

Social Media Makeover: Transforming Small Businesses through Branding and Customer Engagement

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of social media marketing on small businesses in the municipality of Santa Cruz, focusing on branding, customer relationships, and pricing. Using a descriptive survey method, the researchers gathered data from selected small business owners in various barangays, including Banahaw, Maharlika, Bagong Silang, Lapu Lapu, and Pagasa.

The findings reveal that social media marketing significantly boosts revenue for small businesses, enhances customer education, and facilitates effective communication. However, respondents also face challenges in branding, such as establishing a recognizable presence, handling negative feedback, and competing with larger enterprises.

Keywords: social media marketing, small business, customer relationships, branding, 4Ps.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of social media presents both opportunities and challenges for small businesses striving to establish a strong online presence. While platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok offer advantages, many enterprises struggle to use them effectively due to a lack of strategy and understanding.

Selecting the right channels and creating engaging content aligned with their brand can be overwhelming, exacerbated by uncertainty about which metrics, like engagement and conversion rates, to focus on. This information overload can hinder their ability to refine strategies, especially as trends shift rapidly.

The adoption of social media technology has transformed marketing globally. According to the International Telecommunication Union (2022), these platforms are crucial for business growth. In the Philippines, a study by the Department of Trade and Industry (2023) revealed that approximately 92% of micro and small businesses find social media effective for customer engagement.

Cebu City is experiencing a rise in social media marketing among small businesses, with a pilot study by the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2023) showing its importance for community engagement. This research aims to evaluate how social media marketing affects the success of small businesses in Cebu City, considering the socioeconomic context. It also seeks to explore the implications of these strategies on job creation in the SME sector, aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 for sustainable economic growth and employment.

As the SME sector is expected to play a vital role in the Philippine economy, targeting a \$5 trillion economy by 2025, understanding the impact of social media marketing is essential for future policy development and support initiatives.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to assess the impact of social media marketing on small businesses in the municipality of Santa Cruz, focusing on the effectiveness of branding efforts, the development of customer relationships, and the influence on pricing strategies. Additionally, the study aims to identify the challenges that small businesses face when implementing social media marketing, particularly in maintaining a consistent brand presence, nurturing customer relationships, and navigating competitive pricing strategies. Finally, the study seeks to propose effective social media marketing strategies that small businesses can employ based on the insights and findings derived from this research.

Statement of the Problem

In light of the observations noted above, the researcher aims to address the following questions:

1. What is the impact of social media marketing on small businesses in the municipality of Santa Cruz regarding:
 - a. Branding
 - b. Customer relationships
 - c. Pricing
2. What challenges does social media marketing present for small businesses in terms of:
 - a. Branding
 - b. Customer relationships
 - c. Pricing
3. What social media marketing strategies can be developed based on the findings of this study?
4. What action plan could be proposed?

Theoretical Framework

The interplay between entrepreneurial motivation and social media marketing is critical for the success of small businesses in today's digital landscape. Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) posits that valence, instrumentality, and expectancy significantly influence an entrepreneur's intended effort and operational success (Gupta et al., 2021). Yang (2018) highlights social media's vital role as a marketing tool, proposing a model to examine how marketing strategies impact customer engagement and sales performance, with insights drawn from platforms like Sina Weibo and Taobao. Complementing this, Skinner's incentive theory emphasizes the importance of external factors in driving behavior, allowing entrepreneurs to create effective incentive structures (Skinner, 1953).

Additionally, Drury (2019) notes the Internet's transformative role in enhancing communication and information sharing, while Gertimer (2020) addresses how media exposure can shape perceptions and beliefs, influencing consumer behavior. Narelda and Shekar (2018) emphasize the necessity of understanding the target audience to develop effective social media strategies, particularly for businesses lacking brand recognition.

Engaging with customer feedback is equally critical, enabling small enterprises to identify pain points and adapt their marketing efforts effectively (Chen et al., 2023). Collectively, these insights underline the importance of leveraging theoretical frameworks and practical strategies to enhance marketing effectiveness and drive business growth in an increasingly competitive digital marketplace.

