices are ethically sound (Sikalumbi et al, 2025).

For example, some businesses use "dark patterns"—design tactics on websites or apps that subtly manipulate users into providing more personal information or making unintended purchases. These tactics may lead to violations of consumer rights, eroding trust between consumers and brands. Additionally, the use of user data to create highly specific and personalized marketing messages can sometimes cross ethical lines, particularly when it involves vulnerable individuals, such as children or those with limited understanding of privacy risks. Brands must carefully consider the ethical implications of their data practices, balancing the need for targeted marketing with the responsibility to protect their consumers.

The Demand for Transparency and Consumer Control

The growing awareness of privacy has led to increased demands for transparency in data practices. Consumers now expect to know how their data is being used, who has access to it, and how it will be protected. This shift in consumer expectations has forced businesses to prioritize privacy and adopt more transparent data practices (Zeynap, 2014). For instance, many companies are now offering consumers the ability to opt out of personalized advertising or to access their data in a manner that provides more control over how it is shared.

An example of a brand responding to these privacy concerns is Apple, which has taken significant steps to prioritize user privacy in its products and services. Apple's introduction of the App Tracking Transparency feature in 2021 allowed users to choose whether they wanted to share their data with advertisers, providing more control over personal information. Additionally, Apple's marketing heavily emphasizes its commitment to privacy, with slogans like "Privacy. That's iPhone." This transparency and control have resonated with many consumers, helping Apple build trust and maintain a strong reputation in an increasingly privacy-conscious marketplace.

Reputational Risks and Legal Repercussions

Failure to address privacy concerns and adhere to ethical standards can have serious consequences for businesses. A breach of consumer trust or a violation of data protection regulations can lead to reputational damage, loss of customer loyalty, and potentially severe financial penalties. The legal landscape around data privacy is becoming increasingly stringent, with regulations such as the GDPR in the European Union and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in the United States imposing strict rules on businesses that collect consumer data. Companies that fail to comply with these regulations can face substantial fines and legal repercussions, making it essential for businesses to prioritize privacy and ensure compliance with applicable laws.

One example of the legal consequences of data privacy violations is the fine imposed on Google by the European Union in 2019, amounting to €50 million for

failing to adequately inform users about the extent to which their data was being collected and used. This was a clear reminder that privacy violations can not only harm a company's reputation but also result in significant financial penalties.

Building Trust through Ethical Data Practices

To maintain a positive brand image and build consumer trust, marketers must adopt ethical data practices that prioritize transparency, consent, and consumer control. By clearly communicating their data practices and giving users more control over their personal information, businesses can strengthen their relationships with consumers and enhance their reputation. Additionally, adhering to ethical standards helps businesses avoid legal risks and demonstrates a commitment to responsible corporate behavior. This approach is particularly important in the social media landscape, where data is an essential component of digital marketing strategies.

Virality and Trends

The viral nature of content on social media presents both significant opportunities and considerable challenges for marketers. In the digital age, the ability for content to go viral has become a powerful tool for brand visibility, often leading to substantial increases in engagement, awareness, and consumer interest. However, achieving virality is not as simple as just creating content that is widely shared; it involves a deep understanding of the dynamics that drive viral behavior, which includes factors like emotional arousal, social currency, timing, and the role of influencers (Eileen, 2013). While viral content has the potential to elevate a brand's status almost overnight, it also requires a sophisticated strategy and careful consideration of the underlying factors that make content resonate with social media audiences.

Emotional Arousal and Social Currency in Virality

A key factor in the virality of content is emotional arousal. Research has shown that content that evokes strong emotions whether positive (e.g., humor, joy) or negative (e.g., surprise, awe, anger) is more likely to be shared (Kaplan, 2010). This emotional connection encourages users to engage with the content and share it within their social networks, helping it spread

rapidly. For instance, content that elicits a sense of humor or a deep emotional response often triggers widespread sharing as users want to connect with others through that shared emotion. Emotional content, such as heartwarming stories or funny memes, is inherently shareable because it resonates with individuals on a personal level.

