

The Nexus Between Social Media Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, and Business Value: A Theoretical Review

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Abstract:

This paper aims to explore the ever-changing world of social media marketing (SMM) and its effects on both consumer behaviour and business value in the recent period. By analysing and reviewing a broad range of academic studies and scholars to explore how SMM impacts consumer decision-making, brand engagement, and purchasing habits as the main aspects of consumer behaviour. Also, investigated how businesses use social media marketing like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and LinkedIn to improve brand equity, customer loyalty, and financial performance. Recognizing the rapid emergence of new platforms, technologies, and consumer trends, this review identifies key areas where further research is needed to fully understand the dynamic interplay between social media marketing, consumers, and business success

Keywords: social media marketing, consumer behaviour, business value.

1. Introduction:

The digital revolution of the 21st century has drastically changed the way we access and communicate information. The internet has connected us on a global manner, and businesses have taken notice. Social media has emerged as a key factor in this transformation, with many platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and LinkedIn becoming essential methods for both personal and business connection (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Haudi et al., 2022). Social media has really become central to how we live. We're talking about the big facts like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, but also newer platforms like TikTok and LinkedIn. What started as just a way to connect with friends has turned into something much bigger. firms are now using such platforms to reach their target clients, develop their brand, and ultimately sell more stuff. That's all part of what we call Social Media Marketing (Alanazi, 2023; Alsoud et al., 2023; Dewi et al., 2022).

Basically, SMM is a whole new manner of doing the marketing process. It's not like the old ways where firms just talked to people through advertisements on televisions, newspapers, or in magazines. Now, it's about having actual conversations. Businesses can talk to customers, get their feedback, and build real connections. And it's not just one-sided. Customers can be part of this direct conversation, influencing how brands are seen and what people buy. The fact that we all have smartphones. Moreover, internet has really sped up how much we use social media platforms. It's become a must-have for any marketing strategy. People are using these platforms for everything - researching products, reading reviews, comparing prices, and getting recommendations. This change in how people shop has push businesses to adapt. They're seeing SMM as a critical way to reach their audience and keep them engaged (Alsoud et al., 2023; Hanaysha, 2022; Salhab et al., 2023).

SMM is a game-changer because it gives businesses a chance to access to many audiences where billions of people are on social media. In addition, you can target your message to specific groups, making sure it resonates. It's also about interaction, not just broadcasting. Businesses can talk to customers, build relationships, and get feedback (Ali Abbasi et al., 2022; Haudi et al., 2022; Savitri et al., 2021). Furthermore, customers can share their own content, which can have a huge impact on how brands are perceived and what people buy. Social media is also becoming an important way for online shopping, allowing businesses to sell directly to consumers without shops. It helps brands build loyalty, encouraging customers to stick with them.

And on top of that, businesses get access to real-time insights. Social media analytics tools provide data about customer behaviour, preferences, and what's currently popular. This helps firms understand their audience and adjust their strategies. Effective SMM isn't just about posting some stuff online. You need a solid understanding of consumer behaviour, how each platform functions, and good marketing strategies. Businesses must navigate a lot of complexities, including understanding the algorithms of social media,

creating engaging content, managing their online websites, and measuring the results (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Haudi et al., 2022)

This research is focused on understanding the complex nexus between SMM, how customers behave, and the value it brings to businesses. The researcher gathered and analysed information from a wide range of previous academic studies to provide an overview of SMM's impact.

- Consumer behaviour, this includes how social media influences information search, brand engagement, purchase decisions, and post-purchase behaviour.
- Business value, this encompasses how SMM contributes to brand equity, customer relationship management, financial performance, and overall business growth.

This review also covered the latest trends and challenges in SMM, given the rapid changes in technology, consumer preferences, and platform dynamics. The paper identified areas where more research is needed and propose directions for future research, in order to build a strong understanding the complex nexus between SMM, consumer behaviour, and business value.

