

Impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty in Jordan

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Abstract

The primary objective of this research was to investigate the influence of social media marketing on the transformation of consumer responses into brand loyalty, with a specific focus on fashion companies operating in the Jordanian market. Data collection was executed using self-administered questionnaires created using Google Forms, which were subsequently distributed to a sample comprising 900 consumers by email. A total of 639 responses were received, with 27 responses deemed invalid for analysis due to incomplete or inaccurate information. Consequently, the final dataset for analysis comprised 612 responses that met the requisite criteria. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed. The findings of this analysis revealed that social media marketing had a discernible impact on brand loyalty. Notably, the dimension with the highest observed impact was e-word of mouth. In light of the outcomes of this study, it is recommended that website designers consider developing informative brochures highlighting the characteristics and advantages of social media marketing. Additionally, efforts should be made to persuade consumers of the benefits offered by these platforms in terms of shopping convenience, reduced time and effort investment, and cost-effectiveness.

Keywords: social media marketing, brand loyalty, Jordan.

1. Introduction

The development in the field of communications is one of the most prominent developments that we are witnessing in the twenty-first century, as modern means of communication have changed the way people communicate, making it difficult for organizations to ignore the use of electronic communications, because the use of traditional methods in marketing is often costly to the organizations (Alhalalmeh et al., 2022; Al-Hawary & Obiadat, 2020; Al-Hawary & Mohammad, 2011). Social media serves as a multifaceted information reservoir that individuals utilize to share insights regarding products, brands, services, and various pertinent matters. Within this realm, communication channels encompass diverse social networks such as Facebook and MySpace, alongside micro blogging platforms like Twitter. Users intensively rely on these platforms in the context of marketing, formulating their purchasing decisions, and accessing credible and trustworthy information. Social media has a beneficial influence on recruiting consumers, influencing purchasers, and creating brand reputation; it is also

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an excellent marketing tool for promotion (Al-Hawary&Al-Fassed , 2022; Al-Nawafah et al., 2022; Al-Hawary & Alhajri, 2020; Alshawabkeh et al., 2022; Altarifi, 2015).

One of the important uses of social media is marketing and brand building by enabling individuals to promote sites, products or services and reach a larger community that may not be present in traditional means (Al-Hawary & Al-Khazaleh, 2020; Erdogmus&Cicek, 2012). The conventional modes of communication have experienced diminished efficacy and escalated costs, prompting organizations to pivot towards electronic social media as a means to promote their products and cultivate their brand. This transition occurs through mechanisms involving information exchange, knowledge dissemination, facilitated communication, and the nurturing of interpersonal relationships, as noted by Buiut (2013). It should be noted that companies and institutions - in light of globalization - are moving towards marketing through social media marketing, because of their importance in creating awareness and awareness of products and providing all information related to them, where companies can monitor the extent of customer interaction with each brand by following networks to know customer impressions and comments and make all improvements. And since the group that uses social networks the most is the youth (Gharibeh, 2015); the researcher wanted to know the impact of using social media marketing as a marketing tool in building a brand on a sample of Jordanian public university students, as brand building through social networks is still one of the new topics in our Arab countries. This study is one of the first Arab studies that dealt with the impact of the use of social media marketing as a marketing tool in building a brand, which is considered a pioneering contribution to Arab studies to conduct more studies, in theory, and on the practical side; This study draws the attention of companies to the growing interest in brand building and marketing through social networks and taking recommendations and opinions of users. For web designers; this study directs their attention to the aspects that should be focused on increasing the attractiveness of the site in a way that encourages users to visit the site again.