Another critical factor is the concept of social currency the value individuals place on sharing content that enhances their image or status within their social networks. People are more likely to share content that they believe will improve their social standing, entertain others, or present themselves as knowledgeable, humorous, or "in the know." Brands can harness social currency by creating content that users will feel proud to share, such as exclusive offers, behind-the-scenes looks, or content that taps into trending topics.

The Role of Influencers in Virality

Influencers have become central to the virality of content, as their ability to reach large, engaged audiences enables them to facilitate and accelerate the spread of content (Eileen, 2013). Influencers are perceived as trusted figures, and their endorsement of a product or content can give it immediate visibility. When an influencer shares content with their followers, it often has the potential to go viral because their audience values their opinion and feels a sense of community with them. Brands can collaborate with influencers to ensure that their content reaches the right audience and gains the attention it needs to spread quickly.

For example, an influencer's involvement in a marketing campaign can provide the necessary "boost" for a brand's content to go viral. One of the most famous examples of this is the #IceBucketChallenge, which went viral in 2014. The challenge, aimed at raising awareness and funds for ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), became a social media sensation after high-profile influencers, including celebrities like Bill Gates and Oprah Winfrey, participated and shared their videos. The viral campaign raised millions for ALS research, demonstrating how influencers can amplify content

and encourage massive participation from both ordinary users and celebrities alike.

Navigating the Fast-Paced Nature of Trends

The rapid pace at which trends emerge and fade on social media presents a unique challenge for marketers. What is trending today may be irrelevant tomorrow, requiring brands to remain agile and responsive to take advantage of fleeting opportunities. To capitalize on viral content, brands must be quick to act, adapting their strategies in real time and responding to trends that align with their brand identity. However, marketers must also be cautious not to appear inauthentic or opportunistic by jumping on every trend. Consumers can easily detect when a brand is leveraging a trend simply for the sake of capitalizing on it, and this can lead to negative perceptions of the brand (Kaplan, 2010).

A real-life example of a brand successfully capitalizing on viral trends is Wendy's, a fast-food chain known for its witty and often edgy social media presence. Wendy's Twitter account became particularly famous for engaging with viral trends, such as #NationalRoastDay, or responding humorously to user comments, which played into the fast-paced nature of social media. By jumping on viral trends in a timely and authentic way, Wendy's was able to engage with audiences, increase brand awareness, and elevate its brand image as fun and relatable. However, Wendy's success lies in its careful balance of relevance to the brand and not overexploiting trends. The brand's success shows how timely participation in viral content can create significant engagement without appearing disingenuous.

Challenges of Virality: Risks and Rewards

While viral content can lead to tremendous benefits in terms of brand visibility and customer engagement, it also comes with risks. The unpredictable nature of virality means that content can quickly spiral out of control, either positively or negatively. For example, a piece of content that was meant to be humorous or engaging can be misinterpreted or taken out of context, potentially leading to a public relations crisis. One well-known instance of this is the Pepsi ad featuring

Kendall Jenner, which was widely criticized for trivializing social justice movements. The backlash was so severe that it required a public apology from the brand, showcasing how the viral nature of the content can turn negative if not handled with care.

Crisis Management

Social media platforms also pose risks related to crisis communication. Research has addressed the challenges of managing and mitigating negative publicity and crises on these platforms emphasizing the need for proactive crisis management strategies. The rapid dissemination of information on social media means that negative news can spread quickly potentially damaging a brand's reputation. As a result, businesses must develop crisis communication plans that outline clear protocols for addressing issues and engaging with their audience during times of crisis (Heath, 2010). Effective crisis management strategies are crucial for preserving brand reputation in the digital age as they enable companies to respond swiftly and transparently to consumer concerns. Furthermore, research suggests that organizations that effectively manage crises on social media can not only mitigate damage but also strengthen their relationships with consumers by demonstrating accountability and responsiveness (Sikalumbi & Situmba, 2019; Abudetse et al, 2025).