1.1 The Evolution of social media and its Impact on Marketing:

Social media has changed so fast! Think back to those old chat rooms and forums – now we've got these multimedia platforms. It's been a total transformation. And it's changed how firms market themselves, shifting from just blasting advertisements to everyone to really personalized, interactive, and data-driven stuff. (Gan, 2023; Ünvan & Badlo, 2021)

Back in the day, social media was basic. We had platforms like Friendster and MySpace, they were mostly just about creating profiles and connecting people. But they paved the way for something bigger, Facebook. That's when things really changed. Facebook connected you with your friends and family, and suddenly, everyone was online. It showed us how powerful social media could be for connecting many groups of people and having real interactions. Then came Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, and things got even more interesting. Suddenly, we had all these new manners to create and share stuff. Twitter made it easy to share updates and news just in time. Instagram turned social media into a visual playground, all about photos and videos and anything related to life.

And YouTube? It became the place for video, giving creators a window to reach the world. Then smartphones came along, and everything went mobile. Suddenly, billions of people could access social media anytime and anywhere. We're talking constant connection and sharing. This whole “mobile first” thing has really changed marketing. Businesses must make sure their stuff looks good on phones now. Then we got platforms like TikTok and LinkedIn, which mixed things up. TikTok with its short, snappy videos, and LinkedIn for the professional matters. Suddenly, there were all these new ways to reach different groups

of people. Businesses now have more options to target very specific audiences (Agil et al., 2022; Bílková, 2021; Sharma & Aggarwal, 2022).

Alongside the growth of social media, we've seen the development of sophisticated analytics tools. These tools allow businesses to track customers behaviour and measure the performance of their marketing campaigns. This data-driven approach has enabled firms to personalize their strategies regarding marketing, optimize their content, and ultimately improve their return on investment (ROI). (Amara & Albinali, 2021; Hussain & Ali, 2021; Rashi et al., 2021)

1.2 The Significance of Consumer Behaviour in SMM:

Understanding what makes consumers tick is crucial for any marketing strategy, and social media marketing is no different. Consumer behaviour is all about studying how people choose and buy. In the context of SMM, this means looking at how consumers interact with social media, how they process information, how they engage with brands, and ultimately, how they make their decisions regarding the purchasing process. Several factors influence consumer behaviour on social media (Alanazi, 2023; Alsoud et al., 2023; Dewi et al., 2022; Mirbabaei et al., 2023; Schivinski et al., 2022; Sukaini, 2022), including: Social influence, Information seeking, Brand engagement, Personalization, Visual content, and social proof.

1.3 The Role of SMM in Enhancing Business Value:

SMM plays a crucial role in enhancing business value by contributing to various aspects of organizational performance (Duffett, 2017; Felix et al., 2017; Hanaysha, 2022; Savitri et al., 2021; Wibowo et al., 2021). These include Brand equity, Customer relationship management (CRM), Financial performance, Innovation, and Competitive advantage. By leveraging the power of SMM, businesses can create sustainable value for their stakeholders, enhance their brand reputation, and achieve long-term growth.

1.4 The Scope and Objectives of this Review:

This review aims to provide a comprehensive and critical analysis of the previous literature on the impact of SMM on consumer behaviour and business value. The specific objectives of this review are:

- To examine the mechanisms through which SMM influences consumer behaviour, including information search, brand engagement, and purchase decisions.
- To analyse the ways in which SMM contributes to business value, such as brand equity, customer loyalty, and financial performance.
- To identify the emerging trends and challenges in SMM, considering the rapid evolution of technology, consumer preferences, and platform dynamics.

- To propose directions for future research, addressing key research gaps and contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the field of SMM.