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework Design

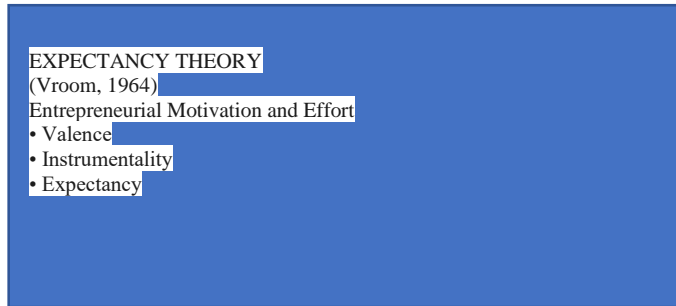


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework Design of this study explains how entrepreneurial motivation, digital communication, customer engagement, and media influence contribute to the effectiveness of social media marketing and improve the performance of small businesses. The framework integrates several theories and recent studies that support the growing importance of digital platforms in entrepreneurial success and sustainability.

The study is anchored on the Victor Vroom Expectancy Theory (1964), which explains that individuals exert effort when they believe their actions will result in desirable outcomes. In the context of entrepreneurship, small business owners are motivated to utilize social media marketing when they expect benefits such as increased customer reach, higher sales, and improved business performance. According to Gupta et al. (2021), entrepreneurial motivation significantly affects business innovation and digital marketing adoption. Similarly, Zubair et al. (2024) emphasized that performance expectancy positively influences online purchase intentions and marketing engagement among digital consumers. These studies suggest that entrepreneurs are more likely to invest effort in social media activities when they perceive positive business outcomes (Gupta et al., 2021; Zubair et al., 2024).

The framework is further strengthened by the Incentive Theory of B. F. Skinner Skinner (1953), which states that behavior is influenced by rewards and reinforcement. In social media marketing, positive customer feedback, increasing online engagement, customer loyalty, and improved revenue serve as motivating rewards for entrepreneurs. Kamyabi (2025) found that customer interaction and engagement through digital platforms enhance organizational sustainability and marketing performance. Chen et al. (2023) also highlighted that customer feedback enables businesses to improve products and marketing strategies, which strengthens customer relationships and long-term business growth. Therefore, external reinforcement encourages entrepreneurs to continuously improve their digital marketing efforts (Kamyabi, 2025; Chen et al., 2023).

The study also incorporates Media Richness Theory, which emphasizes the importance of effective communication channels in delivering messages clearly and efficiently. Social media platforms provide rich communication tools such as videos, photos, instant messaging, and live interaction that improve communication between businesses and consumers. According to Dwivedi et al. (2021), digital and social media marketing have transformed business communication by increasing customer interaction and strengthening brand visibility. Drury (2020) further explained that online interaction and digital communication enhance consumer engagement and business competitiveness in the digital marketplace. These findings support the idea that rich media communication improves marketing effectiveness and customer satisfaction (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Drury, 2020).

Another important theory included in the framework is the Cultivation or Reward Theory, which explains that repeated exposure to media content influences consumer perception, beliefs, and purchasing behavior. Social media continuously exposes consumers to advertisements, product promotions, reviews, and influencer recommendations that shape customer attitudes toward brands and businesses. Jamil (2022) found that social media marketing activities significantly influence customer intentions and purchasing decisions. Likewise, Calvert-Antoye (2024) emphasized that consistent digital exposure positively affects consumer trust, brand awareness, and business performance among small enterprises. This suggests that social media content plays an

important role in shaping consumer behavior and encouraging purchase intentions (Jamil, 2022; Calvert-Antoye, 2024).

The framework also adopts the Target Audience and Customer Engagement Theory proposed by Narelda and Shekar (2018), which emphasizes the importance of understanding customer needs and preferences in developing effective marketing strategies. Through market research, audience identification, customer feedback, and personalized marketing, businesses can better satisfy customer expectations. Alshehri (2021) noted that understanding customer behavior and audience targeting significantly improve the adoption and effectiveness of social media marketing strategies. Bruce (2025) further explained that startup businesses utilizing personalized digital engagement experience stronger customer loyalty and improved organizational performance. These findings demonstrate that customer-centered strategies are essential in achieving marketing effectiveness and business sustainability (Alshehri, 2021; Bruce, 2025).