2. Theoretical framework and hypotheses development

2.1 Social media marketing

Social media constitutes a multifaceted information resource within the realm of the Internet. Consumers utilize it as a platform for sharing insights and experiences related to products, brands, services, and encountered challenges. This expansive domain of social media encompasses various forms of online information exchange, prominently featuring social networking platforms like Facebook, MySpace, Friendster, and micro blogging sites such as Twitter (Neti, 2011; Al-Shormana et al., 2022; Al-Hawary & Ismael, 2010; Bulut, 2013). Web-based means: a set of interactive applications that influence subscribers and expand the experiences, knowledge, and market power of users as participants in business and social processes. Web (2.0) applications play a pivotal role in fostering informal user engagement and enabling the seamless flow of ideas and information. They facilitate the dissemination and exchange of informational content, affording companies the opportunity to gain insights into customer needs and engage with them in a direct and personalized manner. There are five distinct categories associated with Web 2.0: social networking, blogs, forums, content aggregators, communities, and brand audiences, as highlighted in the works of Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) and Al-Hawary and Batayneh (2010). Furthermore, they serve as a vehicle for the blending and widespread dissemination of knowledge and information to a vast user base. Leveraging technology, they enable the publication and sharing of content generated by users themselves, exemplified by platforms like Facebook and Twitter. These networking sites are integral to the realm of social media marketing, serving as cost-effective tools that amalgamate technology and social interaction (Tariq et al., 2022; Al-Hawary & Harahsheh , 2014; AL-Zyadat et al., 2022; Neti, 2011).

Social media is defined as an internet-based platform that affords individuals the ability to construct a public persona, engage in communication, and showcase a network illustrating their relationships with others. Within this digital ecosystem, members engage in communication, exchange activities and trends, and access the most up-to-date information. New media exhibits four distinctive characteristics, namely persistence, searchability, repeatability, and the presence of invisible audiences, as highlighted by (Al-Hawary and Al-Menhaly in 2016, Al-Hawary and Al-Namlan in 2018, and Mustafa and Hamzah in 2011). According to Tsimonis&Dimitriadis (2014), these tools are important for building and developing a brand and strengthening customer relationships, as well as a network of low-cost communications that improve the exchange of information between users, allowing companies' products and services to be available and visible to all users.

Marketing social media plays a major role in strengthening social relations between the company and customers, and providing effective communication channels, which leads to positive perceptions towards the company and purchase intentions (Bilal & Shahzad, 2014). Researchers believe that the social media marketing that companies use as a marketing tool achieves interaction between users through the masses of the Internet and the content that is created by the company and users, and that the credibility of the content that is published contributes to generating trust in the user and emotional loyalty to these sites, which reflects positively on the loyalty of consumers to the company through the consolidation of these sites.

When we look into the literature on social media, we find that the dimensions of this notion are as follows: information quality: The amount to which information about a product is widely accessible to all buyers via social media can be regarded as the quality of information, as shoppers trust information shared about products by a large number of people. Through the exchange of product information, there are more consumers than through any other advertising method (Al-Hawary et al., 2013; Al-Adaileh, 2015). Electronic service quality is described as the site's ability to efficiently and effectively assist online shopping, as well as the purchase and delivery of products (Loanas & Stoica, 2014; Metabis & Al-Hawary, 2013; Alshurideh et al., 2017; Al-Hawary et al., 2012; Abbad & Al-Hawary, 2011; Al-Hawary et al., 2011; Stantoutidis, 2009). Social interaction is a direct interactive process that reveals the desires and needs of customers, and the web is the most interactive site, as it is of greater value to consumers, as consumers prefer interactive advertising; because it allows the consumer to control and exchange opinions about products, in addition to the characteristics of interactive advertising over the Internet. Social influence is a basic and strategic stage that comes after the stage of social interaction, and is an important stage in influencing individuals' attitudes, behaviors, feelings and desires. In the context of social media; these means contribute to influencing users through the content and information they provide, which affects individuals' convictions, ideas and cultures, and thus their purchasing behaviors. Friendship: Using social networking sites to create and develop brand audiences on social media marketing sites, which give them the opportunity to speak different languages and connect with friends to make new friends, share knowledge and brainstorm.

Social participation is defined as interacting with others in social activities and responding to social stimuli. The interaction is related to participation, as a certain level of interaction is related to participation, and this depends on personal characteristics, initiative and motivation (Hollebeek, 2011). Entertainment: The perceptual antecedent entertainment is crucial to the consumer's assessment of the value of the commercial message, the attitude towards the site or the brand, and the evaluation of the success of the website is done through information and entertainment, and researchers have discovered that both knowledge and entertainment had a beneficial impact among Internet merchants, and that both affect the visitor's attitude towards the site and the intention to engage with the Internet. EWom is a non-commercial source of information that is more persuasive and influences consumer decisions.

