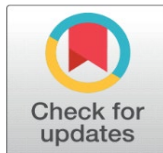


EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PRACTICES ON ENTREPRENEURIAL GROWTH IN NAGALAND

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed how social media marketing (SMM) strategies affected the development of entrepreneurship in Nagaland, India. Entrepreneurs in the area have started using social media tools to improve brand visibility, interact with customers, and spur business growth as a result of the growing adoption of digital platforms. 150 entrepreneurs completed structured questionnaires to provide primary data as part of a descriptive-analytical study approach. The results showed that the most popular platforms were Facebook and Instagram, and that regular content posting and customer service were highly correlated with higher sales and a larger client base. Some entrepreneurs encountered difficulties because of their lack of technical expertise and sparse usage of sponsored advertising, even though the majority of them reported notable benefits from their SMM efforts. According to the study's findings, social media was a strong and affordable marketing avenue for Nagaland's entrepreneurial growth, underscoring the necessity of specialized digital training to optimize its advantages.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Entrepreneurial Growth, Digital Marketing, Small Businesses, Nagaland, Online Branding, Customer Engagement, Social Platforms

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the advent of the digital age, social media has developed into a potent marketing tool, which has revolutionized the way in which businesses interact, promote, and expand their operations. For business owners, particularly those operating in developing nations, social media marketing (SMM) provides a platform that is both inexpensive and easily accessible, allowing them to communicate with their target audiences, construct their brand identities, and interact directly with their customers. Given that Nagaland is a state located in Northeast India, where traditional marketing methods are sometimes constrained by factors such as geography, infrastructure, and budgetary constraints, this is particularly pertinent in the context of Nagaland.

Many local company owners in Nagaland have been able to explore social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube for the purpose of conducting business over the course of the past decade as a result of the increasingly widespread availability of smartphones and internet connectivity in the region. These platforms have not only made it possible for business owners to exhibit their goods and services, but they have also made it possible for them to obtain feedback in real time, cultivate connections with customers, and compete in international marketplaces that extend beyond their immediate surrounds.

Despite the fact that social media marketing is becoming increasingly popular among business owners in Nagaland, there has been a paucity of empirical study that has been conducted to evaluate the actual influence that it has on the growth and performance of businesses. In order to investigate the role that social media marketing strategies have in boosting entrepreneurial outcomes such as greater sales, improved customer interaction, and enhanced brand visibility, the purpose of this study was to conduct an exploratory study. The purpose of the study was to produce evidence-based insights that could be used to influence future digital marketing strategies for small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in the region. These insights were aimed at assessing the types of platforms that were used, the frequency of marketing activity, and the perceived business benefits.

The purpose of this study was to identify challenges and opportunities associated with the adoption of social media through a structured investigation of the experiences of local entrepreneurs. Ultimately, the study aimed to contribute to policy discussions and capacity-building efforts that were aimed at strengthening Nagaland's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

- **Yusuf Bilgin (2018)** A study was conducted to investigate the impact that social media marketing activities have on brand recognition, brand image, and brand loyalty. One of the findings of his research was that consumers' awareness of companies and their emotional connection to those brands were positively impacted by the presence of material on social media platforms that was both regular and engaging. Based on the findings, it was determined that social media initiatives that were well-planned contributed greatly to the development of long-term consumer loyalty and to the enhancement of total brand equity.
- **Zain-Ul-Abideen and Salman Saleem (2016)** research was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of advertising and its impact on the purchasing behavior of consumers. According to the findings of their study, the emotional and informative appeals that are utilized in advertising, particularly on digital platforms, have a direct influence on the prospective purchases that people intend to make. They discovered that advertising content that was credible, imaginative, and visually appealing led to higher levels of engagement, which eventually influenced purchasing decisions.
- **Singhal Tarun Kumar (2016)** examined the influence that social media expressions, including as reviews, likes, and shares, have on the level of trust and engagement that customers have with a brand. Based on the findings of the study, it was discovered that interactive content and expressions provided by users greatly increased the level of trustworthiness and emotional involvement present among customers. Additionally, it was shown that businesses had a role in the development of a loyal client base by actively engaging with their customers through comments, shares, and reactions.
- **Sinha et al. (2012)** It was presented that a comprehensive framework on the use of social media analytics as a tool for understanding customer behavior, particularly in the context of HR analytics and larger business operations, was presented. According to the findings of the study, companies who made use of real-time behavioral insights derived from data collected from social media platforms were in a better position to make strategic decisions concerning consumer engagement, market positioning, and personalized communication.
- **Raju (2013)** investigated the role of advertising in consumer decision-making and concluded that both traditional and digital advertisements played a pivotal role in influencing each stage of the consumer decision process—awareness, interest, evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase behavior. The research emphasized that effective advertising helped reduce consumer uncertainty, especially when aligned with targeted messaging and appropriate media channels.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design that was both descriptive and analytical was utilized for the study. Documenting and gaining an understanding of the prevalent social media marketing practices that are utilized by business owners in Nagaland was the objective of the descriptive part. An examination of the relationship between the utilization of these practices and