Collectively, these theories contribute to the concept of Social Media Marketing Effectiveness, which includes branding, customer relationship management, and pricing strategy. Effective utilization of social media platforms enables businesses to strengthen brand awareness, establish meaningful customer relationships, and improve marketing competitiveness. Consequently, improved marketing effectiveness contributes to better Small Business Performance, particularly in terms of increased sales, customer loyalty, enhanced brand awareness, and long-term business sustainability.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework Design

Input



Figure 2 shows the input, process and output. In this study the input will be the researcher topic of the researchers which is the social media marketing on a small business in the Municipality of Santa Cruz, Marinduque, in terms of branding, customer relationship, and pricing. The challenges of social media marketing for a small business in terms of branding, customer relationships, and pricing. Also, the process of this study involves data gathering and answering a questionnaire. And after the researcher gathered data about the social media marketing on small businesses in Santa Cruz, the results, analysis, and conclusion are presented. The output will be the se media marketing strategies that can be developed from the study. This is patterned in the responses of the respondents after the researcher has analyzed and interpreted the results of the data gathered.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to selected small businesses within the Municipality of Santa Cruz, Marinduque, which may affect the generalization of the findings to other municipalities, provinces, or industries. The respondents were composed primarily of local small business owners; therefore, the perspectives gathered may not fully represent the experiences of larger enterprises or businesses operating in highly urbanized areas.

The study also relied mainly on self-reported responses obtained through survey questionnaires. As a result, some responses may be subjective and influenced by personal perceptions, experiences, or biases of the respondents. In addition, the rapidly changing nature of digital marketing trends, social media platforms, and online consumer behavior may affect the long-term applicability of the findings and recommendations presented in the study.

Furthermore, limited financial resources, technological capabilities, and digital marketing skills among small businesses may restrict the implementation of the proposed social media marketing strategies. Despite these limitations, the study still provides valuable insights into the role of branding and customer engagement in improving the sustainability and competitiveness of small businesses in the digital marketplace.

REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE

Social media marketing has become one of the most influential tools for small businesses in the modern digital economy. With the rapid advancement of technology and increased Internet accessibility, entrepreneurs are now utilizing social media platforms to improve branding, customer interaction, and business sustainability. According to Meta platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Messenger have enabled businesses to reach wider audiences at lower marketing costs compared to traditional advertising methods. Recent studies emphasized that social media marketing helps small enterprises compete effectively by enhancing visibility, improving customer communication, and increasing sales performance (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Jamil, 2022). Digital platforms provide businesses with opportunities to promote products through interactive content, allowing entrepreneurs to establish stronger relationships with consumers and maintain competitiveness in dynamic markets.

Recent literature also highlights the importance of branding in social media marketing effectiveness. Branding refers to the process of creating a unique identity and positive perception among consumers. According to Calvert-Antoye (2024), social media marketing significantly strengthens brand awareness and customer trust among small enterprises. Through consistent posting, visual content, and customer interaction, businesses can create recognizable and credible brand identities that influence consumer purchasing behavior. Similarly, Bruce (2025) explained that startups utilizing social media platforms experience improved brand visibility and organizational growth because digital marketing increases audience exposure and engagement. Customers are more likely to patronize businesses with strong and interactive online presence, making branding an essential component of business sustainability in the digital age.

Customer relationship management (CRM) is another major factor associated with social media marketing effectiveness. CRM involves maintaining positive relationships between businesses and customers through communication, interaction, and customer support. According to Chen et al. (2023), social media platforms allow businesses to respond quickly to customer inquiries, complaints, and feedback, thereby improving customer satisfaction and loyalty. Timely interaction through comments, chats, and online support services enhances trust and strengthens customer relationships. Jha and Bhattacharya (2021) further emphasized that customer engagement through social media positively affects customer retention and purchasing intention. Businesses that actively interact with their consumers online are more likely to develop loyal customer communities that contribute to long-term profitability and organizational sustainability.