2.2 Brand loyalty

A brand is defined as the experience of a customer represented by a set of images and ideas that refer to a symbol, such as: image, ideas, logo, design scheme, and brand recognition, which is created based on the accumulation of experiences with products or services, whether related to their use directly through the impact of advertising, or comments through social media (Al-Hawary et al., 2013; Al-Hawary, 2013b; Kujala & Tuominen, 2011). The rise of social media marketing has had a significant influence on society, which is seen as a technological and Cultural Revolution and these means are useful for a brand that wants to create a strong relationship with customers, which leads to brand loyalty, and thus increases sales. Organizations using social media marketing help organizations appear more reputable and innovative than competitors, as many brand owners have sought to create brand audiences that contribute to interaction and sharing of purpose, benefit, event, sharing of emotions, offering experiences, and corporate affiliation. As well as enhancing the position of the brand through consumers' reliance on many social media marketing sites to obtain information about the brand, and therefore; The companies that rely on social media marketing to be able to reach the largest number of customers, and meet all their needs, which positively affects the purchasing decision of consumers, and to get an idea of what consumers want and what are the preferred products, to meet their needs, which also helps in establishing the brand Branding and creating awareness of this brand by increasing its visibility on marketing social media sites (Naveed, 2012).

The final step in the CBBE (customer-based brand building model) pyramid is where customer response to the brand is transformed into a customer-brand loyalty relationship (Kuhn & Alpert, 2004, 4). The commercial relationship between customers and the brand is expressed in the resonance of the brand, and the extent to which customers feel that the nature of the relationship is synchronous with the brand, and also reflects the intensity and depth of emotional attachment with the brand and some brands that have a high resonance such as Apple, Harley and Davidson (Keller, 2009). Creating brand resonance requires marketers to create the foundation upon which brand resonance can be built. Brand loyalty is taught under brand resonance or brand resonance which refers to the nature of customers' relationship with the brand, and the extent to which customers feel emotionally attached to the brand, a high degree of loyalty, interaction and effective exchange of experiences with others.

Karamian et al., (2015) defines loyalty as a long-term commitment to repeat the purchase of the same brand, without regard to the situational effects and marketing efforts that can lead to changing behaviors. Social media platforms empower consumers to share information regarding brands with their peers, facilitating conversational exchanges. Consumers exhibit a preference for social media marketing platforms as a means to stay informed about a brand's products and promotional activities. Their inclination to encounter updated brand-related content is driven by a desire for timely information. Notably, the popularity of such content among their social circles contributes positively to brand loyalty. Furthermore, the transmission of electronic word-of-mouth communication has a favorable impact on brand loyalty. This phenomenon is exemplified in the cases of Pepsi and Coca-Cola, where internet-based programs are implemented to enhance customer loyalty through promotional offers, often at no cost, as observed in research by Erdogmus and Cicek in 2012. Naveed (2012) illustrated that brand loyalty can be cultivated through the utilization of social media marketing strategies. These approaches aid in enhancing brand visibility, circumventing obstacles to information dissemination. Furthermore, the ease of Internet access and utilization by marketers facilitates seamless communication with consumers and target audiences, contributing to the establishment of brand loyalty.

2.3 Social media marketing and brand loyalty

Sumitha & Beegam (2014) indicated that brand loyalty increases the company's revenues, and that the use of social media technologies helps the company reach a wide segment of customers, and it is an important and successful strategy for achieving brand loyalty. In addition to the existence of a relationship in customer engagement in fun and utilitarian brands, Najafi, Rahmani, and Safdari (2014) noted that customer relationships, participation, and customer value in fun brands are more than utilitarian brands., where the customer recommends the product to other customers; this enhances organizational innovation, and that customer relationships and loyalty are more with recreational brands (catering to sensory and emotional needs) than with utilitarian brands; this enhances organizational innovation, and that customer relationships and loyalty are more with recreational brands (catering to sensory and emotional needs) than with utilitarian brands (catering to basic needs and necessities of life such as food). Erdogmus&Cicek (2012) finds that campaigns conducted via social media to advertise a brand contribute to building brand loyalty, and the popularity of content among friends and word of mouth; increase brand loyalty in online environments, as social media affects brand loyalty positively when providing useful campaigns and relevant content and showing it on various platforms, and emphasizing the content is constantly updated to successfully manage the brand on social networking sites. Brand loyalty increases sales, revenue, and market share and helps companies grow. Based on the above, the hypothesis of the study can be formulated as follows:

There is an impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty.