2. Theoretical Framework: Understanding the Mechanisms of Social Media Marketing's Influence

To really understand how SMM, customers, and business success all interacting together, we need a solid way of looking at it. Think of it like a pair of glasses that helps us see the big lens and understand why things happen. So, in this section, we're going to break down some key theories that help us understand how SMM makes an impact. The paper covered things like why people use social media, how they're influenced by others, how they process information, and how businesses build its connections and brand value (Mirbabaee et al., 2023; Schivinski et al., 2022; Sukaini, 2022)

2.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT):

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) is a communication theory that assumes individuals actively seek out media to satisfy specific needs and desires. Instead of viewing consumers as passive recipients of media messages, UGT ensures their active role in selecting and using media to achieve desired outcomes. In the context of SMM, UGT provides a framework for understanding why consumers engage with social media platforms and how businesses can leverage these motivations to achieve their marketing goals. According to UGT, consumers use social media for a variety of gratifications, including Information seeking, entertainment, social interaction, self-expression, and personal identity. By understanding the gratifications that consumers seek from social media, businesses can tailor their SMM strategies to meet these needs, enhancing engagement and building stronger brand relationships (Liu & Ali Qureshi, 2023; Sadyk & Islam, 2022; Sidharta et al., 2021; Suzanne Thomas & Shivani Verma, 2023).

2.2 Social Influence Theory:

Social Influence Theory assumes the impact of social norms and peer influence on individual behaviour. In the context of SMM, this theory highlights the role that social media plays in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions. Social media platforms provide a ground for social influence, where consumers are influenced by the opinions, recommendations, and actions of their social networks. Key aspects of social influence in SMM include normative influence, informational influence, word-of-mouth (WOM), and social proof (Liu et al., 2023; Palalic et al., 2020; Rosita et al., 2023).

2.3 Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM):

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is a dual-process theory that explains how consumers process persuasive messages. According to ELM, consumers process information through two routes: the central route and the peripheral route. The central route involves

careful consideration of the information, while the peripheral route relies on superficial cues. In the context of SMM, ELM helps us understand how consumers process social media content and how businesses can design effective messages.

First, central route, consumers who are highly motivated and able to process information are more likely to engage in central route processing. Businesses can leverage central route processing by providing information about their products and services, highlighting their benefits and features.

Second, peripheral route, Consumers who are less motivated or less able to process information are more likely to rely on peripheral cues, such as source credibility, visual appeal, and emotional appeals. Businesses can leverage peripheral route processing by creating visually appealing content, using celebrity endorsements, and evoking positive emotions (Ebrahimi et al., 2023; Rodrigo & Mendis, 2023; Sağtaş, 2022).

2.4 Relationship Marketing Theory:

Relationship marketing theory focuses on building long-term connections with customers through personalized engagement. In the context of SMM, this theory highlights the importance of fostering two-way communication, building brand communities, and providing personalized experiences (Agil et al., 2022; Gan, 2023; Sharma & Aggarwal, 2022; Ünvan & Badlo, 2021). Key aspects of relationship marketing in SMM include personalized communication, customer engagement, brand communities, and customer loyalty

2.5 Brand Equity Theory:

Brand Equity Theory explains how brand's value is built based on consumer knowledge and perceptions. In the context of SMM, this theory highlights the role of social media in enhancing brand awareness, improving brand image, and fostering brand loyalty (Bílková, 2021; Constantinides & Fountain, 2008; Rashi et al., 2021; Rosita et al., 2023; Sidharta et al., 2021). Key aspects of brand equity in SMM include Brand awareness, Brand image, and Brand loyalty. These theoretical frameworks provide a robust foundation for understanding the complex interplay between SMM, consumer behaviour, and business value. By drawing upon these theories, we can develop a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how SMM influences consumer decision-making processes, brand engagement, and business performance.

3. Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behaviour

Social media has changed how we shop. It affects everything, from when we first start looking for something to even after we've bought it. So, we're going to discover how SMM changes how people act as customers. We'll look at how they find information, how they interact with brands, and how they decide what to buy.

3.1 Information Search and Processing:

These days, if you want to know about something, you go online, right? Especially social media. Before buying anything, people are checking out products, comparing prices, reading reviews, and asking their friends online. Basically, we've got all this information from the internet through social platforms, and it's made us smarter shoppers (Ajina, 2019; Mishra & Ashfaq, 2023; Sağtaş, 2022).