measures of entrepreneurial success, such as the expansion of businesses, the engagement of customers, and the enhancement of revenue, was the primary emphasis of the analytical component at hand.

3.2. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

For the purpose of the study, the population consisted of business owners running their operations in a variety of fields across the urban and semi-urban regions of Nagaland. The retail industry, handicrafts, fashion, food service, and agricultural industries were all included in these sectors. A technique known as stratified random sampling was utilized in order to guarantee representation that was equitable across a variety of business disciplines. The ultimate sample was comprised of one hundred fifty business owners who had been actively involved in social media marketing efforts over the course of the previous year.

3.3. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The primary data for the study were gathered through the use of a standardized questionnaire, which was disseminated in both online and offline settings. The offline data were obtained through in-person visits and interviews, while the online responses were gathered through the use of platforms such as Google Forms and WhatsApp. A combination of closed-ended and scaled questions were included in the questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect information regarding the frequency and kind of social media usage, content development tactics such as posts, reels, and videos, and customer involvement procedures such as comments, polls, and direct messaging. Additionally, it contained items that were associated with the utilization of sponsored promotions and perceived business outcomes such as the expansion of sales and the recognition of the brand.

Secondary data were gathered from a variety of sources, including scholarly literature, reports from regional business associations, and publications from the government. For the purpose of contextualizing the current condition of entrepreneurship and digital participation in Nagaland, these sources gave background insights and helped contextualize the situation.

3.4. TOOLS OF ANALYSIS

Descriptive methods such as frequency distribution, percentage analysis, and categorization were utilized in order to organize and evaluate the data that was obtained. The utilization of these tools enabled the compilation of patterns in the utilization of social media marketing by business owners, as well as the discovery of general trends connected to the outcomes of commercial deals.

3.5. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small group of business owners to ensure that it was clear, consistent, and relevant. This was done in order to guarantee the instrument's dependability. Their comments served as the basis for the essential adjustments that were made. The content validity of the instrument was verified by expert reviews conducted by academicians and professionals working in the domains of marketing and entrepreneurship. These evaluations ensured that the questions were in line with the aims of the study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part provided the findings that were obtained from the primary data that was collected from 150 businesses located around Nagaland. Additionally, the implications of these findings were examined in relation to best practices for social media marketing (SMM). Identification of common trends in social media usage, the relationship between social media and the growth of entrepreneurial endeavors, and the perceived success of various social media marketing tactics were the primary focuses of the analysis. The findings were arranged in accordance with the different thematic subheadings, with each subsection being supported by pertinent data and interpretative insights.

4.1. SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS USED BY ENTREPRENEURS

According to the findings of the poll, the vast majority of business owners are promoting their companies on many social media platforms. In accordance with the data shown in Table 1, the platforms that were most chosen were Facebook and Instagram, followed by WhatsApp and YouTube. Among the primary reasons that entrepreneurs chose these platforms, they cited the visual appeal, the ease of interaction, and the familiarity of the user experience.