In addition, pricing strategy plays a significant role in the effectiveness of social media marketing. Social media allows businesses to monitor customer reactions toward product prices and promotional offers in real time. According to Gajjar and Kachhadiya (2023), entrepreneurs can use social media analytics and customer feedback to adjust pricing strategies based on consumer demand and market competition. Online promotions, discounts, and limited-time offers also influence customer buying decisions and increase product attractiveness. However, excessive price competition may negatively affect brand value and profitability if not properly managed. Thus, businesses must carefully balance affordability and product value to maintain customer trust and competitive advantage in digital markets.

Another important theme in recent literature is customer engagement and online interaction. Social media marketing encourages two-way communication between businesses and consumers, allowing customers to actively participate in product discussions, reviews, and brand promotion. According to Kamyabi (2025), customer engagement significantly contributes to organizational sustainability because engaged consumers are more likely to recommend products, share content, and support businesses online. Interactive marketing activities such as live streaming, storytelling, influencer collaboration, and personalized responses increase customer participation and emotional connection with brands. This strengthens customer loyalty and improves overall business performance.

Despite these advantages, small businesses continue to face several challenges in implementing effective social media marketing strategies. One of the major problems is the lack of digital marketing knowledge, skills, and resources among entrepreneurs. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration (2023), many small

enterprises struggle with content creation, audience targeting, and platform management because of limited technical expertise and financial resources. Montalvo et al. (2020) also noted that the continuous evolution of social media algorithms and trends creates difficulties for businesses in maintaining effective marketing strategies. Entrepreneurs must constantly adapt to changing consumer preferences, platform features, and technological advancements to remain competitive.

Moreover, studies revealed that social media marketing directly influences business performance and sustainability. Dwivedi et al. (2021) explained that effective digital marketing strategies improve organizational competitiveness, customer acquisition, and financial growth. Businesses utilizing social media effectively often experience increased sales, improved customer retention, and stronger market presence. Similarly, Jamil (2022) found that social media marketing activities significantly affect customer purchase intentions and overall business success. These findings suggest that social media marketing is not only a communication tool but also a strategic business resource that contributes to long-term entrepreneurial growth and sustainability.

Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates that social media marketing plays a vital role in enhancing branding, customer relationship management, pricing strategy, customer engagement, and organizational performance among small businesses. Although entrepreneurs face challenges related to skills, resources, and rapidly changing technologies, effective utilization of social media platforms can significantly improve business sustainability and competitiveness in the digital marketplace.

METHODOLOGY

This study applied descriptive research, this is according to Sanchez (1997) wrote that the descriptive method, sometimes as characterized as a survey or normative approach to the study of conditions, is an essential guide to one thinking of facts concerning the conditions or where we are at present, knowledge of conditions desired or we wish to be, and knowledge of how to get where researcher with to be are gained from the studies that deal with causation. Through observation of the coincidence of certain conditions and certain apparent consequences, survey studies furnish valuable clues of cause-effect relationships. This study was made by the means of quantitative methods of the researcher.

The researcher attempts to get the answers to the mentioned problem and to justify and satisfy the objectives of the study. The respondents are composed of 60 respondents with different businesses in the community of the Municipality of Santa Cruz Marinduque. One of the vital processes to keeping this successful all of these participants were selected through random sampling. This sampling is conducted where each traditional business owner becomes part of the sample respondents.

The researcher formulated a set of scaled response instruments to gather data needed in the study. The questionnaire was distributed to residents and local business owners in Santa Cruz Marinduque. These instruments include either written or oral questions and comprise an interview-style format. Questionnaires may be qualitative or quantitative and conducted online, by phone, on paper, or face to face, and questions don't necessarily have to be administered with a researcher present. Questionnaires feature either open or closed questions and sometimes employ a mixture of both. Open-ended questions enable respondents to answer in their own words in as much or as little detail as they desire. Closed questions provide respondents with a series of predetermined responses they can choose from. The 5-point Likert scale is a popular rating scale used to measure attitudes, opinions, or perceptions. It typically ranges from 1 to 5, where respondents indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a statement. Here's a breakdown of the scale and its verbal interpretation:

1. **Strongly Agree (1):** This indicates that the respondent has a very positive view or fully
2. **Agree (2):** This suggests that the respondent generally agrees with the statement and holds a positive view.
3. **Neutral (3):** This indicates that the respondent neither agrees nor disagrees with the statement, or feels indifferent about it.