3.1.1. User-Generated Content (UGC) Influence:

Social media is flooded with stuff people create themselves – reviews, ratings, comments, you name it. And this stuff really matters when you're deciding what to buy. People trust these reviews way more than anything a brand says. Like, good reviews can make a brand look awesome and sell a ton, but bad reviews? They can totally kill a sale. That's why companies must be super careful about what people are saying about them online (Ebrahimi et al., 2023; Y. Liu et al., 2023; Rodrigo & Mendis, 2023).

3.1.2. Visual Content's Impact:

Social media is all about the visuals. Pictures and videos are everywhere. And they work! They grab your attention, make you feel something, and get the point across way faster than just reading text. Think about Instagram and Pinterest – they're basically built on visuals, and they're huge for brands in fashion, beauty, and food. And short videos, like on TikTok and Instagram Reels? They're super powerful for showing off products, telling brand stories, and just making things fun and engaging (Rosita et al., 2023; Sidharta et al., 2021).

3.1.3. Influencer Marketing's Role:

Influencer marketing is huge now. Basically, brands team up with people who are popular on social media to promote their stuff. These influencers have built up trust with their followers, so when they recommend something, people listen. It can really change how people see a brand and what they buy. But here's the catch: it only works if the influencer is genuine and fits with the brand. People can spot a fake a mile away, and it can really hurt a brand's reputation (Liu & Ali Qureshi, 2023; Sadyk & Islam, 2022; Schivinski et al., 2022; Suzanne Thomas & Shivani Verma, 2023).

3.2 Brand Engagement and Interaction:

Social media platforms facilitate interactive communication between brands and consumers, enabling businesses to build relationships, foster brand engagement, and create brand communities. This interactive nature of SMM has transformed the traditional, one-way communication model into a dynamic, two-way dialogue (Agil et al., 2022; Bílková, 2021; Gan, 2023; Ünvan & Badlo, 2021).

3.2.1. Interactive Features and Engagement:

Social media platforms offer a range of interactive features, including comments, likes, shares, polls, quizzes, and direct messages. These features enable consumers to actively participate in brand communication, express their opinions, and engage with content. Interactive content, such as polls and quizzes, can enhance consumer engagement by creating a sense of participation and involvement. Brands can use these features to gather valuable feedback and insights from their audience. Live streaming has emerged as a powerful tool for engaging with consumers in real-time. Live sessions allow brands to interact directly with their audience, answer questions, and showcase products (Mirbabaei et al., 2023; Murshed & Ugurlu, 2023; Sukaini, 2022).

3.2.2. Brand Communities and Belonging:

social media is like a hangout spot for people who love the same brands. They can chat with others who get it and share their stories. This creates a feeling of belonging, like your part of a club. And it's super helpful for brands too! They can see what people are saying, fix any problems, and even turn fans into brand ambassadors. Basically, these online communities can get people talking about a brand and recommending it to their friends (Amara & Albinali, 2021; Hussain & Ali, 2021; Rashi et al., 2021).

3.2.3. Personalized Communication and Relationship Building:

SMM lets businesses talk to customers like they know them. They can send messages and offers that fit what each person likes. This makes customers happier and more loyal. By looking at social media data, companies can figure out who their customers are, what they're into, and how they act online. Then they can create content that's interesting to them. But here's the thing: you gotta be consistent and respond quickly. Brands need to jump in on comments, answer questions, and fix problems right away, and do it professionally (Agil et al., 2022; Gan, 2023; Sharma & Aggarwal, 2022).

3.3 Purchase Decisions and Behaviour: The Social Commerce Revolution

Social media platforms are increasingly integrated into the purchase decision process, influencing consumer choices and facilitating online transactions. The rise of social commerce, which involves selling products and services directly through social media platforms, has transformed the way consumers shop (Felix et al., 2017; Levy et al., 2024; Wibowo et al., 2021).

