

Social Media Marketing as a Marketing Tools in COVID-19 Pandemics: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

The use of social media as a marketing tool has been predominantly apparent in the last few years. For marketers, social media is seen as an opportunity to advertise their product or services. Thereby, it is expected that social media reaches far more users than traditional media and eventually converts to the number of sales. The objective of this research is to find out (1) the social media characteristic, and (2) whether COVID19 pandemics accelerates the growth of social media as a marketing tool based on those-characteristic. This study found out that as a marketing tool, social media beset the advantages of velocity, accessibility, and reachability. This paper also revealed that the social media usage is rising during pandemics. The study uses systematic review methods by reviewing 20 research papers from well-known database, then rigorously analyses and integrates the findings. A systematic understanding will help future researcher on marketing and social media during uncertainty times.

Keywords: *Pandemic, Social Media Marketing, Systematic Review, Marketing*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the borderless and advanced technology, today, social media has become a manner to bridge between brand and consumer. People around the world continue to integrate social media as a part of their daily life and it is directly influence consumers behaviour [1]. Marketers, seizing this trend and using social media as a marketing tool. Most article about social media in the context of marketing focuses on specific issues and remained fragmented. The focuses on previous studies emphasizes on brand awareness, human needs and satisfaction, and brand management. Social media as a marketing tools itself, has reflected on several studies such as the work of which emphasizes on social media as a communication and marketing tool. Whereas the implementations of such marketing tools reflected on various industry such as on educational institutions, tourism organisations, and culinary industry. Those studies mentioned how social media transform the organizational model and changes the company marketing dynamics. Alongside with transforming business model, social media is being used extensively by brand at the moment as a result of Covid-19 pandemics. The nature of pandemic that

disrupts every human aspects and livelihood has created a significant usage of social media on the planet. With the governments around the world enacted the stay-at-home program, people are expected to get access to social media more often than before. The report ASEAN Post concludes that 23% of people in ASEAN spending time more significantly on social media. The data from Data Reportal, estimating than more than half of humanity now using internet at home (The ASEAN Post, 2020). Looking at this data, it is posed a question, does social media usage is accelerating as a marketing tool in this pandemic? Past research already noting on the benefit of social media as marketing tools, yet during this unprecedented times, such research on reviewing social media during pandemics for marketing tools has not yet been published.

Therefore, this research determines to find out whether social media marketing practice accelerating during COVID-10 pandemics using systematic review. Systematic review is chosen to to come up with a rigour assessment on how of social media accelerates as a marketing tools during the pandemics by weighed in all relevant academic articles from a well-known databases as well as best practices and

published reports to support the findings. This study also aims to add to the dynamic of social media marketing during pandemic as there are still a few numbers of article that reviewing such topic.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing can be defined as a connection between brands and consumers while consumers are actively engaged and create interaction with the brand itself. One studies defines social media as an alternative media communication [3]. While others regard social media entails a benefit that brands can increase the awareness in a fast manner with certain velocity. Different theories exist in the literature regarding the term velocity. More recent attention has focused on the provision of sales and not marketing. It has also been focusing on retailing and consumer behaviour. Whereas on another study, social media marketing besets a hybrid in a company marketing mix, namely in promotion because it is accessible by plenty of consumers at the same time [4]. Social media marketing also reaches different segment, types, and style of consumers which at the same time created a more fragmented market for each product offered by companies[5]. In addition, the rising trend of instafamous and influencer marketing has made this marketing tools more dynamic than before [6].

Pandemic and Business

COVID19 pandemics are started in Wuhan, Mainland China in December 2019. This virus then spread all over the world since March 2020 and it is not over yet when this paper is written in December 2020. Pandemic disrupts human life in every aspects [7]. Subsequently, businesses around the world are losing money and eventually needed to reassess their business strategy or even change the business model altogether [8]. The interest of research in business and pandemic impact risen significantly that reflected on previous research. One study implement bibliometric research on pandemic and business management [9]; Another study emphasizes the pandemic impact on a human resources management internationally [10]; and the workplace; While some other study show how the virus also affecting many industry namely hospitality industry in China [10]; to the retailing and retailer sales [11]; and even takes on how corporate responsibility program will commenced [12].