4. **Disagree (4):** This shows that the respondent has a negative view or disagrees with the statement, but not as strongly as the "Strongly Disagree" option.
5. **Strongly Disagree (5):** This response indicates that the respondent has a very negative view or does not agree at all with the statement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data gathered. It presents the answer to the question. The data gathered were also analyzed and treated with table presentation and corresponding interpretation.

Part I- What are the demographic profiles of the respondents in terms of Year of Business, Nature of Business, and Payment Method?

Table 1.1 The demographic profile according to year of Business.

Year of Business	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Rank
1-10	30	50%	1
11-20	15	25%	2
21-30	8	13.33%	3
31-40	5	8.33 %	4
41-50	2	3.33%	5

Table 1.1 shows a diverse range of business longevity among respondents. Half of the businesses (50%) have been operating for 1-10 years, indicating a strong presence of newer enterprises. Another 50% of businesses have been operating for more than 10 years, with 25% each in the 11-20 and 21-30-year ranges. A smaller proportion of businesses have shown long-term sustainability, with 8.33% operating for 31 years and 3.33% for 41-50 years. These findings suggest a dynamic business environment with both new ventures and established enterprises, reflecting a blend of innovation and experience. The presence of newer businesses highlights the need for support mechanisms to aid their growth, while the longevity of some businesses suggests successful adaptation strategies that others can learn from. According to Pueblos and Timateo (2023), 41% are operating for 5 years and more.

Table 1.2 The demographic Profile according to Nature of Business

Payment Method	No of Respondent	Percentage (%)	Rank
GCash	20	33.33%	2
Pay Maya	2	3.33%	4
Cash on hand	30	50%	1
Online bank Applications	5	8.33%	3

In Table 1.3, it is shown that 50% of the respondents accept cash as a payment method from their customers, which totals 30 respondents. GCash is the next most accepted method with 20 respondents or 33.33%. PayMaya and Online Banking received no acceptance. This indicates that 5 respondents accept online bank applications as payment methods for their business and 2 respondents with 3.33% from Pay Maya.

According to Apama (2018), e-wallets are gaining popularity among retailers due to their security, reliability, and added value to the end-user, which ultimately improves customer satisfaction with transactions. Customers consider various factors in determining which e-wallet to trust with their e-money.

Part II. What is the Role of Electronic Commerce as a payment method in traditional retail business in terms of Marketing, Customer Relations, and Financial Aspects

Table 2.1 The Role of Digital Payment Methods in the Traditional Retail: Implications for Business Innovation in terms of Marketing.

Characteristics	Weighted Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Online Selling	3.6	4	Agree
Offering Affordable product	3.78	1	Agree
Increase Customer Base	3.7	2	Agree
Efficient Service	3.65	3	Agree
Increase Income or Profit	3.5	5	Agree

According to Table 2.1, offering an affordable product ranks first (weighted mean: 3.78; interpretation agreed), followed by increasing a customer base (weighted mean: 3.7); and providing efficient service (rank 3; weighted mean: 3.65). and position 4 (online selling) has a weighted mean of 3.6. Increased income or profit comes in fifth place with a weighted mean of 3.5.

A study on entrepreneurship development in Santa Cruz Marinduque demonstrates the role of electronic commerce on traditional retail businesses in marketing. Respondents noted that electronic commerce has led to the offering of affordable products, an increase in customer base, hassle-free online payments, efficient service delivery, and an increase in income through lower marketing expenses. According to Bharadwaj and Soni (2019), e-commerce involves using computer networks and information technology to facilitate transactions and various economic activities such as sales, purchasing, and marketing. It allows for the marketing and distribution of products and services to consumers via the Internet, benefiting both retailers and consumers. Researchers have extensively discussed the impact of e-commerce development, particularly in terms of its effect on economic growth and international prices.

