

# Influence of Social Media as a Marketing Platforms for Food-related Products in the New Normal

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**Abstract:** *The principal aim of the researchers was to know the influence of social media as a marketing platform for food-related products in the new normal. To achieve this aim, the researchers used a sample size of 55 senior high school students at Barcelona Academy located in Marilao, Bulacan in the course of the school year 2020-2021. The primary data gathering tools used in the study was a standardized questionnaire adapted from "Customer Perception Towards Social Media Advertising" by Suyash Jain, Kritika Navetia, and "To Assess the Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Perception" by Zulqurnain Ali, Muhammad Aqib Shabir, Mashal Rauf, and Abid Hussain. The collected data were analyzed and treated statistically through the use of descriptive-correlational study. Results revealed that social media does not significantly affect customer value in online food products. That means that consumers prefer traditional marketing strategies or advertisements. We may safely conclude that social media does not have significant effects on marketing food products online. The study recommends that firms have to be more active and engaging towards their customers, be more innovative yet informative when advertising the product but not repetitive, and listen to consumers' feedback.*

**Keywords—Social Media, Marketing platform, food-related products, Descriptive-correlational Study**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The modern age has brought upon many wonders that have helped our society grow and prosper. Technology has made everything accessible and convenient for a lot of people. One of the benefits of technology is the rise of social media and how it can help with the advertising of many products, in this case, food-related ones.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, many were put into lockdown or quarantine, minimizing physical contact. Which led to many businesses to shut down or move to a different type of platform, like social media. In order to drive digital engagement, advertisers are enthusiastically incorporating social media into their publicity programs [1]. Growth in social media has gained the attention of many firms, which lead them to put more effort in advertising on social media platforms [2].

People around the world are largely active and linked to web 2.0 technology and social media networks. At the same time, companies begin to look at such innovations as productive mechanisms to communicate more with their clients, the researchers of this study stated significant social media's role in advertisement, digital word of mouth, customer relationship management, and the brands and success of companies [3]. As a result of this rise, companies in all sectors of the economy are driven to use these social networks to keep in contact with consumer behaviour [4].

Many food-related products have become prevalent over the course of the quarantine, some even considered in making their own business. Food advertising and food and beverage

firms are increasingly advertising on youth-popular social media platforms [5].

This study aims to provide context in marketing food-related products through the use of social media, the strategies that businesses have used, and how it can influence the value of the product to the customers. This study also aims to contribute to the field of this literature and as a guide for social media marketers in creating more effective and successful social media ads.

## 2. RELATED WORKS

As the world has become a global organization and extensive coverage of the distribution of information via social media, this has become the latest and desirable approach [6]. In order to drive digital engagement, advertisers are enthusiastically incorporating social media into their publicity programs. Social media monitoring tools that offer quantitative results, such as the number of likes, shares, comments, openings, views, followers, or clicks, are typically used to measure the efficiency of such digital engagement systems as indicators of the degree of engagement or the importance of engagement (positive or negative comments). Growth among these metrics of interaction is often thought to result from innovative advertising execution [7]. Electric word-of-mouth (eWOM), has become the new response term for consumers online. A study related to this revealed that by improving brand recognition and optimistic brand attitude, the CSR-related behaviours of customers in social media significantly impacted eWOM intention and purchase intention [8].

A study shows that the desire for products and the experience of products in social media marketing establish different successful directions for interaction results. Social benefits were non-significant for cell phone brands other than the iPhone; but, because of the interplay of benefits, brand benefits were significant for them, because in recent years of marketing, social media is becoming a new medium for communication. Social networking promotes increased targeting and plays a vital role in marketing activities. We collect empirical data that can be used to assess whether social media marketing ultimately generates brand advantages or improves product sales [9]. In order to engage consumers, particularly via social media, and maintain a more intense experience around the brand rather than merely relying on ads, brand management has moved to make use of multiple channels [10].

However, despite high-tech businesses' social content marketing, social media and product creation process efficiency, some studies have shown that it was not considered that the social element of social media marketing was useful to customers in fulfilling their motivations. The reasons for belief (the importance of social media in receiving up-to-date information and the opportunity to exchange experiences), group engagement (active participation in the social media page of a retailer and stimulating the retail brand), and monetary (receiving better deals and free coupons for purchasing) and psychological (seeking a sense of association and belonging in the community) [11]. Another study shows that although the efficiency of the product development process was affected by social content marketing and e-trust, it did not play a mediating role in the relationship between social content marketing and the efficiency of the process of product development in high-tech companies [12]. To add to that, a study shows that high as well as low likes-to-followers ratios negatively affect the perceived reputation of the account and, as such, reduce social media marketing effectiveness. The addition of hashtags is described as a way to protect against the negative effects of high likes-to-followers ratios [13].

