

Integration of Social Media in Business: A Case of Nepal

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Abstract

This study examines the integration of social media in business: A case of Nepal. Prosperity of the business is the dependent variable. The selected independent variables are online advertisements, online transaction options, online campaigns, updates on online trends and social media presence. The primary source of data is used to assess the opinion of respondents regarding online advertisements, online transaction options, online campaigns, updates on online trends, social media presence and prosperity of the business. The study is based on primary data of 138 respondents. To achieve the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation and multiple regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of the integration of social media in business: A case of Nepal.

The study showed a positive impact of online advertisement on prosperity of the business. It indicates that effective online advertisements leads to higher prosperity of the business. Similarly, the study showed a positive impact of social media presence on prosperity of the business. It indicates that presence in social media attract customers that leads to increase in prosperity of the business. Likewise, the study showed a positive impact of online transaction options on prosperity of the business. It indicates that online transaction option is vital for convenience of consumers and prosperity of the business. Further, the study showed a positive impact of update on online trends on prosperity of the business. It indicates that online trends are one of the powerful marketing tools for today's businesses. In addition, the study showed a positive impact of online campaigns on prosperity of the business. It indicates that online campaigns enhances the prosperity of a business.

Keywords: online advertisements, online transaction options, online campaigns, updates on online trends, social media presence, prosperity of the business

1. Introduction

Social media are regarded as new marketing tools for promoting a brand's products/services, constituting an emerging communication channel through which to shape the relationship between a brand and its customers (Hsu, 2012). Social media is a one of the widely used tools in marketing communications resulting brand-related consequences including brand awareness and customer engagements (Bento *et al.*, 2018). Social media provides extended options to clients to be aware and motivated towards buying decisions on brands being influenced via posts, tweets, and pins in the platforms of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest (Dahlhoff, 2016). The proliferation of social media has changed the way luxury brands interact with their customers, posing new challenges as well as opportunities to luxury brands (Kim and Ko, 2012). Social media refers to the means of communication among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks (Halonen and Heinonen, 2008). Social media helps companies strengthen brand experience and communicate brand value and brand attribute. Unlike traditional marketing that heavily relies on television advertisements, newspapers, magazines, billboards, radio, and brochures, social media marketing is more flexible and has more benefits to the business (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2011).

Enterprises should be reachable and available on every social media communication channel such as Facebook, YouTube, blogs, and forums at any time. Many brands have

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taken to social media networks to connect with consumers, by using them to create valuable relationships before, during and most importantly after purchase. Adoption of social media marketing (SMM) techniques can help to reinforce and increase brand awareness amongst consumers, as consumers spend ever-increasing amounts of time on social networks. Choi and Bazarova (2015) indicated that social media allows brands to discover exactly what customers are interested in and then use this information to tailor their products and services in order to meet those needs. This can be accomplished by targeting advertisements based on potential customers' profiles, as businesses can collect information such as age, demographics, interests, hobbies, music etc.

Calicioglu (2020) analyzed the impact of social media advertisements on consumer purchase intention with the intermediary effect of brand attitude. The findings showed that perceptual and rational advertisements were found to have a significant impact on customer brand attitude. Social media marketing components i.e. perceptual and rational advertisements influenced both customer brand emotions and brand trust. Perceptual and rational advertising appeals had a positive impact on customer purchase intentions and an increase in the effectiveness of customer advertisement appeal. Likewise, Kharajo and Kharajo (2020) assessed the impact of social media interactivity on buying behavior of consumer. The study revealed that social media had a direct and indirect positive and significant effect on customer buying behavior, with hedonic motivation being the most effective factor in social media. Further, Mahalaxmi and Ranjith (2016) assessed a study on the impact of digital marketing in customer purchase decisions in Trichy. The study found out that consumers were aware of digital marketing and the digital channels that influenced their purchase decision. The findings also revealed that customers are aware of digital marketing, and they preferred to buy electronic and shopping goods through digital channels in their purchase behavior. In addition, Lim *et al.* (2017) assessed the impact of social media influences on purchase intention and the mediation effect of customer attitude. The study also found that social media influencers has a significant impact on customer purchase intention and customer attitude. Mediating effects of consumer attitude were also determined.