Table 2.2 The Role of Digital Payment Methods in Traditional Retail: Implications for Business Innovation in terms of customer Relations.

Characteristics	Weighted mean	Rank	Interpretation
Customer Satisfaction	3.6	3	Agree
Prospective Client Enhance Manner	3.68	2	Agree
Customer Awareness and Retention	3.56	4	Agree
Changing Behavior	3.5	5	Agree
Accessibility and Convenience	3.8	1	Agree

Table 2.2 shows that in ranked 1, accessibility and convenience have a weighted mean of 3.8, whereas in ranked 2, prospective client enhanced manner way has a weighted mean of 3.68. With 3.6, customer satisfaction is placed third. Customer awareness and retention come in fourth place with a 3.56 rating, followed by changing behavior with a 3.5 rating and an agreed-upon interpretation.

The role of electronic commerce as a payment method for traditional retail businesses in the Santa Cruz Marinduque area, with a focus on entrepreneurship development to customer satisfaction. According to the respondents, electronic commerce has played a significant role in enhancing the prospective client experience by providing convenient and accessible ways of making payments. It also improves customer satisfaction by offering personalized and efficient services through online transactions. Additionally, it has brought about a shift in customer behavior, with many customers now preferring to make payments for their purchases online rather

than using traditional methods. This has also helped in encouraging customer awareness and retention, fostering long-term business partnerships with customers.

According to Bajarin, T. (2017), the challenge faced by traditional retail businesses in the era of e-commerce involves exploring strategies for their survival. It examines the role of technological advancements on consumer behavior and provides insights into the future of the traditional retail industry.

Table 2.3.

The Role of Digital Payment Methods in Traditional Retail: Implications for Business Innovation in terms of financial aspects:

Characteristics	Weighted mean	Rank	Interpretation
Investment in Technology	3.61	4	Agree
Revenue Shift	3.78	1	Agree
Minimum Capitalization	3.7	2	Agree
Impact Cash Flow	3.65	3	Agree
Market expansion opportunities	3.5	5	Agree

Table 2.3 shows the current revenue shift ranked 1 (weighted mean 3.78), ranked 2 (minimum capitalization) (weighted mean 3.7), ranked 3 (impact cashflow) (weighted mean 3.65), ranked 4 (investment technology) (weighted mean 3.61), and ranked 5 (market expansion opportunities) (weighted mean 3.5).

The respondents mentioned that digital payment methods have an impact on expanding market opportunities, as they offer convenient and secure mobile payment options and require investment in technology, such as creating a user-friendly website. Additionally, digital payment methods improve cash flow by enabling businesses to receive cash more quickly compared to traditional payment methods. The financial management knowledge within a business consists of the past personal experience of the owner, employees, and other external sources (Cleary & Quinn, 2018). Improving the financial knowledge of small business owners could enhance their overall management of small businesses (Alpar et al, 2018).

Part III. What interventions can be implemented based on the study's results?

Table 3. The possible intervention that can be offered in the result of the study.

Characteristics	Weighted Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Embrace e-commerce	3.98	3	Agree
Enhance in-store experienced	4	2	Agree
Leverage Customer Data	3.78	5	Agree
Collaborate with online platforms	3.95	4	Agree
Provide added value services	4.1	1	Agree

Table 3 shows that the top-ranked priority is providing added-value services, with a weighted average of 4.1. Coming in second place enhances the in-store experience, with a weighted average of 4.0. Embracing e-commerce secures third place, with a weighted mean score of 3.98, followed by collaborating with online platforms at fourth place, with a score of 3.95, and using consumer data at fifth place, with a score of 3.78. All interpretations are in agreement.