Conversely, a study that talked about consumers experiencing food ads on Instagram using various endorsers and visual complexity levels, the variations in consumer pleasure, arousal and purchasing intent. Their findings state that food advertisements endorsed by a celebrity yield more satisfaction and enthusiasm than those endorsed by food experts. Food advertisement creates more satisfaction and enthusiasm than less complicated advertisements using high levels of visual sophistication. Less complicated food commercials using food experts, however, produce greater pleasure than those endorsed by celebrities. The effect of the endorser form and visual complexity on consumer buying intentions were important mediators of consumer satisfaction [14]. In addition to that, a study showed that self-disclosure and the need for connection had a major positive effect on both the attitude of the brand and the intent to buy and that

adding celebrities to endorse a product is found to be effective [15]. According to studies, some people also create personalized ads and are identified as Ad Lovers, Ad Accommodators, and Ad Haters [16]. Another study has stated that Unlike any other mass media, social media speeds the spread of information; ensuring that new awareness reaches customers, thereby growing rivalry among retailers in the restaurant industry and concludes that social media plays a key role in fostering consumer welfare and decision-making [17].

### **3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This study's primary focus is on the influence of social media as a marketing platform for food-related products in the new normal. The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How effective is social media as a marketing platform for food-related products?
2. What is the status of customer value in buying online products?
3. Does social media significantly affect customer value in online products?
4. What implications can be drawn from the findings of the study to improve further the marketing strategies of businesses through social media?

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

The researchers of this study used a descriptive-correlational method of research that deals with the identification of the independent and dependent variables. Correlational research attempts to distinguish correlations between two or more factors. To put it simply, it investigates whether an increase or decrease in one variable correlates to the increase and decrease to another variable [18]. Specifically, this study aims to know if marketing food-related products through social media is effective.

The primary data gathering tools used in the study was a questionnaire about customers perception towards social media advertising and customer value.

The respondents of the study are made up of consumers from the ages of 16-18, specifically, senior high school students from Barcelona Academy. For the sample of the study, the researchers used a convenience sampling technique.

To gather the information for this study, the researcher adopted a questionnaire that deals with the perception of customers towards social media advertising, adapted from the studies entitled "Customer Perception Towards Social Media Advertising" by Suyash Jain, Kritika Navetia, and "To Assess the Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Perception" by Zulqurmain Ali, Muhammad Aqib Shabir,

Mashal Rauf, and Abid Hussain. It is divided into two surveys. The first being is about their thoughts on marketing through social media and the second is about the customer value. The first questionnaire has 10 indicators while the later has 12.

The mode of the gathering was the questionnaire method. In gathering the data, the researcher will follow the following procedures:

A letter was sent to the school principal of the researchers for the approval of their survey that will be conducted online.

With the approval of the school principal, the researchers then distributed the questionnaire via Messenger.

The researchers gathered the responses of the questionnaires and check whether they answered all questions.

## 5. RESULTS

### EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Table 1. The Effectiveness of social media as a marketing platform

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Do you visit the associated website or page of the advertisement?	3.13	Neutral
2. Does social media advertisement help you in making purchase decisions?	3.64	Agree
3. Do you think social media advertisements will lead you to purchase a useful product?	3.58	Agree
4. Are you attracted to a brand by clicking the advertisement?	3.70	Agree
5. Do you think consumer's perceptions of a brand change with social media marketing activities?	4.06	Agree
6. Content should be present which consumers expect to see from a brand on social media.	4.38	Agree
7. People mostly buy which brand posts are most popular.	4.32	Agree
8. Social Media	4.24	Agree

innovates the ways of advertising products or services in an efficient manner.		
9. Social media outlets should be a brand utilized to engage with consumers.	4.08	Agree
10. Consumers perceive information posted by the other consumers on the brand's social media outlets to be trustworthy.	4.02	Agree
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>3.91</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**The Effectiveness of Social Media.** As we can see, statement 1 got the lowest mean score of 3.13 with the corresponding interpretation of "Neutral" while statement 6 got the highest mean score of 4.38 which is interpreted as "Agree". It is apparent from the table above that most respondents use social media networks and consider social media before starting the decision-making process that resulted in "agree" as shown by the average score of 3.91.

The effectiveness of social media was outlined in the following aspects of social media usage and convenience: visiting the associated website or commercial page (3.13); helping in making purchase decisions (3.64); advertisements lead on purchasing a useful product (3.58); attracted to a brand by clicking on the advertising (3.70); consumer's perceptions of a brand changes with social media marketing activities (4.06); content that consumers expect to see should be present (4.38); people typically buy the most popular brand posts. (4.32); innovates the medium of advertising products or services in an efficient manner (4.24); outlets should be a tool used for interacting with customers (4.08); consumers consider information shared on the brand's social media outlets by other consumers to be credible (4.02).

Social media is a medium to socialize as well as to market and today, the plethora of social media networks are among the finest opportunities available to organizational marketers in their bids to connect with existing and prospective customers. Social network applications provide users with new forms of empowerment and means of information sharing. Customers are able to communicate online exchanging information, comments and product reviews beyond the marketer's control [19].