3. Study model

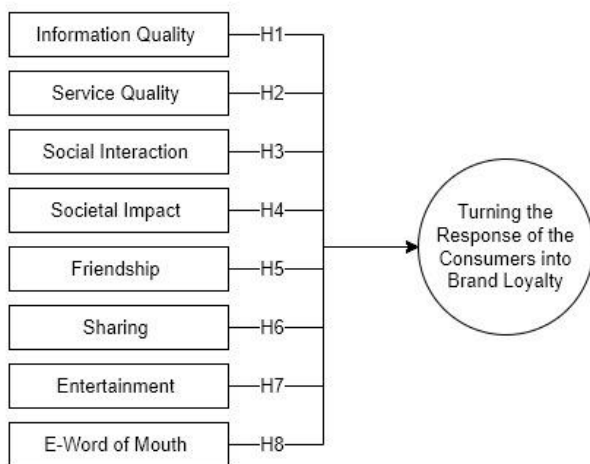


Figure 1. Research Model

4. Methodology

4.1 Population and sample

In this study, a quantitative research approach which relied on a questionnaire was employed for data gathering. The primary objective of the research was to assess the influence of social media marketing on the transformation of consumer responses into brand loyalty, with a specific focus on fashion companies operating in the Jordanian market. Data collection involved the distribution of self-administered questionnaires created using Google Forms to a sample of 900 consumers by email. In total, 639 responses were received; however, 27 responses were deemed invalid for statistical

analysis due to incompleteness or inaccuracies. Consequently, the final dataset comprised 612 responses, representing a response rate of 68%. This response rate was considered sufficient for the study's objectives, and it allowed for the presumption of data saturation, in accordance with the methodology outlined by Sekaran and Bougie (2016).

4.2 Measurement instrument

The measurement instrument utilized in the current research was a self-administered questionnaire, comprising two major sections, alongside a section addressing control variables. Categorical measures were employed as socioeconomic features for the sample and encompassed gender, age group, educational level, and experience. The first section included 40 items designed to gauge social media marketing, drawing upon the framework proposed by Erdogmus (2012). These items were categorized into distinct dimensions with five items for assessing each of them as follows: information quality (INQ), service quality (SEQ), social interaction (SIN), societal impact (SIM), friendship (FRS), sharing (SHA), entertainment (ENT), and e-word of mouth (EWM). The second section of the questionnaire comprised eight items specifically developed to measure brand loyalty (TRL), guided by the work of Al-Hawary et al. (2013a).

5. Findings

5.1 Model evaluation

In this research, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was applied as the statistical approach to examine and estimate the relationships between various factors and variables. SEM is recognized as a modern statistical technique for assessing these relationships, as highlighted by Wang and Rhemtulla (2021). To ensure the robustness of the constructs used in the research, their reliability and validity were evaluated through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), carried out using the statistical software AMOS version 24. The results of the analysis, including convergent and discriminant validity, as well as values of reliability, are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: validity and reliability tests

Constructs	INQ	SEQ	SIN	SIM	FRS	SHA	ENT	EWM	TRL
INQ	.748								
SEQ	.362	.741							
SIN	.358	.262	.767						
SIM	.375	.244	.282	.750					
FRS	.315	.354	.267	.318	.751				
SHA	.385	.392	.255	.229	.361	.745			
ENT	.271	.266	.360	.267	.347	.284	.772		
EWM	.258	.318	.348	.388	.225	.394	.346	.770	
TRL	.438	.479	.451	.406	.461	.502	.384	.486	.767
VIF	2.164	2.041	1.988	1.574	1.638	2.591	2.134	2.447	---
L.R	.706-.814	.628-.846	.671-.822	.681-.813	.703-.791	.692-.811	.732-.815	.685-.892	.715-.835
AVE	.560	.550	.588	.562	.564	.556	.596	.593	.588
MSV	.415	.409	.338	.482	.467	.381	.425	.497	.462
I.C	.861	.857	.873	.862	.865	.859	.878	.876	.917
C.R	.864	.858	.876	.865	.866	.862	.880	.878	.919

Table 1 presents the findings of the research's measurement model evaluation. The standard loading values for individual items (L.R) fell within the range of 0.628 to 0.892. These values exceeded the minimum threshold for item retention based on their standard loads, as indicated by previous research by Sung et al. (2019). Assessing convergent validity, the research considered the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), a summary indicator. All constructs exhibited AVE values surpassing the 0.50 threshold recommended by Howard (2018). This suggests that the measurement model employed in the research demonstrates appropriate convergent validity.

