

Maximizing Profitability of Local Businesses Through Social Media Platforms

Arvin Gionne A. Teston

School of Graduate Studies, St. Louise de Marillac College of Sorsogon, Inc., Sorsogon City, Philippines

E-mail: arvingionneteston@gmail.com

Abstract— Social media is a medium used by almost everyone in today's fast-paced society and businesses are no exception. Online applications called social media platforms, serve as a bridge to realize this concept among users. In this research, the researcher shed light on how local businesses utilized this form of communication through a descriptive quantitative research design. Surveys were conducted with local business owners to gain insights into the strategies that drove profitability. The findings revealed that three social media platforms were commonly used to significantly enhance customer engagement, brand visibility, increased sales, and greater customer reach. However, certain internal and external challenges affect its full implementation among business owners. The research underscored the need for a tailored action plan to resolve the gaps and barriers to its full implementation. This study contributed to the broader understanding of digital marketing's role in local economies and provided practical recommendations for businesses aiming to leverage social media for local business growth.

Keywords— local businesses, marketing strategies, social media platforms.

I. INTRODUCTION

The creation of the internet marked the beginning of a profound transformation in how humans interact with their surroundings. This digital revolution, characterized by the rapid development and adoption of digital technologies, has permeated nearly every aspect of modern life. One of the most significant outcomes of this revolution is the emergence of social media, a collection of digital applications designed to facilitate seamless and instantaneous communication. Social media platforms have fundamentally altered the way people connect, share information, and engage with each other, revolutionizing communication in the 21st century.

Before the advent of the internet, communication was predominantly limited to face-to-face interactions, telephone calls, and written correspondence. These methods, while effective, had inherent limitations in terms of immediacy, reach, and convenience. The internet, however, introduced new paradigms of communication that transcended geographical boundaries and time constraints. Email, one of the earliest forms of digital communication, allowed messages to be sent and received instantaneously, paving the way for more advanced forms of interaction.

As the internet evolved, so did the tools for communication. Instant messaging services like AOL Instant Messenger (AIM) and ICQ emerged in the 1990s, offering real-time text-based communication. These platforms were precursors to the sophisticated

social media applications we use today. They provided users with the ability to have live conversations, marking a significant departure from the asynchronous nature of email.

Social media, as people know it today, began to take shape in the early 2000s with the launch of platforms like Friendster, MySpace, and LinkedIn. These early social networks allowed users to create profiles, connect with friends, and share content. The concept of an online social network quickly gained popularity, setting the stage for the explosive growth of social media.

The launch of Facebook in 2004 marked a pivotal moment in the history of social media. Unlike its predecessors, Facebook offered a more refined and user-friendly interface, along with features that encouraged active engagement and interaction. Users could post status updates, share photos and videos, comment on each other's posts, and join groups based on shared interests. Facebook's success demonstrated the immense potential of social media to connect people and facilitate communication on a global scale.

Other platforms soon followed, each offering unique features and catering to different audiences. Twitter, launched in 2006, introduced the concept of microblogging, allowing users to share short messages, or "tweets," with their followers. Instagram, launched in 2010, focused on photo and video sharing, appealing to a visually-oriented audience. Snapchat, introduced in

2011, offered ephemeral messaging, where content would disappear after being viewed. Each of these platforms contributed to the diversification and expansion of social media, offering users multiple ways to connect and communicate.

One of the most recent and significant additions to the social media landscape is TikTok. Launched internationally in 2018, TikTok is a short-form video platform that has quickly gained massive popularity, particularly among younger audiences. TikTok allows users to create and share 15 to 60-second videos set to music, featuring a variety of content, including dance challenges, comedic skits, and educational clips. Its algorithm, which personalizes the content feed based on user interactions, has been a key factor in its rapid growth and engagement levels.

TikTok's rise can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, its intuitive and user-friendly interface makes content creation accessible to everyone, regardless of technical skill. The platform's editing tools and effects allow users to produce high-quality videos with minimal effort. Secondly, TikTok's emphasis on creativity and entertainment has resonated with users, encouraging them to participate in trends and challenges. This participatory culture fosters a sense of community and virality, driving engagement and growth. Thirdly, TikTok's algorithm ensures that content is tailored to individual preferences, keeping users hooked and increasing the time spent on the app.

TikTok's impact extends beyond individual users to brands and businesses. Companies leverage TikTok to reach a younger, highly engaged audience, using creative and authentic content to build brand awareness and drive sales. Influencer marketing is particularly effective on TikTok, where popular creators can sway the opinions and behaviors of their followers. The platform's viral nature also means that content can reach a wide audience quickly, providing opportunities for rapid brand exposure.