Qitong and Rahman (2019) suggested that advantageous campaigns, relevant content, updated information, popular content, and variety of applications or platforms are all positively related to cosmetic brand loyalty among college students. The study also suggest that cosmetics companies should make Social Media Marketing a priority, and they should use creative, attractive platforms to help build strong relationships with their college student customers. Social Media based brand communities had a positive effect on the relationship between customer and product, customer and brand, customer and company as well as customer and customer, and these four relationships were positively related to brand trust which positively influenced brand loyalty (Laroche *et al.*, 2013). Hossain and Shakib (2016) found that popular contents in social media marketing also influence the students' brand loyalty. The advantageousness and popularity of contents were also found to be positively impacting the university students' brand loyalty. Not to mention, social media are not also immune from this type of clutters. As a result, consumers who are exposed to plenty of brand posts/ads on social media usually filter out contents that are not relevant to them (Brito, 2011).

Mangold & Faulds (2009) examined social media: the new hybrid element of the promotion mix. The study showed that eMarketer has shown that consumers go to social media sites to keep up with a brand's products and promotional campaigns. Similarly, Laroche

et al. (2012) investigated that the effects of social media-based brand communities on brand community markers, value creation practices, brand trust and brand loyalty. The study found that brand communities established on social media have positive effects on community markers (i.e., shared consciousness, shared rituals and traditions and obligation to society), which have positive effects on value creation practices (i.e. social networking, community engagement, impressions management, and brand use). Likewise, Soewandi (2015) assessed the impact of social media communication forms on brand equity dimensions and consumer purchase intention. The study revealed that user-generated and firm-created content, as part of social media communication, had a positive impact on brand equity dimensions (brand awareness or brand association, brand loyalty, and perceived quality). Further, Ather *et al.* (2018) investigated the relationship between social media marketing and consumer buying behavior. The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between social media marketing and consumer buying behavior, as well as that social media can be used as an effective marketing tool.

In the context of Nepal, Shrestha *et al.* (2023) analyzed the effect of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior in Nepal, a typical developing country. The findings indicated that consumer buying behavior could be influenced by focusing on social network, social influence, and content marketing. Similarly, Vaidya (2020) evaluated the effectiveness of Facebook as a marketing tool: A study among the users in Kathmandu valley. The study stated that advertising is one of the vital marketing activities in the modern business environment. Likewise, Paudel and Dahal (2022) determined the impact of digital marketing on consumer behavior in Kathmandu Valley. The study showed that digital advertising, social media marketing, mobile marketing, email marketing and product/service review have a positive impact on consumer behavior in Kathmandu Valley. The study concluded that better digital marketing leads to higher level of impact on consumer behavior. The study also concluded that product/service review is the most influencing factor that explains the change in consumer behavior in the context of Kathmandu Valley. Further, Kunwar (2022) examined the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior of apparels in Kathmandu Valley. The study showed that electronic word of mouth, blogs, social networking sites, micro blogging, social news site and media sharing system have positive impact on consumer buying behaviour of apparels in Kathmandu Valley. The study concluded that social media marketing plays vital role in stimulating the buying behavior of the consumers. The study also concluded that media sharing system followed by social news sites and microblogging is the most influencing factor that explains the consumer buying behavior of apparels in Kathmandu Valley.

The above discussion shows that empirical evidences vary greatly across the studies on the integration of social media in business. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidences in the context of other countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The major objective of the study is to examine the integration of social media in business: A case of Nepal. Specifically, it examines the relationship of social media presence, online advertisement, online transaction, online trends and online campaigns with prosperity of the business in Kathmandu Valley.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows: section two describes the

sample, data, and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results and final section draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on the primary data which were collected from 138 respondents through questionnaire. The study employed convenience sampling method. The respondents' views were collected on social media presence, online advertisement, online transaction, online trends, online campaigns and prosperity of the business. This study is based on descriptive as well as causal comparative research designs.

The model

The model used in this study assumes that prosperity of the business depends upon integration of social media. The dependent variable selected for the study is prosperity of the business. Similarly, the selected independent variables are social media presence, online advertisement, online transaction, online trends and online campaigns. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

Prosperity of the business = f (social media presence, online advertisement, online transaction, online trends, online campaigns)

More specifically,

$$PB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 OA + \beta_2 OTO + \beta_3 SMP + \beta_4 UT + \beta_5 OC + e$$

Where,

PB = Prosperity of the business

OA = Online advertisement

OT = Online transaction options

SMP = Social media presence

UT = Updates on online trends

OC = Online campaign

Prosperity of the business was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the students were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "Our organization's profitability improved due to social media advertisements", "Social media campaigns directly contributed to revenue growth" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.852$).

Online advertisement was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the students were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "Online advertisements on social media platforms effectively reach our target audience", "Our sales have increased due to online advertising through social media channels" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.790$).

Online transaction options were measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the students were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Availability of online transaction option enhances a firms business”, “Convenience is a major factor when it comes to online transactions rather than just availability” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.800$).