For discriminant validity, the study adopted the comparison approach proposed by Rimkeviciene et al. (2017) within the context of covariance-based SEM. This approach

involved comparing the Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) values with the AVE values and comparing the square root of AVE (\sqrt{AVE}) values with the correlations between other constructs. The results indicated that MSV values were smaller than the AVE values, and \sqrt{AVE} values exceeded the correlation values among the other constructs. These findings affirm that the measurement model exhibits discriminant validity. For assessing measurement reliability, two indicators were utilized: Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for internal consistency (I.C) and McDonald's Omega coefficient for composite reliability (C.R). Both coefficients exceeded the threshold of 0.70, as recommended by de Leeuw et al. (2019). This demonstrates that the measurement model is reliable in terms of internal consistency and compound reliability.

5.2 Structural model

The analysis of the structural model revealed the absence of multicollinearity issues among the independent constructs, as indicated by Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values that were less than the threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2017), as presented in Table 1. This finding aligns with the results of model fit indices, as depicted in Figure 1, further corroborating the absence of multicollinearity in the model.

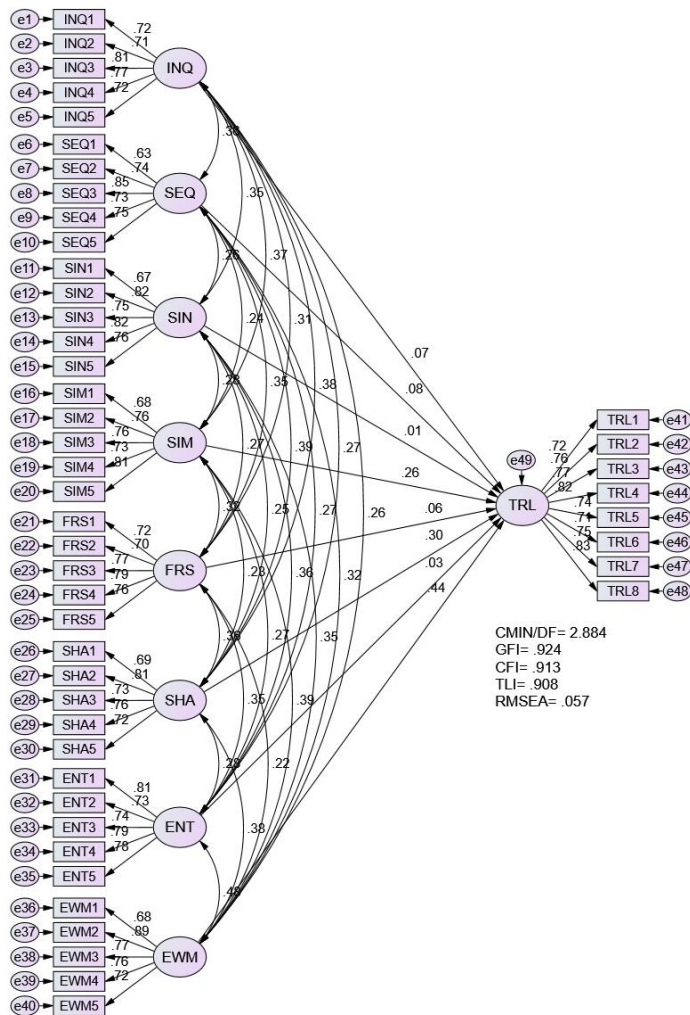


Figure 2: SEM results of the SMM effect on brand loyalty

Figure 1 shows that the results of several model fit indices meet acceptable standards. The Chi-Square to Degrees of Freedom (CMIN/DF) ratio was 2.884, which was less than the indicator's top limit of 3. Furthermore, the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) values are all above the minimum acceptable level of 0.90. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) returned a result