### CUSTOMER VALUE

Table 2. Customer's Value Towards Online Food Business

1. The product(s) I received online was/were what I expected.	3.76	Agree
2. The online check-out process was simple.	4.01	Agree
3. The website or app was easy to use.	4.29	Agree
4. I believe products are made of high-quality ingredients or materials.	3.34	Neutral
5. I would recommend this product to my friends.	3.81	Agree
6. I will buy this product again in the future.	3.61	Agree
7. I am satisfied with my purchase.	3.78	Agree
8. I am satisfied with the speed of service.	3.36	Neutral
9. I am satisfied with the prices offered.	3.78	Agree
10. I am satisfied with the customer support.	3.65	Agree
11. Quality of the product is important to me.	4.69	Strongly Agree
12. I would use a coupon/discount if I received one.	4.54	Strongly Agree
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Customer's Value Towards Online Food Business.** It can be seen in Table 2 that the customer's value towards online food business survey resulted in "agree" as shown by the average score of 3.88. The customer's value was presented in the following aspects of online food purchasing: product received was expected (3.76). Online check-out process was simple (4.01). website or app was easy to use (4.29). products are made out of high-quality materials or ingredients (3.34). will recommend the product to my friends (3.81). will buy again in the future (3.61). is satisfied with the purchase (3.78). is satisfied with the speed of service (3.36). is satisfied with the price offered (3.78). is satisfied with the customer support (3.65). importance of product quality (4.69). and will use a coupon or discount if given (4.54).

In the research paper, "Consumers Perception Towards Online Shopping". E-shopping is very popular because of its convenience and low prices. Online shopping is a savior for a person who has to go to various shops and wait long queues especially during holidays. The internet has transformed the consumer's shopping habits and has proven itself to be a global success. Many businesses have begun to use the internet to cut marketing costs and minimize the

prize of counter-competition goods [20]. In a study that talks about, "People Perception Towards Online Shopping", the survey showed that many people find online shopping a better and easier option, although some consumers find it difficult too. Many people believe that online shopping will be more in demand [21]. Online marketing will have a broad variety in the future, and consumers will prefer cash on delivery [22].

## EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO ONLINE FOOD PRODUCTS

The findings reveal that social media does not significantly affect the customer value in online food products as evident by 0.3495 correlation coefficient.

This means that consumers prefer traditional marketing strategies or advertisements. They want to see or have a close proximity within the product because on social media, consumers do not have the assurance of the quality of the product.

## 6. DISCUSSION

Social media marketing is the new trend in the business world and this research can help entrepreneurs or business owners in stepping up their marketing strategies. In this marketing strategy (the use of social media), it can cut marketing costs and reach a broader audience.

The outcome shows that social media advertising is best done by being informative, not by entertaining and spamming, which irritates users, as some social media advertisers thought it was the way to attract attention [23]. Online food marketers should be more socially active and accommodating so that they can earn the trust of the consumers, especially during this new normal where in the quicker the response of the firm, the consumers will be satisfied.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Based from the findings established during the course of this study, the researchers have hypothesized the following conclusions: first, many "agree" that social media is not only used for entertainment and socializing but also for marketing though it is still a growing concept, it has proved that it is just as effective as traditional marketing.; second, the analysed effect of online customer's shopping values on consumer satisfaction and loyalty show many "agree" and are satisfied ; third, the influence of social media as a marketing platform for food-related products do not have significant effects on the product; fourth, notable implications were drawn out from the study: (1) social media can cut marketing costs and reach a broader audience, (2) social advertisements should be informative and straight to the point, (3) online food firms should be more active on social media.



## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings and the conclusion, the researchers offer the following scope for the future: (1) more interaction with the consumers to obtain the trust of their customers. In that manner, customers will be more engaged in the improvement and enable business firms to build more consumer relationships. To keep their product and business prospering. (2) Capture the attention of the consumers in relevant ways to keep the interest of the mass. Social media has paved the way in easily grasping prospective and old customers. Now, in maintaining the audience's interest, business firms must promote their product on social media in an innovative yet informative approach that wouldn't leave consumers with question marks on their heads. (3) Provide added value for the customers such as discounts, coupons, etc. to gain more loyal customers. Through this course of action, loyal customers will be able to remain with the firm and also attract new ones. (4) Listen to consumers' feedback in order to further improve the product and services. Being able to listen to feedback gives a preview on the views, thoughts, and insights of the customers on the product and their suggestions on the improvement of the commodity and the firm itself.

For the limitations of the study, first, is the population sample size. The researchers encourage a larger number of senior high school students to participate to make the results more reliable and valid. Next, the researchers should also include other senior high school students from other schools within the province of Bulacan. The researchers also suggest to use a more distinctive research design like that of a mixed method because the study is a survey typed one. Lastly, this study needs a more advanced statistical tool to be used.

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