3.3.1. Social Commerce and Seamless Shopping:

Shopping on social media is super easy now. You can just buy stuff right from your feed, no need to go to some other website. It's all quick and simple. And with things like shoppable posts and in-app checkout, it's even more convenient. Platforms like Instagram

and Facebook have added shopping features right into their apps. Plus, live shopping is a big deal – brands show off their stuff and give out exclusive deals during live streams. It's like shopping and entertainment rolled into one (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Hanaysha, 2022; Haudi et al., 2022; Savitri et al., 2021)

3.3.2. Promotional Offers and Discounts:

Brands love using social media for deals and discounts. It's like, 'Hurry, this offer won't last!' That kind of thing makes people buy stuff right away. And it's cheap for companies to get the word out to tons of people with ads that target exactly who they want. Plus, contests and giveaways get everyone excited and bring in tons of customers, which means more sales (Alanazi, 2023; Alsoud et al., 2023; Dewi et al., 2022).

3.3.3. Social Proof and Purchase Confidence:

Basically, SMM is now a must-have for any business. It affects everything we do as customers – how we find info, how we interact with brands, and what we buy. If businesses use social media right, they can build strong relationships with customers, keep them coming back, and sell more stuff (Hanaysha, 2022; Salhab et al., 2023; Savitri et al., 2021).

4. Impact of Social Media Marketing on Business Value:

SMM isn't just about getting likes and comments; it changes how much a business is worth. In this section, we'll look at how SMM boosts a company's value, focusing on things like how well-known the brand is, how they manage customer relationships, and how it affects their bottom line (Abbasi et al., 2022; Duffett, 2017; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Haudi et al., 2022).

4.1 Brand Equity and Awareness:

4.1.1. Brand Awareness and Reach:

social media lets businesses reach *tons* of people, like, all sorts of people. With ads and good content, brands can get way more visible. And if something goes viral? Boom! Everyone knows about them. To make the most of this, you gotta create stuff that people want to share. And showing up on all the different platforms helps people remember your brand (Felix et al., 2017; Wibowo et al., 2021)

4.1.2. Brand Image and Perception:

SMM lets brands show people who they really are. By making cool stuff that fits with their values and speaks to their audience, they can create a good image. And if they listen to what people are saying and fix any problems fast, they'll build trust. Basically, being real and honest online is key. Plus, telling stories with pictures and videos is a great way to show off their brand's personality (Gan, 2023; Levy et al., 2024; Ünvan & Badlo, 2021).

4.1.3. Brand Loyalty and Advocacy:

SMM helps brands build these awesome online communities where fans can connect and share their love for the brand. If brands create real conversations and make things personal, they can build strong relationships and turn customers into super loyal fans. And when they encourage people to create their own content and give shout-outs to their fans, it makes everyone feel like they're part of something special, which makes them even more loyal (Agil et al., 2022; Saleem Meer & Ahmed Khan, 2022; Sharma & Aggarwal, 2022)

4.2 Customer Relationship Management (CRM):

4.2.1. Customer Feedback and Insights:

social media is like a constant customer feedback machine. Businesses can see what people are saying and figure out what they need to fix. There are even tools that let them track when their brand is mentioned, analyze conversations, and see what customers like. And they can talk directly to customers through comments, messages, and polls, which is great for getting feedback and solving problems fast (Bílková, 2021; Hanaysha, 2022; Rashi et al., 2021)

4.2.2. Customer Support and Service:

social media is now a super easy way for customers to get help. Businesses can fix problems fast and keep people happy. Chatbots and automatic replies can give instant answers to common questions. And when brands give quick, personalized support on social media, customers are way more satisfied and loyal (Alanazi, 2023; Dewi et al., 2022; Savitri et al., 2021).

4.2.3. Customer Retention and Engagement:

By fostering ongoing engagement and providing personalized experiences, businesses can enhance customer retention and reduce churn rates. Social media platforms enable businesses to maintain consistent communication with customers, keeping them informed about new products, promotions, and events. Building strong relationships with customers on social media can cultivate brand advocacy, with customers acting as brand ambassadors (Hanaysha, 2022; Salhab et al., 2023; Savitri et al., 2021).