Data Analytics and Insights

The availability of data on social media allows for advanced analytics and insights that can inform marketing and communication strategies. Scholars have explored how businesses can leverage data-driven insights to refine their approaches enhancing customer targeting and engagement (Kaplan, 2010). By analyzing consumer interactions, behavior, and preferences on social media, brands can gain valuable insights into their audience's needs and expectations. Data analytics has become a cornerstone of modern marketing practices enabling businesses to track performance metrics, optimize content strategies, and measure return on investment (ROI). The ability to analyze and interpret large volumes of data presents opportunities for marketers to identify trends and adapt their strategies in real-time ensuring that their messaging remains relevant and impactful. Additionally, the integration of artificial intelligence

and machine learning into data analytics has further enhanced the capacity to derive actionable insights allowing for more personalized and targeted marketing effort. (Eileen, 2013). As businesses continue to embrace data-driven decision-making, the role of analytics in shaping marketing strategies will only grow in importance.

Theoretical Framework

In exploring the impact of social media on consumer-brand relationships, this theoretical framework leverages Social Exchange Theory and Social Identity Theory. These theories provide a foundation for understanding how consumers engage with brands and the formation of online communities that influence brand perception and loyalty (Sikalumbi, 2023).

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) posits that interactions are based on the principle of reciprocity, where actions are driven by the expectation of mutual benefit (Molm, 2020). This theory is relevant in examining the dynamics of consumer-brand relationships on social media, where consumers and brands exchange various forms of value, such as information, loyalty, and feedback. The underlying assumption is that both parties—consumers and brands—evaluate the benefits and costs of interaction. When brands actively engage with users through personalized responses, promotions, or exclusive content, users are more likely to reciprocate by showing loyalty and positive brand advocacy (Sikalumbi, 2022).

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT), developed by Tajfel and Turner, explores how individuals categorize themselves into groups, fostering a sense of belonging and shared identity (Turner John, 2016). On social media, SIT helps explain how users associate with brands that reflect their identity, values, and social groups. Brands can leverage this theory by creating campaigns that resonate with users' social identities, thereby fostering an emotional connection that enhances brand loyalty. This theory is critical for brands that seek to create online communities or use

influencers to reinforce social belonging among consumers.

The Conceptual Framework

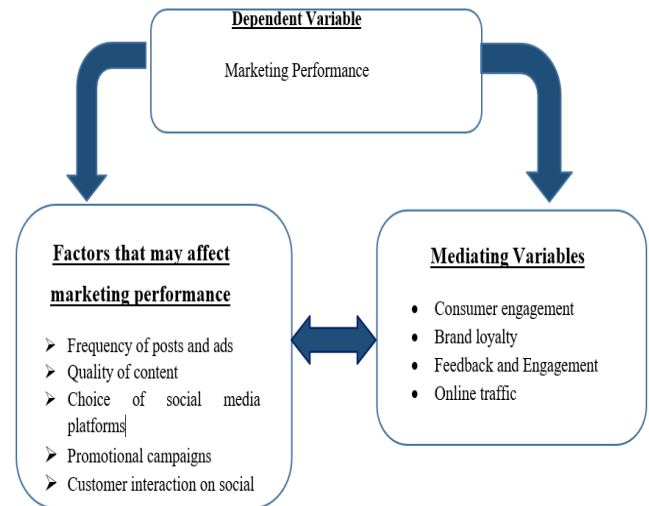
The conceptual framework integrates key variables that influence the impact of social media on marketing and communication strategies. By analyzing these variables, we can understand how social media serves as a platform for building brand awareness and fostering customer engagement.