Together, this theoretical foundation will be a starting point in examining how social media is utilized during COVID19 pandemics as a marketing tool.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Methodology Description: A Systematic Literature Review

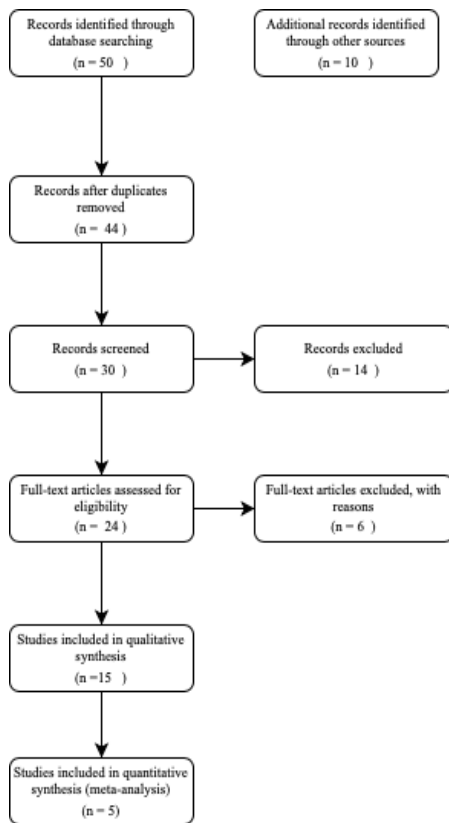
Systematic review is a set of literature review that is more comprehensive than regular literature review. Although it is mostly used in medical and natural science, yet the application in social science is also prevalent. According to Antman and Oxman, 1992 systematic review can be defined as follow:

“A systematic review attempts to collate all empirical evidence that fits pre-specified eligibility criteria in order to answer a specific research question. It uses explicit, systematic methods that are selected with a view to minimizing bias, thus providing more reliable findings from which conclusions can be drawn and decisions made”.

There are some key characteristics of a systematic review to be able to extract a form of scientific evidence for the purpose of this research. First, there are clearly stated set of objectives with pre-defined eligibility criteria for studies; Second, an explicit, and clear methodology; Third, a systematic search that attempts to identify all studies that would meet the criteria; Fourth, an assessment of the validity of the findings, and fifth, systematic presentation, of the characteristics and findings of the included studies.

Data Collection Methods

In order to reduce bias and author subjectivity towards the quality of this study, the author carefully select and planned research studies and paper. The author proceeded the research as follows using PRISMA Flow:



When this study is first commenced, author determined the research question and the objective of the research. The main source of the information is extracted from academic journals as this study aim to collectively and rigorously review a specific topic. Once the sources are distinguished, author starts to define and identify search terms and keywords to better understanding the research variable. Furthermore, selection criteria are added by only collect articles that are no older than the year of 2010, focusing on social media marketing, and pandemic-related articles in the respective databases. Once done, the execution of search begins in November 2020 when the pandemic has last for approximately nine months. During the search, author found around 50 papers that has significant correlation with social media, marketing, marketing tools, and pandemics in total, yet it eventually filtered out into 20 articles. As such, these 20 articles are then analysed. The inclusions and exclusions criteria of the paper being analysed are as follows:

Inclusions Criteria

This paper established below criteria as a basis of conducting this research as follows:

- 1) The articles are indexed in reputable database namely in DOAJ, Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), etc.

- 2) The articles are published no older than 2010, to ensure relevancy with current dynamic of marketing science
- 3) The articles research methodology is either quantitative or qualitative in nature.
- 4) The articles contain related topics namely social media, social media marketing, pandemic impact on business, marketing tools, digital marketing, and marketing strategy.

Exclusions Criteria

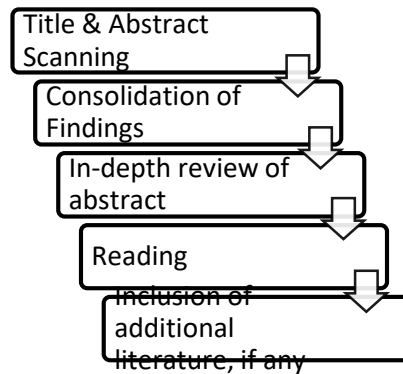
This study established below criteria as a basis of excluding research article as follows:

1. Non-English Papers
2. Paper published before 2010
3. Mixed methodology research

Reflecting on these criteria, the papers are then being analysed.

Data Analysis

The collected article then being classified using article mapping to make it easier for author to organize and identify which article is related with the research. From 50 articles that author found, 20 articles are mapped according to two classification which are social media marketing and the impact of pandemic and business. Once selected, below in Figure 3.1 shows the article mapping results by adopting article mapping process.