Table 1 Distribution of Entrepreneurs by Preferred Social Media Platform

Social Media Platform	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Facebook	60	40%
Instagram	52	35%
WhatsApp	27	18%
YouTube	6	4%
Twitter	3	2%
Others (e.g., Threads)	2	1%
Total	150	100%

Figure 1

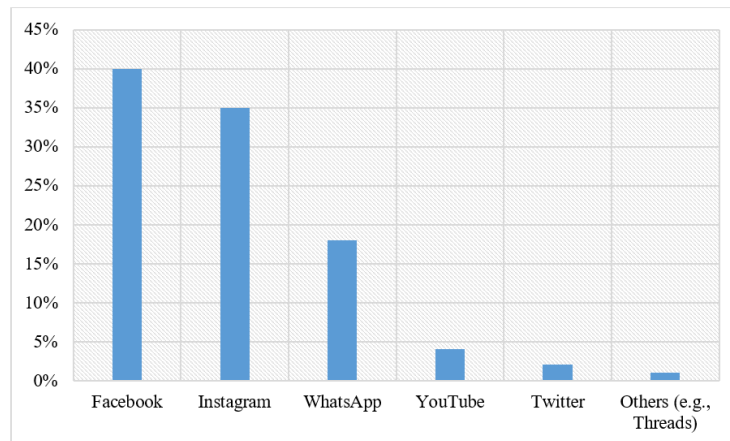


Figure 1 Distribution of Entrepreneurs by Preferred Social Media Platform

Facebook and Instagram were found to be the social media sites that were utilized the most frequently by company owners in Nagaland, with forty percent and thirty-five percent of respondents, respectively, looking to these platforms for the purpose of promoting their companies. WhatsApp came in third place as the third most popular platform, with 18% of the market share. This highlights the platform's role in informal marketing and direct engagement with customers. Platforms such as YouTube (4%), Twitter/X (2%), and others such as Threads (1%) were utilized by a lesser fraction of entrepreneurs. This indicates that platforms that are more visual-heavy or microblogging were less desired. This could be due to the restricted capacity for content generation, or audience reach of these platforms. The data, taken as a whole, indicated a strong preference for platforms that promote visual content, customer connection, and involvement with local markets.

4.2. FREQUENCY OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ACTIVITIES

Entrepreneurs varied in how actively they engaged in content creation and interaction with followers. Table 2 showed the frequency of key SMM activities such as posting content, responding to customer queries, and running advertisements.

Table 2 Frequency of Key SMM Activities Among Entrepreneurs

Activity	Daily	Weekly	Occasionally	Never
Posting content (images, videos, etc.)	78	54	15	3
Responding to customer inquiries	102	36	10	2
Running paid advertisements	24	48	45	33