One of the defining characteristics of social media is its ability to facilitate real-time communication. Unlike traditional forms of communication, such as phone calls or text messages, social media allows users to interact with each other instantaneously through various multimedia formats. This immediacy and versatility have revolutionized the way people communicate, making interactions more dynamic and engaging.

Video calls, for instance, have become a staple feature of many social media platforms. Applications like Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, and Skype allow users to conduct face-to-face conversations regardless of their physical location. This capability has bridged the gap between distant family members, friends, and colleagues, enabling them to maintain close relationships despite geographical barriers. Video calls also play a crucial role in professional settings, facilitating remote work, virtual meetings, and online collaborations.

In addition to video calls, social media platforms offer a wide range of features that enhance communication. Users can send text messages, share photos and videos, and even broadcast live events to their followers. These features provide multiple avenues for interaction, catering to different preferences and needs. For example, a user might choose to share a photo on Instagram to visually document an experience, while another might prefer to tweet about it on Twitter for a more concise update.

The ability to share multimedia content has added a new dimension to communication. Photos and videos capture moments and emotions in ways that text alone cannot. They allow users to share their experiences more vividly and authentically, creating a richer and more immersive form of interaction. Platforms like Instagram and Snapchat have capitalized on this trend, offering tools and filters that enhance visual content, making it more engaging and appealing.

One of the most significant advantages of social media is its accessibility and convenience. With the proliferation of smartphones and mobile internet, social media platforms are accessible to users anytime and anywhere. This ubiquitous availability has transformed social media into an integral part of daily life, enabling people to stay connected on the go. Mobile applications have played a crucial role in this transformation. Apps like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp are designed to be user-friendly and intuitive, making it easy for users to navigate and interact with content. Push notifications ensure that users are instantly alerted to new messages, comments, and updates, keeping them engaged and informed in real time.

The convenience of social media extends beyond personal communication. It has become a valuable tool for accessing information and staying informed about current events. News organizations, government

agencies, and public figures use social media to disseminate information quickly and reach a broad audience. During emergencies and crises, social media platforms serve as critical channels for delivering timely updates and mobilizing community support.

Moreover, social media has democratized content creation and distribution. Anyone with a smartphone and an internet connection can create and share content, reaching a potentially global audience. This accessibility has empowered individuals to express themselves, share their stories, and influence public discourse. It has also given rise to a new generation of content creators, influencers, and digital entrepreneurs who leverage social media to build their brands and engage with audiences.

Another significant development in the social media landscape is the increased interconnectivity among platforms. Many social media applications now offer integration features that allow users to share content across multiple platforms seamlessly. This interconnectivity enhances the reach and visibility of content, making it easier for users to engage with their audience on various platforms.

For instance, Instagram allows users to share their posts and stories directly to Facebook, enabling a broader audience reach without the need to create separate posts. Twitter users can link their accounts to Facebook, allowing tweets to be shared as Facebook updates. Similarly, TikTok videos can be shared on Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat, maximizing their exposure and engagement.

This interconnectedness also facilitates more cohesive social media strategies for individuals and businesses. By leveraging multiple platforms, users can tailor their content to suit the unique features and audiences of each platform while maintaining a consistent message. For example, a business might use Instagram for visual storytelling, Twitter for real-time updates and customer service, and TikTok for engaging and entertaining content.

The integration of social media platforms has also streamlined the user experience, making it more convenient to manage multiple accounts and interact with diverse audiences. Social media management tools like Hootsuite and Buffer allow users to schedule posts, monitor engagement, and analyze performance across different platforms from a single dashboard. This functionality is particularly beneficial for businesses and

influencers who need to maintain an active and cohesive presence across various social media channels.

The transformative impact of social media extends beyond individual interactions to broader societal changes. Social media has reshaped how people connect, communicate, and consume information. It has also influenced various aspects of society, including politics, business, culture, and social movements.

In the business world, social media has revolutionized marketing, customer engagement, and sales. Companies use social media to build their brand, connect with customers, and promote products and services. Targeted advertising, influencer marketing, and social commerce are just a few examples of how businesses leverage social media to achieve their objectives. The direct interaction between brands and consumers has also transformed customer service, allowing for real-time feedback and support.