of 0.057, which is a tolerable approximation error because it is less than the top limit of 0.08. Therefore, the structural model employed in this research was deemed to be a suitable model for predicting the transformation of consumer responses into brand loyalty and for generalizing its findings, in accordance with the research conducted by Shi et al. (2019). To substantiate the findings of hypothesis testing, SEM was applied and the outcomes of this analysis are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relation	Standard Beta	t value	p value
H1	Information Quality → Brand Loyalty	.068	1.167	.180
H2	Service Quality → Brand Loyalty	.077	1.344	.244
H3	Social Interaction → Brand Loyalty	.010	0.174	.862
H4	Societal Impact → Brand Loyalty	.257***	4.727	.000
H5	Friendship → Brand Loyalty	.063	0.951	.342
H6	Sharing → Brand Loyalty	.305***	5.010	.000
H7	Entertainment → Brand Loyalty	.035	0.562	.575
H8	E-Word of Mouth → Brand Loyalty	.439***	8.530	.000

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 2 demonstrates that the majority of SMM aspects had little influence on converting customer responses into brand loyalty. Despite this, the findings showed that e-word of mouth had the biggest influence ($\beta = 0.439$, $t = 8.530$, $p = 0.000$), followed by sharing ($\beta = 0.305$, $t = 5.010$, $p = 0.000$), and societal impact had the lowest impact ($\beta = 0.257$, $t = 4.727$, $p = 0.000$).

6. Discussion

The study's findings revealed that brand awareness is an important aspect of developing a customer-centric brand, and we can deduce that users can remember the brand through (word - logo - colors - symbols and designs), i.e. all brand identity-building elements. Furthermore, Jordanian public university students are still young, and their ability to form opinions, make decisions, and shape conduct that influences other people's decisions has not yet reached full maturity. We've been noticing it lately; the political, economic, and social changes that impacted the youth may have caused them to avoid or boycott certain businesses.

The study found an effect of SMM on of brand loyalty. This result confirms the role of social networks and social media in creating a relationship of closeness and emotional engagement with users to enhance their loyalty through the dimensions of SMM, their participation and influence on users; in addition to hearing their opinions, as user feedback plays a big role in people recommending products they are convinced of to avoid bad experiences for friends, and brand defense through electronic word transmission is considered the strongest measure of brand loyalty. It should be noted that the loyalty market in Jordan and the Arab countries is still new and needs to be given more attention, which requires marketers through social networks to provide new business possibilities and take advantage of the features offered by social networks to address all aspects of the concerns felt by users. The findings of this research align with the research conducted by Barhemmati and Ahmed (2015), which also identified a positive relationship between customer engagement via social media marketing and purchasing behavior. It suggests that individuals tend to harbor a favorable attitude towards the brand when they actively participate in social media interactions. Moreover, such participation through social media platforms fosters an emotional connection between customers and the brand, ultimately resulting in an enhancement of customer loyalty towards the brand.

7. Recommendations

According to the research's findings, it is recommended that website designers and marketers take proactive steps to harness the potential of social media marketing. To begin, website designers should consider creating awareness brochures that elucidate the characteristics and benefits of social media marketing, serving as educational tools for both consumers and businesses. These materials can highlight the advantages of using social media platforms for shopping, emphasizing the time and cost savings they offer. It is crucial to persuade consumers about these benefits and underscore the convenience that social media shopping brings in terms of time and effort reduction. Furthermore, it is imperative for marketers and website designers to possess a deep understanding of the features provided by social media marketing. This comprehension enables the selection and effective use of communication tools that engage users and foster customer loyalty. By implementing these recommendations, businesses can leverage social media marketing to enhance brand visibility, engage consumers, and ultimately cultivate lasting brand loyalty. The research also suggests that businesses re-emphasize the importance of social media marketing in their marketing plans. Universities should place a greater emphasis on making information and communication technology a part of their students' curriculum by giving information technology lecturers to teach them how to shop using new communication methods. Finally, the study recommends website designers to pay more attention to marketing social media pages, by providing more entertainment and integrated information to achieve more user participation, and to obtain the largest amount of comments by promoting the electronically transmitted word among university students, and integrating it into marketing tools in the context of SMM.

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