Figure 2

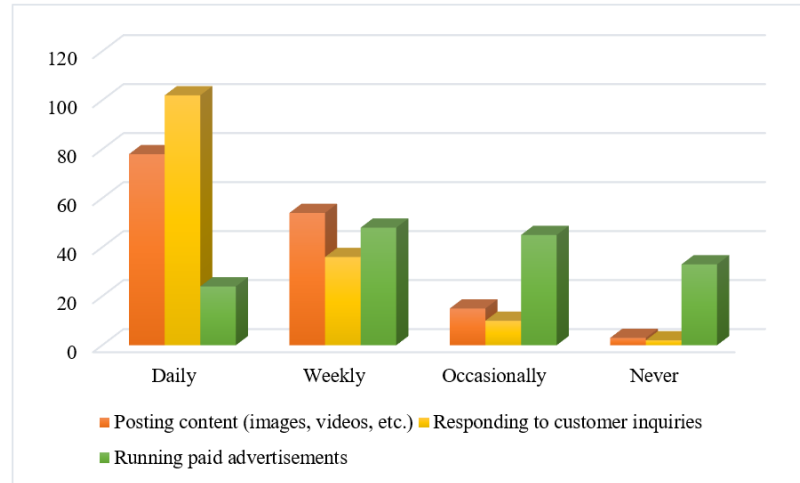


Figure 2 Frequency of Key SMM Activities Among Entrepreneurs

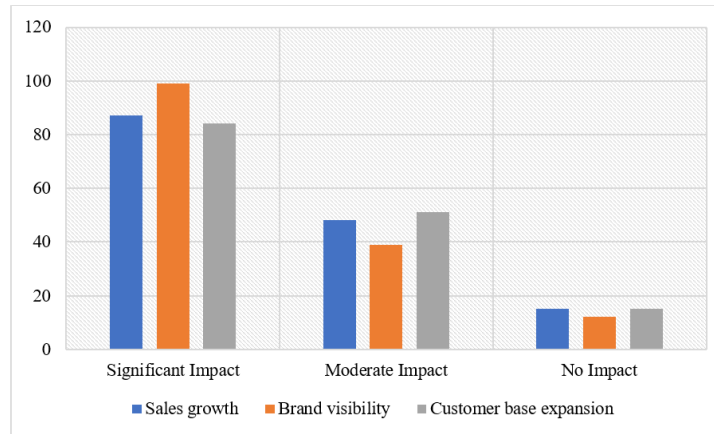
According to the survey results, the vast majority of business owners are actively participating in important social media marketing (SMM) activities, particularly those involving connection with customers and the production of content. There was a significant commitment to maintaining an active online presence, as indicated by the fact that approximately 68% of respondents posted content on a daily or weekly basis. The priority that is placed on timely communication and customer relationship management is reflected in the fact that an even higher proportion, 92%, responded to client inquiries either daily or weekly. The use of paid adverts, on the other hand, was considerably low, with only 16% of people using them on a daily basis and 32% using them on a weekly basis, while a significant 22% never used them at all. It appears from this that although business owners placed a high priority on organic interaction and content-driven initiatives, their utilization of paid promotional tools may have been restricted due to financial restrictions or a lack of sufficient understanding.

4.3. PERCEIVED IMPACT OF SMM ON BUSINESS GROWTH

Respondents were asked whether they observed measurable growth in various aspects of their business due to social media marketing efforts. As shown in Table 3, most entrepreneurs agreed that SMM positively influenced their sales, brand awareness, and customer base.

Table 3: Entrepreneurial Perceptions of SMM's Impact

Business Growth Area	Significant Impact	Moderate Impact	No Impact
Sales growth	87	48	15
Brand visibility	99	39	12
Customer base expansion	84	51	15

Figure 3**Figure 3 Entrepreneurial Perceptions of SMM's Impact**

Based on the findings, it was determined that social media marketing had a favorable impact on a variety of areas of business growth among entrepreneurs in Nagaland. 66% of respondents reported a considerable influence on brand visibility, and 58% of respondents noted a large boost in sales. These findings indicate that a significant number of respondents have observed noteworthy changes. In a similar vein, 56% of businesses saw a considerable increase in the number of customers they served. In addition, a moderate influence was widely acknowledged, notably in terms of the expansion of the customer base (34%) and sales (32%). This indicates that although social media initiatives were generally effective, the degree to which they were successful varied depending on how they were executed and how engaged the audience was. A relatively small minority of respondents, between 8 and 10 percent, indicated that there was no influence, which suggests that the majority of people benefited from social media marketing efforts to some degree.

5. DISCUSSION

Based on the data, it was discovered that marketing through social media services played a significant role in the development of entrepreneurial activity in Nagaland. These platforms were essential conduits for customer connection and visibility, as evidenced by the high reliance on Facebook and Instagram, which reflected tendencies that were both global and regional in nature.

The findings of the study demonstrated that a favorable correlation exists between active and consistent involvement and business success, particularly with regard to the publishing of information and connection with employees and customers. The comparatively low use of paid advertisements revealed that the majority of business owners preferred organic growth tactics. This could be due to financial restrictions or a lack of expertise regarding advertising.

As an additional point of interest, the premise that successful social media strategies greatly contributed to the success of entrepreneurs was supported by the perceived impact of social media marketing (SMM) on key growth indicators. However, the data also showed a sector of entrepreneurs who reported limited impact, which suggests that there is a need for training and capacity-building programs that are specifically suited to digital marketing for small enterprises located in places that are either underserved or more economically isolated.

6. CONCLUSION

Following the findings of the study, the conclusion was reached that social media marketing had a key part in promoting the growth of entrepreneurial endeavors in Nagaland. This was accomplished by increasing the visibility of brands, broadening the scope of customer reach, and contributing to an increase in sales. Platforms such as Facebook and Instagram have emerged as the most influential tools, and the creation of constant content and direct connection with customers have shown to be crucial success elements. A portion of entrepreneurs encountered difficulties as a

result of limited usage of paid marketing or a lack of strategic understanding, according to the findings of the survey, despite the fact that the majority of entrepreneurs saw positive outcomes. All things considered, the findings brought to light the growing significance of digital marketing within the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the region. Furthermore, they brought to light the necessity of implementing specific digital literacy and capacity-building efforts in order to guarantee more inclusive and sustainable business growth.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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