Culturally, social media has created new forms of expression and entertainment. Memes, viral videos, and online challenges have become integral parts of internet culture, spreading rapidly across platforms and influencing mainstream media. Social media has also provided a platform for diverse voices and perspectives, fostering a more inclusive and globalized cultural landscape.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in late 2019 and rapidly spread across the globe in 2020, brought about unprecedented challenges and disruptions to daily life. As health authorities worldwide grappled with the highly contagious virus, stringent measures such as lockdowns, social distancing, and travel restrictions were implemented to curb its spread. These measures, while necessary for public health, significantly limited physical interactions, compelling individuals and organizations to find alternative ways to communicate, work, and socialize. In this context, digital interactions, particularly through social media, have become more relevant and indispensable than ever before.

As people are confined to their homes, social media platforms experienced a substantial surge in usage. According to a report by DataReportal, the number of social media users worldwide grew by more than 13% between April 2019 and April 2020, reaching over 4.33 billion users (Kemp, 2020). This increase can be attributed to several factors: connectivity, information dissemination, entertainment, and the formation of support networks. Social media provided a vital means

of staying connected with family and friends during periods of isolation, allowing users to share updates, photos, and videos, maintaining a sense of closeness despite physical separation.

With the rapidly evolving nature of the pandemic, social media served as a critical source of real-time information. Health organizations, government agencies, and news outlets used platforms like Twitter and Facebook to disseminate updates, guidelines, and news about the virus, vaccine developments, and public health measures. Traditional forms of entertainment were disrupted, making social media a primary source of diversion and engagement. Platforms like TikTok saw explosive growth, with users creating and consuming short, entertaining videos to pass the time and stay engaged. Additionally, social media facilitated the formation of support groups and communities where individuals could share experiences, seek advice, and offer support to others facing similar challenges.

During the pandemic, social media's role as a real-time medium of communication became particularly vital. Unlike traditional phone calls or text messages, social media enabled multi-faceted interactions that could accommodate the diverse needs of individuals and groups. Platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Facebook Messenger Rooms saw a dramatic increase in usage as people turned to video calls for personal and professional interactions, facilitating virtual family gatherings, online classes, business meetings, and even medical consultations.

Social media platforms with live streaming capabilities, such as Facebook Live, Instagram Live, and YouTube Live, became crucial for real-time broadcasting. Public figures, health experts, and influencers used live streaming to connect with audiences, provide updates, and engage in interactive discussions. This feature also allowed artists and performers to reach their fans by hosting virtual concerts and events (Seetharaman, 2020). The ability to create group chats and communities on platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Telegram enabled collective communication and collaboration, helping families, friends, colleagues, and interest groups stay organized, share resources, and provide mutual support (Anderson & Vogels, 2020).

The pandemic had a devastating impact on small businesses, many of which relied on physical foot traffic. Social media became a lifeline for these businesses, enabling them to reach customers, promote

products, and offer services online. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram introduced features to support businesses, such as gift card sales, delivery options, and online shops, helping businesses adapt to the new normal and sustain their operations (Bartik et al., 2020).

According to the business news website, Forbes, it is estimated that 4.9 billion people use social media across the world in 2023, and is expected to jump to approximately 5.85 billion users by 2027. And according to the American think tank, Pew Research Center, 84% of those aged 18 to 29 and 81% of people between 30 to 49 actively use at least one social media site. And despite the challenges that older demographics face, they use it as well, with 73% in the 50 to 64 range and 45% of those in the 65-plus group.

One of the severely affected sectors during the pandemic where businesses as people were advised to stay away from crowded places therefore affecting their sales. But it is also businesses that first took charge in adapting to the sudden change of landscape and what else they used to make their livelihood afloat but no other than the power of social media platforms. Going back to the study by Forbes, it was found that 77% of surveyed small businesses use social media to connect with their customers. In addition to building brand awareness, a significant number of small businesses depend on social media as a revenue driver.

In the Philippines, according to the GoDaddy 2023 Data Observatory, 62% of local business respondents make up to half or 50% of their annual revenue from online sales channels, while 38% make up most. Moreover, 67% of small businesses in the country use social media as a complementary sales channel. A recent study by Meta found that social media influencers are strong drivers of online shopping, with 76% of shoppers saying they are most likely to trust a brand that partners with a trustworthy creator and influencer. Based also on the same study, Gen Z and millennials are shopping more on social media.

Based on this scenario, the researcher would like to see to what extent social media has been implemented as a catalyst for growth for businesses in the locality. The researcher who is also a social influencer, wants to determine if businesses in the area are open to the idea of collaboration that will serve the best interests of both parties.

II. OBJECTIVES

This study determined the usage and benefits of using social media for the operation of local businesses in Sorsogon.