When author reading the paper, author decided not to include additional literature for systematic review other than the one on respectable academic journal database which is indexed in SCOPUS, DOAJ, Google Scholar and or Web of Science (WoS). Therefore, the next section of this paper will discuss the findings of this review.

4. FINDINGS

Paper Summary

This study finds 20 articles that potentially caters a substantial research result for the topic of these papers. Majority of the articles are in qualitative research nature with regards to current pandemic situation in 2020. Whereas in term of social media marketing it publishes during the year of 2014 to 2019. The articles selected are demonstrates in the Table 1 below

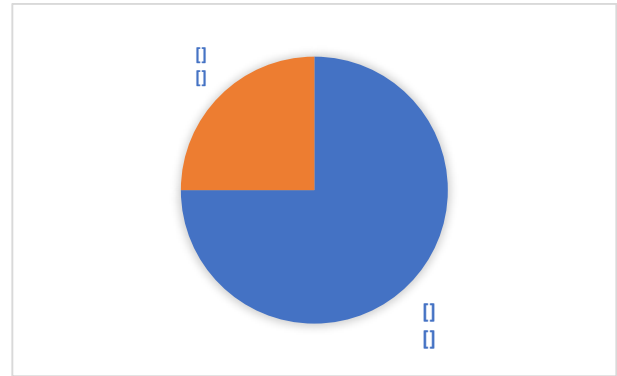
No	Classifications	Author & Title
1	Social Media Marketing	Tiago, et.al (2014). <i>Digital marketing and social media: Why bother?</i>
		Constantinides (2014). <i>Foundations of Social Media Marketing</i>
		Balakrishnan, Bamini K.P.D et.al (2014) <i>The Impact of Social Media Marketing Medium toward Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty among Generation Y</i>
		Felix, Reto et.al (2017). <i>Elements of strategic social media marketing: A holistic framework</i>
		Paquette, Holly (2013). <i>Social Media as a Marketing Tool: A Literature Review</i>
		Appel, Gil et.al (2020), <i>The future of social media in marketing</i>
		Godey, Bruno et.al (2016) <i>Social media marketing efforts of luxury brands: Influence on brand equity and consumer behavior</i>

No	Classifications	Author & Title
		Dahnil, Mohd Irwan et.al (2014). <i>Factors Influencing SMEs Adoption of Social Media Marketing</i>
		Jin, S. Venus et.al (2019) <i>Instafamous and social media influencer marketing</i>
		Vinerean, Simona et.al (2013). <i>The Effects of Social Media Marketing on Online Consumer Behavior</i>
		Hoffman, Donna L. & Fodor, Marek (2010). <i>Can you measure the ROI of your social media marketing?</i>
		Jacobson, Jenna et,al (2020) <i>Social media marketing: Who is watching the watchers?</i>
2	Pandemics & Business	Surabhi Verma & Anders Gustafsson (2020). <i>Investigating the emerging COVID-19 research trends in the field of business and management: A bibliometric analysis approach</i>
		Pantano, Eleonora Et.al (2020). <i>Competing during a pandemic? Retailers' ups and downs during the COVID-19 outbreak</i>
		Caligiuri, Paula et.al (2020) <i>International HRM insights for navigating the COVID-19 pandemic:</i>

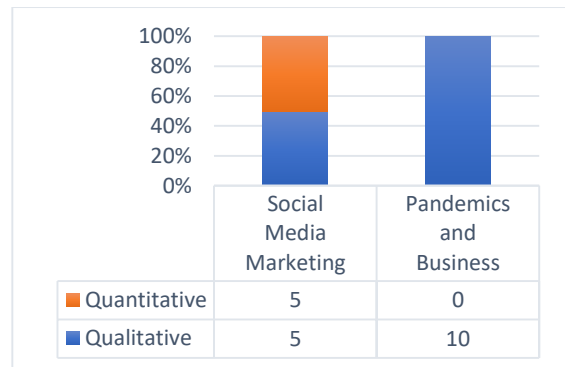
No	Classifications	Author & Title
		<i>Implications for future research and practice</i>
		He, Hongwei
		Harris, Lloyd (2020). <i>The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on corporate social responsibility and marketing philosophy</i>
		Obrenovic, Bojan
		Et.al (2020). <i>Sustaining enterprise operations and productivity during the COVID-19 pandemic: "Enterprise effectiveness and sustainability model"</i>
		De', Rahul et.al (2020). <i>Impact of digital surge during Covid-19 pandemic: A viewpoint on research and practice</i>
		Djalante, Riyanti et.al (2020). <i>Review and analysis of current responses to COVID-19 in Indonesia: Period of January to March 2020</i>
		Crick, James M & Crick, Dave (2020). <i>Coopetition and COVID-19: Collaborative business-to-business marketing strategies in a pandemic crisis</i>