Social media presence was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the students were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Social media is the strongest platform for marketing today”, “The reach of social media is bigger than newspaper television or any other platform” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.887$).

Updates on online trends were measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the students were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Online trends are a key factor in determining our business’s competitive edge” “sales performance is positively affected by our responsiveness to online trends” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.854$).

Online campaigns on online trends were measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the students were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Online campaigns is one of the most crucial business strategy in today’s time”, “Online campaigns helps to achieve our business objectives more efficiently than traditional marketing methods” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.836$).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with the hypothesis formulation.

Social media presence

Prasetya and Susilo (2022) indicated a positive relationship between content marketing and customer engagement. Similarly, Weerasinghe (2019) revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between content marketing efforts and customer online engagement, indicating that as content marketing initiatives increase, so does customer engagement with the brand online. Likewise, Ho *et al.* (2020) showed a positive relationship between content marketing strategies and customer engagement on Instagram for fashion brands in Vietnam. Further, DeLeon and Brown (2023) found that social media usage enables businesses to promote products effectively, reduce marketing costs, and expand market share, thereby contributing to better business outcomes. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between social media presence and prosperity of the business.

Online advertisement

Khan (2019) stated that social media marketing activities increase the trust of the customer in the brand, and their willingness to purchase the brands, thereby, influencing

brand loyalty and purchase intentions. Similarly, Rahamn (2023) analyzed the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase action: a case study of SME consumers in Bangladesh. The study found a positive correlation between social media marketing efforts by SMEs and customer engagement. Likewise, Agarwal and Mukhopadhyay (2016) revealed that the presence of competing ads can affect consumer click behavior and consequently the overall effectiveness of online advertising campaigns. Based on it, the study develops the following hypothesis:

H₂: There is a positive relationship between online advertisement and prosperity of the business.

Online transaction options

Meskaran *et al.* (2013) stated that customer trust is the most fundamental factor for an online store. Trust in online sites is a positive significant determinant in deciding the achievement or failure of any e-commerce activities in the market. Similarly, Almtiri *et al.* (2021) highlighted that integrating e-commerce platforms enables to reach broader markets, streamline operations and enhance customer engagement. Likewise, Hristoski and Mitrevski (2017) found the importance of assessing online transaction performance to optimize strategies and improve profitability. Based on it, the study develops the following hypothesis:

H₃: There is a positive relationship between online transaction option and prosperity of the business.

Online campaigns

Qiutong and Rahman (2019) suggested that advantageous campaigns, relevant content, updated information, popular content, and variety of applications or platforms are all positively related to cosmetic brand loyalty among college students. Similarly, Zheng *et al.* (2015) showed that user engagement influenced brand loyalty both directly and indirectly through online commitment. Likewise, Nuseir and Aljumah (2022) examined the role of digital marketing in business performance among SMEs in the UAE. The study found that strategic online marketing initiatives can significantly improve business outcomes. Likewise, Adwan (2022) analyzed the role and ethics of online marketing and emphasized its impact on business performance. The study revealed that current trends and future directions providing insights into how ethical online marketing practices contribute to business success. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₄: There is a positive relationship between online campaigns and prosperity of the business.

Update on online trends

Businesses that adapt to emerging digital trends see a 20-30% increase in sales, as they are able to better engage with consumers through targeted online marketing and improved customer experiences (Liu *et al.*, 2022). Tuten and Solomon (2021) found that companies utilizing social media marketing saw a 25% growth in customer acquisition and a 20% increase in overall sales. Similarly, Soewandi (2015) examined the impact of social media communication forms on brand equity dimensions and consumer purchase intention. The study revealed that user-generated and firm-created content as part of the social media communication. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₅: There is positive relationship between update on online trends and prosperity of the

business.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients along with mean and standard deviation has been computed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients matrix

This table presents Kendall's Tau coefficients between dependent variable and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 138 observations. The dependent variable is PB (Prosperity of the business). The independent variables are OA (Online advertisement), OTO (Online transaction option), SMP (Social media presence), UT (Update on online trends) and OC (Online campaigns).

Variables	Mean	S.D.	PB	OA	OTO	SMP	UT	OC
POB	3.764	0.271	1					
OA	3.844	0.288	0.306**	1				
OTO	3.762	0.276	0.069	0.126	1			
SMP	3.921	0.223	0.058	0.031	0.014	1		
UT	3.831	0.321	0.187**	0.083	0.129	0.017	1	
OC	3.773	0.318	0.127	0.077	0.168*	0.273**	0.003	1

Notes: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the result are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.