Specifically, it identified the social media platforms employed by local businesses in their operation. The strategies of the local business owners in utilizing social media in their operation in terms of promotion, customer interaction, and brand identity. The impact of social media platforms on the profitability of local businesses. The issues and gaps encountered by local businesses in using social media platforms in their business operation. A plan of action may be proposed to address the identified gaps and issues.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive design. This approach was chosen to systematically and objectively examined the relationship between social media implementation and the profitability of local businesses. By utilizing quantitative methods, the study aimed to gather numerical data that can be analyzed statistically, providing a clear and measurable understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Table 1. Social Media Platforms Employed by the Local Business in Their Operation

Social Media Platforms	Frequency	Rank
Facebook	22	1
Instagram	5	2
Tiktok	2	3

Facebook with a frequency of 22 is rank 1. Implied by this finding is that all of 22 business owner respondents employed Facebook in the operation of their businesses. As the leading social media platform in the country, local business owners used Facebook as a marketing tool. These business owners create pages, share updates about their products and services, and interact with customers. This is a testament to the study of Harrigan et al. (2020) wherein the said platform offered flexibility and its array of features have benefited small businesses which majority are owned by the locality of the scope area.

The use of Facebook as the leading social media platform among the sampled business owners can be associated with the statistics that a massive number of users engaged in this platform. Such is a great opportunity for business owners to have an extensive reach and to connect to potential customers. A proof of

The respondents of this research were composed of 22 business owners across the Province of Sorsogon. This research was expected to provide valuable insights into the current state of social media implementation among local businesses in the Province of Sorsogon and its impact on their profitability.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data gathered from the respondents of the study are hereby presented, analyzed, and interpreted. Tabular presentation and textual analysis and interpretation were also used.

Social Media Platforms Employed by the Local Businesses in Their Operation

In the digital age, various social media platforms have emerged and are used for various purposes. The unceasing increase in the number of social media users provides a greater opportunity for local business owners to integrate this technological advancement into their operations. Table 1 presents the various platforms used by the local business owner respondents in the operation of the business. Revealed by the Table that only three relevant social media platforms are being engaged in by the respondents.

the claim that Facebook offers wide business access to vast and diverse customers.

Further shown in Table 1, there were instances that some of the local business owners opted to employ other social media platforms. It was noted that Instagram obtained a frequency of 5 and rank 2. Because of the visual appeal that Instagram possesses, these local business owners share photos and videos of their products and services. This visual appeal attracts potential customers, thus there are local business owners who vouched for the text-heavy platforms with this visual focus medium. Also, most of the social media influencers preferred Instagram thus the local business owners supplement their Facebook engagement with this platform. It is also be noted that both platforms are owned by one company, Meta Platforms, therefore it is not surprising that out of 22 who used Facebook, five also use Instagram, because of the ability to cross post between each platform.

TikTok which is very popular as a video-sharing sharing application had a frequency of 2 and rank 3. This reflects the desire of some local business owners to harness the potential of other social media applications as a marketing channel for their business. They recognize the possible benefits of social media as a technology tool in reaching potential clients. This grey area as indicated by Garcia (2020) could be a precursor to trends we may have yet fully grasp in this fast-changing world wherein its effects are yet to be determined in the long run. What seems relevant today may not be the case in the future. At the same time,

future trends that were unexplored in the past may gain significance as technology and society advance.

Strategies of Local Businesses in Utilizing the Social Media

Social media can be utilized in a variety of ways to meet the needs of local businesses, from promoting their products and services to communicating with their customers and raising awareness of their business. The following tables present how social media is employed through these predetermined strategies.

Table 2.1. Business Promotional Strategies Through Social Media

Strategies	Frequency	Rank
Posting of digital promotional materials such as photos	22	1
Having promotional events where customers share, like, and tag	12	2
Using social media influencers	5	3

Table 2.1 has the strategies for how the local business owners used social media platforms to promote their products and services. Based on the predetermined strategies, the most frequent strategy local businesses employ is the posting of digital promotional materials such as photos and videos, with 22 respondents affirming this option. This is followed by the strategy of hosting promotional events where customers share, like, or tag posts to win discounts or prizes, with 12 respondents indicating this strategy. Lastly, 5 respondents also stated that they use social media influencers as a way of promoting their businesses.

liking, and tagging. Similarly, those who use Instagram can further promote their businesses through sharing the posts to their stories or send to others via direct message. Liking on Instagram can be done by tapping the heart icon below the photo or video. TikTok allows also local businessmen to share, like, and tag using the distinct features of this application.

Implied by the results that all sampled local business owner respondents used visuals particularly photos relevant to their business operation to promote their products and services. They found Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok as promotional media for business through the photos. Social media platforms become an avenue on the part of the local business owners to showcase their products and services. Doing such, the potential customers are attracted and gain ideas of the offerings the businesses have.

