

Original Article (Qualitative)

eISSN: 2980-8359

Compilation of the native model of social media marketing for online stores

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Receive:

10 September 2023

Revise:

17 November 2023

Accept:

28 November 2023


Keywords:

Social marketing,
social media,
branding,
online store.

Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to develop a native model of social media marketing for online stores, so the current research is in the scope of developmental research. The statistical population of this research included 10 marketing experts and university professors who were selected purposefully and non-randomly, based on reaching theoretical saturation. A semi-structured interview was used to collect data. The data obtained from the interview was done in three stages of open coding, central coding and selective coding through database theory. Max QDA version 20 software was used for data analysis. From all the indicators obtained from the qualitative analysis of 10 interviews, 11 categories and 52 indicators have been used to formulate the native model of social media marketing of online stores. The result of data analysis has been presenting a paradigmatic model including six components of causal conditions (information and communication technology, time management and cost management), background conditions (infrastructure of online stores), intervening conditions (sanctions and economic problems, and risk management), strategies (use of expert manpower and the use of influencers), the central phenomenon (social media marketing), and consequences (sustainability in the use of social networks, special value of the brand). A number of indicators were also identified for each of the identified main categories.

Please cite this article as (APA): Assarian, M. A., Mehrani, H., Alipour Darvishi, Z., & Hasan Moradi, N. (2024). Development of a native model of social media marketing for online stores with a qualitative approach. *Journal of value creating in Business Management*, 3(4), 201-224.

 <https://doi.org/10.22034/jvcbm.2023.415764.1183>



Publisher: Iranian Business Management Association

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

The most important event that happened after the development of social networks in the world is a topic called business in social networks, which has many advantages from the point of view of both commercial companies and customers (Iacovou, 2021). Social business has a structure based on social networks, where each business center or each customer is a node of the network (Jacobson, Gruzd & Hernández-García, 2020). Social media marketing has an impact on various aspects of customers' behavioral tendencies, such as brand loyalty and brand trust; therefore, it has been paid highly attention by researchers as well as business owners (Yazdani Kachuei, Korhani, & Kosari, 2022). Online stores have emerged in the country's business environment for more than a decade and have experienced relatively rapid growth. On the other hand, with the expansion of the Internet and especially smart phones inside the country, the desire of customers to buy from online stores has also increased. However, a large part of online stores in Iran have not been able to convince a large part of customers to buy online, and one of the reasons is the lack of an effective online marketing program in most of the online stores in the country. The results of this study can provide opportunities for business leaders to find new ways to use social media to engage their customers, which can lead to job creation and improve the economic situation, and contribute to social change. Therefore, the current research was conducted with the aim of developing a local model of social media marketing for online stores with a qualitative approach. The main question of the current research is: what dimensions and components does the local social media marketing model of online stores include?

Theoretical framework

Social media provides a two-way communication channel between companies and their customers, and is changing the way by which businesses market their goods and services to their customers (Morales, Sosa-Fey & Farias, 2017). A common business problem is that business leaders are not using social media to improve customer engagement, resulting in lost potential profits. A specific business problem is that some business leaders lack social media marketing strategies to increase customer engagement (Islam, Rahman & Connolly, 2021). The past decade has seen the development of complex, diverse and intensified interactions between companies and their customers through the use of social media. On one hand, companies use social media platforms to expand geographic reaching to buyers, strengthen brand evaluations, and create closer relationships with customers (Creevey, Coughlan & O'Connor, 2022). On the other hand, customers are increasingly empowered by using social media and controlling the marketing communication process and are becoming creators, collaborators, and interpreters of the messages sent by business companies.

Alrawad et al, (2023) conducted a study titled customers' perception of the advantages and risks of online stores. A total of 558 participants in three countries (Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) were selected as samples. The results showed that among the types of risks examined, only three had a significant impact on customers' purchase decisions: financial risk, information risk, and privacy risk. Regarding the moderating role of demographic variables, the analysis showed that previous experience has a significant moderating effect. Liu, Wang, Zhang & Qiao (2023) conducted a study on the effects of social media marketing activities on the travel behaviors of Generation Z in the tourism industry. The statistical population and the studied sample include 384 female tourists. The results showed that generation Z tourists were more sensitive to the four characteristics of social

media marketing activities (entertainment, stylishness, interaction, and word of mouth) when choosing destinations, and were more willing to pay more to visit than others. Yazdani Kachuei, Korhani, & Kosari (2021) conducted a study entitled Investigating the impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty with the mediating role of trust and brand equity in the banking industry. 384 acceptable samples were collected by simple random sampling. Research results shows that social media marketing has an effect on brand loyalty with the mediating role of trust and brand equity, that is, if the bank tries to create content in the virtual space and through it they can attract the attention of the audience in those platforms and encourage readers to share It among the social media, as a result, the loyalty of the bank's customers will be improved.

Methodology

This research is in the field of developmental-applicable in terms of purpose, and it is a qualitative-exploratory research method, which, by means of the qualitative approach of dimensions, components and indicators effective on social media marketing, is identified and design a research model. To design the model, a group of social media marketing experts, online store managers and social media marketing managers have been selected and interviewed. The reason for choosing this community is the dominance of experts on the concept of marketing and knowledge of its status, and having experience and knowledge and responsibilities related to social media marketing and increasing sales in online stores. Therefore, sampling has been done using the snowball method. The sampling of experts in this research has been carried out until the discovery and analysis process reaches the theoretical saturation point; by conducting 10 interviews. In this research, database theory was used for data analysis. In this regard, the content of the interviews was conducted in three stages of open coding, central coding and selective coding. Data analysis in the qualitative section has been done using Maxqda v.20 software.

Discussion and Results

In the research process, after collecting data and analyzing and interpreting them, it is time to present the model, conclusion and summarizing the research. In the first step, by examining the current situation, the obtained data are classified into 6 main categories. According to the professors and experts, all indicators obtained from the qualitative analysis of 10 interviews; including 11 categories and 52 indicators, have been used to formulate the native model of social media marketing for online stores. Based on the secondary coding results of the research, the indicators of considering sufficient capital to start a business, the costs of supplying goods and various items, SEO, site design and optimization and etc., producing trust in the internet and virtual space, providing comprehensive and complete information in the case of store products as contextual categories, information and communication technology, time management and cost management as categories of causal conditions, indicators of widespread advertising in social networks, providing after-sales services (providing services before, during and after purchase), long-term strategy or planning (rather than considering short-term and temporary profits), planning to publish content on social networks, listening and interacting with customers (by receiving comments, opinions and complaints from customers), analyzing marketing performance as the central phenomenon category, the use of expert manpower and the use of influential people (influencers) as the category of strategies and actions, sanctions and economic problems, and risk management as the category of intervening conditions, indicators of brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty, repetition of virtual purchases, fanatical shopping

behavior, reduction of search time and continuous use of social network, positive word-of-mouth advertising, customer satisfaction were selected as the categories of outcomes in developing the local social media marketing model of online stores.

Conclusion

These findings show that if the native social media marketing model of online stores is formulated correctly, it can have a positive effect on the buying behavior of customers; a problem that has already been mentioned by many researchers (Chatterjee & Kar, 2020; Creevey, et.al, 2022; Harb, et.al, 2019; Nian & Sundararajan, 2022).

It is recommended that in other researches, the effect of endorsement by famous people to brand online stores should be investigated separately.

It is suggested to evaluate the impact of economic sanctions on the performance of domestic online businesses in a separate research format.

It is suggested to develop a model related to social media marketing of online stores using metacombination method in future researches.