5. Emerging Trends and Challenges in Social Media Marketing.

Social media is always changing, like, constantly. New tech, how we act online, and the platforms themselves keep evolving. So, in this section, we're going to look at what's coming next for SMM, like AI and automation, AR and VR, all the privacy stuff and ethical questions, and how we're going to measure if any of this works (Abbasi et al., 2022; Duffett, 2017; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Haudi et al., 2022).

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automation: The Intelligent Evolution of SMM

- Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR).
- Privacy and Ethical Concerns: Building Trust in the Digital Age
- Measurement and Analytics: Proving ROI in the Social Media Sphere

6. Future Research Directions:

The dynamic nature of social media and its pervasive influence on consumer behaviour and business value necessitate continuous research and exploration. This section outlines potential avenues for future research, aiming to address existing knowledge gaps and contribute to the advancement of social media marketing (SMM) scholarship (Alanazi, 2023; Alsoud et al., 2023; Dewi et al., 2022; Hanaysha, 2022; Salhab et al., 2023).

- Cross-Cultural Analysis: Understanding Global SMM Dynamics
- Longitudinal Studies: Tracking Long-Term SMM Impacts
- Impact of Emerging Technologies: Navigating the Technological Frontier
- Ethical Considerations: Ensuring Responsible SMM Practices
- Integration of SMM with Other Marketing Channels: Achieving Synergistic Effects

7. Conclusion:

This review has taken a deep dive into the intricate world of social media marketing, exploring its significant impact on both consumer behaviour and business value. By synthesising existing research, the paper illuminated the various ways social media marketing transforms the consumer journey, from initial information gathering and brand engagement to purchase decisions and post-purchase interactions. Furthermore, we've examined the strategic role of social media marketing in strengthening brand equity and cultivating customer relationships.

Social media platforms have proven to be transformative marketing tools. The interactive nature of social media marketing allows businesses to engage in two-way communication with consumers, fostering brand communities through features like comments, likes, and direct messages. Furthermore, user-generated content has empowered consumers to actively participate in brand-building. The review emphasised the importance of understanding consumer behaviour in this digital sphere. Consumers increasingly use social media to research products, seek recommendations, and share their experiences. The paper explored the impact of social proof, visual content, and influencer marketing, revealing the complex factors that influence consumer decisions online. Social media marketing also offers significant strategic value for businesses, enhancing brand awareness, improving brand image, and fostering customer loyalty. Integrating social media into customer relationship management allows businesses to provide personalised support,

gather feedback, and cultivate lasting customer relationships. Ultimately, effective implementation of social media marketing can drive sales growth, reduce marketing costs, and improve return on investment.

The evolving landscape of social media marketing is full of potential, but it also presents significant challenges. We're seeing artificial intelligence and automation reshape content creation, campaign optimisation, and customer interactions. Augmented and virtual reality are creating exciting, immersive brand experiences. However, we must also address growing concerns about data privacy, ethical marketing practices, and the spread of misinformation. Accurately measuring and analysing the performance of social media marketing remains a key challenge, requiring sophisticated analytics tools and methodologies. Looking forward, there are several promising areas for research. For example, we could explore the effectiveness of social media marketing in different cultural contexts. We could also investigate its long-term impact on brand perception, customer loyalty, and revenue. Furthermore, we should examine how emerging technologies like AI, AR, VR, and blockchain will influence the field. Finally, we must consider the ethical implications of these advancements and the integration of social media marketing with other marketing strategies.

To sum it up, social media marketing is now a must-have for any modern marketing strategy. If businesses really get how customers act online, use social media to chat and engage, and keep up with the latest tech, they can use it to build strong brands, make loyal customers, and grow steadily. Since social media is always changing, businesses need to keep learning and trying new things to stay ahead in the digital world

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