Conceptual Framework with Variables

This framework identifies essential variables, including marketing performance metrics such as likes, views, reactions, and comments, which contribute to overall brand awareness and customer behavior on social media. The presence of these metrics allows marketers to measure and assess the effectiveness of their social media strategies. Metrics such as brand awareness and customer behavior are particularly important as they reflect how well a brand can establish itself in the minds of consumers and maintain ongoing interaction (Eileen, 2013). By tracking these variables, brands gain insights into consumer preferences and can tailor their marketing strategies accordingly.

Conceptual Framework Graph

To facilitate comprehension, a visual representation (Figure 2) demonstrates the relationships between the identified variables and their impact on marketing and communication outcomes. This graphical model maps out how different social media activities such as likes, shares, and brand interactions collectively influence consumer perception, brand loyalty, and long-term customer engagement (Pires, 2019).



Independent Variables

The independent variables in this study are as follows: frequency of posts and advertisements, the quality and relevance of the content shared, the choice of platforms, and promotional campaigns like discounts and giveaways. Social media marketing is expected to have a direct influence on the firm's marketing performance by increasing visibility, customer engagement, and sales.

Frequency of Posts and Advertisements: This refers to how often Naddies Beauty Saloon publishes content or runs paid advertisements on social media platforms. A consistent posting schedule helps maintain the brand's visibility and ensures that the target audience is regularly reminded of the products and services offered. Frequent advertisements can also increase the likelihood of reaching new customers, creating more opportunities to engage with potential clients. However, the frequency needs to strike a balance to avoid overwhelming or annoying followers, which could lead to a decline in engagement.

Content Quality and Relevance: The quality and relevance of the content shared on social media are critical in capturing the audience's attention and fostering engagement. High-quality content includes visually appealing images, videos, and well-written captions that align with the audience's preferences. Relevant content, on the other hand, should address the needs, interests, and aspirations of potential customers, such as tips on beauty care or showcasing

customer transformations. Quality and relevance can significantly influence how customers perceive the brand and their likelihood of engaging with or purchasing from the business.

Choice of Social Media Platforms: Selecting the right social media platforms is crucial for reaching the target audience effectively. Different platforms have distinct user demographics and purposes. For instance, Instagram and TikTok are more visually driven and popular among younger audiences, making them ideal for showcasing beauty products and services. Facebook, with its broader demographic, can cater to a wider audience. The choice of platforms affects the reach, engagement, and overall success of social media marketing campaigns.

Promotional Campaigns: Promotional campaigns, such as offering discounts, giveaways, or hosting online contests, are a key component of social media marketing. These campaigns can create excitement and encourage followers to take immediate action, such as booking appointments or purchasing products. They also help in attracting new customers, retaining existing ones, and increasing brand loyalty. Successful promotional campaigns often lead to higher customer engagement and increased sales.

Customer Interaction and Engagement: Interacting with customers on social media involves responding to their comments, messages, and reviews in a timely and friendly manner. This interaction humanizes the brand, builds trust, and fosters a sense of community among followers. Engaged customers are more likely to share their positive experiences, recommend the brand to others, and remain loyal to the business. Effective customer interaction enhances the brand's online presence and strengthens customer relationships.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable in this study is marketing performance. It can be evaluated through key performance indicators such as sales growth, customer acquisition, customer retention, profitability, and overall brand strength. Marketing performance reflects the effectiveness of the firm's marketing

strategies in achieving its business goals and gaining a competitive edge in the cosmetic industry.

Gaps in Literature

While extensive research exists on the influence of social media on marketing notable gaps persist in the current literature. Areas requiring further exploration include the impact of emerging platforms, cross-cultural perspectives on social media marketing, and the ethical dimensions of data-driven strategies (Pires, 2019). Addressing these gaps is essential for advancing our understanding of this dynamic field.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive literature review, covering the historical evolution of social media, its impact on consumer behavior, challenges and opportunities for marketers, relevant theoretical frameworks, and a conceptual framework with variables. Additionally, it has highlighted areas where further research is needed to enhance our comprehension of the influence of social media as a marketing strategy in business.

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