The possible intervention that can be offered in the result of the study to The Role of Digital Payment Methods in the Traditional Retail: Implications for Business Innovation. According to the respondent's answers, the intervention about collaboration with online platforms is that they can explore partnership or collaboration with online platforms to expand their reach and existing customer base these platforms and provide added services that can offer value-added services to enhance the overall customer experience. The potential interventions for traditional retail businesses in the Municipality of Santa Cruz are presented. The respondents suggest that collaborating with online platforms and expanding reach through partnerships could help these businesses tap into new customer bases. Additionally, offering value-added services to enhance the overall customer experience is also recommended.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The main purpose of the study is to find out the Role of Digital Payment Methods in Traditional Retail: Implications for Business Innovation.

In most cases, respondents have been in business for 1-10 years before establishing their own. The most common types of businesses are Sari-Sari stores and general merchandise. Cash on hand is the most frequently used payment method, while GCash is the most commonly used electronic commerce payment method. GCash is exclusively used for online transactions, without the use of other online payment applications such as PayMaya, Debit/Credit Online applications, and Bank Online.

The significance of marketing in online sales, particularly in offering affordable products, becomes apparent in its ability to expand the customer base and enhance the efficiency of services, thereby contributing to increased income and profits. Additionally, online platforms enable customers to easily browse through a wide range of affordable products, facilitating seamless online payments and ensuring prompt delivery. This not only boosts customer satisfaction and accessibility but also improves the business's financial standing by necessitating investments in technology, increasing revenue through electronic payments, and expanding market reach through the provision of mobile payment options.

Based on the respondent's input, it is suggested that the intervention should involve embracing e-commerce by adapting and establishing a well-structured online presence. Moreover, the strategy includes offering an array of online payment options to cater to the needs of customers who prefer online shopping. For traditional stores lacking an online presence, a focus should be placed on elevating the in-store experience by creating distinctive and personalized shopping experiences, delivering exceptional customer service, and fostering collaborations with various online platforms. Furthermore, the potential for forming partnerships with online platforms to expand their reach and solidify their customer base should be explored. Finally, the stores should consider providing additional services to enhance the overall customer experience.

CONCLUSION

Upon careful examination of the aforementioned findings, it is evident that traditional business owners should prioritize enhancing their marketing efforts. This entails focusing on increasing their online presence to facilitate easy access for customers to view and purchase their products over the internet. In light of the shift in consumer behavior towards online payment methods, traditional businesses should adapt by providing secure and convenient online payment options. Collaborating with business owners in Santa Cruz, Marinduque to implement these interventions is crucial for fostering business improvements. The researcher affirm that traditional businesses in the Municipality of Santa Cruz, Marinduque can effectively meet the needs of their customers.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made according to the results and conclusions done by the researchers.

1. It is highly recommended that to improve business operations and maximize customer convenience, traditional businesses such as Sari-Sari stores and general merchandise shops should diversify their payment options beyond traditional cash and GCash. Embracing a broader spectrum of digital payment methods, including but not limited to PayMaya, debit/credit card processing, and online bank transfers, will enable these businesses to cater to a more extensive customer base and accommodate diverse payment preferences. This expansion will not only serve to enhance customer satisfaction by offering more convenient and secure payment options but also foster increased potential for sales growth and financial inclusion. Moreover, providing comprehensive training and support to business owners on the utilization of these digital payment solutions will play a pivotal role in ensuring a seamless transition and successful implementation.
2. To take advantage of the benefits of online sales and foster business growth, traditional retail businesses should invest in effective digital marketing strategies. These strategies should emphasize promoting affordable products to attract a broader customer base and highlight the convenience of online shopping. Leveraging social media platforms, search engine optimization (SEO), and targeted online advertisements can significantly enhance visibility and reach. Furthermore, businesses should streamline the online shopping experience by providing a user-friendly website or mobile app that offers a wide range of products, easy navigation, and seamless online payment options. By doing so, businesses can improve customer satisfaction, ensure timely delivery, and ultimately increase revenue and profits. Additionally, investing in technology to support these initiatives will improve service efficiency and strengthen the business's financial standing in the competitive market.
3. To effectively modernize and expand your market reach, traditional retail businesses should prioritize establishing a strong e-commerce presence. This can be achieved by developing user-friendly websites and mobile apps that allow customers to easily browse, select, and purchase products online. Additionally, businesses should integrate multiple online payment options, such as GCash, PayMaya, debit/credit cards, and bank transfers, to accommodate various customer preferences. For stores that do not yet have an online presence, efforts should be directed toward enhancing the in-store shopping experience by offering personalized services, unique product displays, and exceptional customer service. Collaborating with popular online platforms can also help these businesses reach a larger audience and solidify their customer base. Finally, introducing value-added services such as home delivery, click-and-collect options, and loyalty programs can significantly improve the overall customer experience and foster long-term customer loyalty.