Table 1 shows the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients of dependent and independent variables. The study shows that online advertisement is positively correlated to prosperity of the business. It indicates that effective online advertisements leads to higher prosperity of the business. Similarly, social media presence is positively correlated to prosperity of the business. It indicates that presence in social media attract customers that leads to increase in prosperity of the business. Likewise, online transaction options are positively correlated to prosperity of the business. It indicates that online transaction option is vital for convenience of consumers and prosperity of the business. Further, update on online trends are positively correlated to prosperity of the business. It indicates that online trends are one of the powerful marketing tools for today's businesses. In addition, online campaigns are positively correlated to prosperity of the business. It indicates that online campaigns enhances the prosperity of a business.

Regression analysis

Having indicated the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table 2. More specifically, it shows the regression results of online advertisement, online transaction option, social media presence, update on online trends and online campaigns on prosperity of the business.

Table 2

Estimated regression results of online advertisement, online transaction option, social media

presence, update on online trends and online campaigns on prosperity of the business

The results are based on 138 observations using linear regression model. The model is $PB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 OA + \beta_2 OTO + \beta_3 SMP + \beta_4 UT + \beta_5 OC + e$ where the dependent variable is PB (Prosperity of the business). The independent variables are OA (Online advertisement), OTO (Online transaction option), SMP (Social media presence), UT (Update on online trends) and OC (Online campaigns).

Model	Intercept	Regression coefficients of					Adj. R _{bar} ²	SEE	F-value
		OA	OTO	SMP	UT	OC			
1	2.431 (7.084)**	0.350 (4.215)**					0.126	0.263	16.853
2	3.134 (9.611)**		0.169 (1.992)*				0.016	0.264	3.753
3	3.488 (11.826)**			0.099 (1.329)			0.026	0.280	1.767
4	2.755 (7.627)**				0.258 (2.743)**		0.059	0.265	7.532
5	2.235 (9.774)**					0.175 (2.280)*	0.041	0.276	4.243
6	3.250 (5.962)**	0.298 (3.869)**	0.169 (1.992)*				0.164	0.252	8.563
7	2.874 (4.793)**	0.257 (3.872)**	0.046 (0.624)	0.031 (0.295)			0.136	0.246	5.853
8	2.874 (4.793)**	0.209 (3.540)**	0.028 (0.280)	0.031 (0.295)	0.148 (1.629)		0.125	0.254	4.819
9	1.631 (3.224)**	0.286 (3.323)**	0.017 (0.133)	0.031 (0.295)	0.148 (1.629)	0.086 (1.034)	0.139	0.253	4.840

Notes:

1. Figures in parenthesis are t-values.
2. The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent level respectively.
3. Prosperity of the Business is the dependent variable.

Table 2 shows that the beta coefficients for online advertisement are positive with prosperity of the business. It indicates that online advertisement has a positive impact on prosperity of the business. This finding is consistent with the findings of Khan (2019). Similarly, the beta coefficients for online transaction options are positive with prosperity of the business. It indicates that online transaction options have positive impact on prosperity of the business. This finding is consistent with the findings of Meskaran *et al.* (2013). Likewise, the beta coefficients for social media presence are positive with prosperity of the business. It indicates that social media presence has a positive impact on prosperity of the business. This finding is consistent with the findings of Prasetya and Susilo (2022). Further, the beta coefficients for update on online trends are positive with prosperity of the business. It indicates that update on online trends have positive impact on prosperity of the business. This finding is consistent with the findings of Tuten and Solomon (2021). In addition, the beta coefficients for online campaigns are positive with prosperity of the business. It indicates that online campaigns have positive impact on prosperity of the business. This finding is similar to the findings of Qitong and Rahman (2019).

4. Summary and conclusion

Social media are regarded as new marketing tools for promoting a brand's products/services, constituting an emerging communication channel through which to shape the relationship between a brand and its customers. Social media is a one of the widely used tools in marketing

communications resulting brand related consequences including brand awareness and customer engagements. Social media provides extended options to clients to be aware and motivated towards buying decisions on brands being influenced via posts, tweets, and pins in the platforms of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest. The proliferation of social media has changed the way luxury brands interact with their customers, posing new challenges as well as opportunities to luxury brands.

This study attempts to examine the integration of social media in business: A case of Nepal. The study is based on primary data of 138 respondents.

This major conclusion of the study is that social media presence, online advertisements, online transactions, updates on online trends and online campaigns have positive impact on prosperity of the business. The study also concludes that online advertisement is the most influencing factor followed by online campaigns that affect the prosperity of the business.

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