Some of these articles are overlapping which means it falls into social media marketing, marketing tools altogether or has a direct correlation towards pandemics and business. Some research is also classified in one classification, yet it does not exclusively talk about the correlation between social media and pandemic situation. During the analysis,

researcher finding for the methodology used are as follows



Reflecting on the figure 3 above, we can see that majority of the research is qualitative research which accounted for 75% of the total articles selected. Surprisingly, the qualitative research methodology is mostly finds in research related with COVID Pandemic 2020. The distribution of each classification are as follows:



The most obvious finding to emerge from the article mapping is that 10 articles that falls into the classification of pandemics and business are in qualitative research. As such, caution must be applied as to avoid bias from the interpretation manner.

5. DISCUSSION

Social Media as a Marketing Tool

Social media has been used by vast majority of people worldwide. Globally, a study report for millennial and generation Z in Asia Pacific has shown that they are using internet for around 4-6 hours per day. Align with this report, social media marketing as a marketing tools positively impact consumer purchase intention on Generation Z. [3]. Their study highlight how the online marketing through social media marketing platform is found engaging and interesting, hence the influence on brand loyalty as well as purchase intention. Another study also mentioned that the use of social media is preferred as

a communication and marketing tools as its fast and cheap [13].

Having face a digital age, at any points, company started to merge their social media as one of the marketing tools. Research has found that engaging social media as a marketing tool can be classified into two approach, one is passive approach as a platform that provide a good picture on the product, or active approach that utilizing social media as a tools for sales, customer retention, and acquisitions[7]. More companies are also inviting social media personalities to advocates their brand or products[7]. Furthermore, the study from Felix et.al (2016), demonstrates that most social media marketers in Europe are working in attracting consumers to collaborate with brand and not only in a passive approach. On a side note, in this paper, it is found out that the social media governance is necessary because of social media characteristic that leap boundaries, globally. That being studied, the second and third characteristic of social media marketing is accessibility and reachability.

These findings from the reviewed paper suggest that social media beset three characteristics which are velocity, accessibility, and reachability.

The Acceleration Process of Social Media as a Marketing Tool During COVID-19 Pandemics

The role of social media during pandemic is prominently apparent amongst exchange of information[14]. The three characteristic mentioned on above section are especially prevalent on the quick sharing of information related of new scientific findings, COVID-19 responses globally, as well as the emerging of multi centre studies in medical field or business [14]. Pre-pandemic, business are known to use social media marketing in two approaches, passive and active. With the pandemics and restriction to travel all over the world, the use of social media and digital experience a surge [7]. In light of this recent events, business are eager to use social media as strategic approach in reactivating sales after a lockdown restriction in multi-countries. One example is the advertisement of Burger King in Instagram that encourage people to purchase food from another fast-food companies to support business during pandemics. This practice is corroborating with the research findings from [7] that emphasizing on business to business coopeting (cooperation and competition) to support each other during this unprecedented times. Another real life example is YouTube, that has also

reportedly limit the video quality all over the world to ease internet traffic during COVID-19 outbreak as million people all over the world are stay-at-home or work from home. This practice is supported by recent research that mentioning how business using social media more than ever as one way to cope with the loses, to make it more sustainable and survive.[10]. That being said, social media becoming one of the marketing tools that demonstrates a surge of usage in 2020

6. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that there are three main characteristic of social media marketing which are velocity-which refers to the rapid information spread; accessibility-which refers to the easy access of social media as a marketing tools to consumer; and reachability-which refers to the world wide reach the social media entails. These three characteristic are helping the social media accelerates as a marketing tools and has been used exponentially during COVID-19 pandemics.

7. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study was limited in terms of the number of articles collected and to the fact that the article being reviewed are mostly are recently published without longer exposure for observation. Despite its exploratory nature, this study offers some insight into how social media is used by companies in the year of the pandemics in 2020.

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