Proposed Action Plan

Table 4

Action Plan Recommendation for Enhancing Social Media Marketing Effectiveness of Small Businesses

Objectives	Activities/Strategies	Persons Involved	Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Expected Outcome
Improve business branding through social media	Conduct training workshops on branding, logo creation, and content development	Business Owners, LGU, DTI, Marketing Experts	1–2 Months	₱15,000	Improved online brand identity and visibility
Strengthen customer relationships	Implement regular customer interaction through comments, chats, and feedback mechanisms	Business Owners and Customers	Continuous	₱5,000	Increased customer satisfaction and loyalty

Enhance digital marketing skills	Organize seminars on social media management, content creation, and digital advertising	DTI, Academic Institutions, Business Owners	Quarterly	₱20,000	Improved digital marketing competencies
Develop competitive pricing strategies	Conduct market analysis and competitor benchmarking	Business Owners and Marketing Team	Monthly	₱8,000	Better pricing decisions and increased competitiveness
Increase customer engagement	Utilize interactive content such as live selling, reels, promotional videos, and online contests	Business Owners and Social Media Managers	Weekly	₱12,000	Higher customer engagement and online interaction
Improve customer feedback management	Create online feedback forms and customer satisfaction surveys	Business Owners and Customers	Monthly	₱3,000	Faster response to customer concerns and improved services
Expand social media presence	Establish and optimize business accounts on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and other platforms	Business Owners	1 Month	₱7,000	Wider market reach and increased online visibility
Promote sustainable business growth	Develop long-term social media marketing plans and promotional campaigns	Business Owners, LGU, DTI	Every 6 Months	₱18,000	Sustainable business performance and increased sales
Strengthen collaboration with stakeholders	Partner with local organizations and educational institutions for marketing support and training	LGU, Schools, Entrepreneurs	Continuous	₱10,000	Stronger business network and support system
Monitor and evaluate marketing performance	Conduct regular evaluation of social media analytics, customer reach, and engagement rates	Business Owners and Marketing Team	Monthly	₱5,000	Improved marketing strategies and business decision-making

Total Estimated Budget

Particulars	Amount
Total Estimated Cost	₱103,000

Future Researchers are encouraged to include a larger and more diverse group of small businesses from different industries and geographic locations to improve the reliability and applicability of the findings. Comparative studies between businesses with strong and weak branding strategies may also provide deeper insights into effective customer engagement practices and business sustainability.

Additionally, future studies may explore emerging digital marketing trends such as influencer marketing, artificial intelligence-based advertising, live selling platforms, and advanced social media analytics to better

understand evolving consumer behavior and digital business practices. Incorporating longitudinal studies may also help determine the long-term impact of branding and customer engagement strategies on small business growth and competitiveness.

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that small business owners strengthen their utilization of social media marketing platforms to improve branding, customer relationships, and pricing strategies. Entrepreneurs should invest in continuous digital marketing training, customer engagement activities, and promotional strategies to remain competitive in the digital marketplace. Financial support from the Department of Trade and Industry, local government units, and partner institutions may help provide training programs, seminars, and digital marketing resources for small entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, small businesses are encouraged to maximize interactive social media features such as live selling, reels, video marketing, online promotions, and customer feedback systems to enhance customer loyalty and brand awareness. Regular monitoring of social media analytics and customer behavior is also recommended to improve marketing effectiveness and organizational decision-making.

Collaboration between academic institutions, government agencies, and entrepreneurs is essential in promoting sustainable digital entrepreneurship. Future researchers may also explore additional factors affecting social media marketing effectiveness and business sustainability among small enterprises.

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