Further disclosed by the Table that social media influencers have been engaged by some local business owners. Platforms on the internet become the medium for these influencers to become visible in the digital community while at the same time promoting local products and services.

In addition, the sampled business owner respondents made the value of the basic features of Facebook in promoting their products and services through sharing,

From this data, it can be deduced that social media platforms are frequently used by local business owners as a medium for promoting their businesses. And, all these strategies give marketing advantages on the part of the local business owners.

The importance of communication between the business owners and the customers is essential. Despite the online way of doing business, listening to the voices of the customers serves as feedback which is essential in improving the business. Also, hearing the clients' voices 'provides satisfaction to both parties.

Table 2.2. Utilization of Social Media In Business Along With Customer Interaction

Strategies	Frequency	Rank
Use for customer support in responding to customers' queries	22	1
Use for customers' online purchases	12	2
Use as a channel for customers' feedback or comments	7	3

Table 2.2 has the strategies relative to the utilization of social media in business along with customer interaction. With the provision of certain features in the media social applications intended for client interaction, local business owners take such opportunities to respond to customers' queries. This strategy obtained a frequency of 22 and a rank of 1. Truly, social media platforms are facilitative in terms of responding to customers' queries due to their accessibility, immediacy, and interactive measures. Direct messaging on Facebook and Instagram enables business owners to send private messages as responses to their customers. There are also instances that these business owners leave comments on posts provided by the clients

Using social media as a medium for online purchases by customers has a frequency of 12 and rank 2. The trend of adopting the online mode of shopping is facilitated by social media applications. Most of the local business owners adopted the said strategy.

Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are not only supportive of communication between business owners and clients, but these social media platforms are also effective channels in terms of the promotion of e-commerce. Business owners can create a fully integrated online store on Facebook which enables users to browse and purchase products from the platform. If ever this is availed by the local business owners, their market reach is widened in terms of coverage.

Instagram allows businesses to set up a shop in their profile, tag products in posts and stories, and even let users purchase directly through the applications. Engaging in this feature will help purchasing process easy for both parts of the business owners and the customers.

TikTok offers also a feature that promotes online selling through TikTok Shopping. This feature may allow local business owners to create a storefront on the platform. With this, business engagement is facilitated.

The chance on the part of business owners to get feedback from their customers becomes easy because of social media applications. Revealed by the Table that this strategy facilitates and enhances the communication process.

Based on the findings, in terms of customer interaction, social media platforms are frequently used as avenues for responding to customers' inquiries regarding local businesses as a whole. This is in line with the findings of De La Cruz and Del Rosario (2021) wherein these platforms serve as a convenient channel for interaction between customers and business owners as well as Martinez (2021) where it gives businesses real-time feedback that can let businesses tailor their offerings to the locality.

Table 2.3. Utilization of Social Media in Business Brand Identity

Strategies	Frequency	Rank
Creating a recognizable brand presence of business logos across platforms	20	1
Use for building continuous linkages with customers through promotional images	12	2
Use for visual storytelling through content creation for customers' further understanding of the business products and services	10	3

Table 2.3 shows how social media applications are utilized by local business owners along with their business brand identity. Knowing the potential of social media platforms in terms of reach and the volume of users, these local business owners tap the advertising options that are featured by the applications.

Disclosed by the Table among the identified strategies, rank 1st with 20 as the obtained frequency is creating a recognizable brand presence, such as a uniform business logo across platforms. Rank 2, with 12 as the frequency was building continuous linkages with customers through promotional images, such as eye-catching posts on their social media platforms. Rank 3rd, with 10 as the

frequency, was that social media platforms are frequently used for visual storytelling through content creation for customers, furthering their understanding of the business's products and services. This includes helping customers understand the history and behind-the-scenes operation of the business.

The finding is aligned with the studies of Johnson and Lee (2019) wherein social media can help business owners create their image or what they want their customers to see in them. Business logos that constantly appear across Facebook pages, posts, and ads are a mechanism for building brand recognition. Smartphone users who see the logo repeatedly will associate the

logos with the business values and the products and services offered. Similarly, local business owners who engage in Instagram can feature their business logo in their profiles, stories, and posts. This process promotes visual consistency which results in easy recognition among social media users. Almost the same process is featured by TikTok when the business owners incorporate the business logo in their profile picture, video watermarks, and content which later may become viral.

Through these findings, it is evident that social media platforms are used to easily identify a brand or business through a recognizable image that customers can easily

distinguish from others. These findings reflect how potent social media platforms are in the promotion of business brand identity in the digital world.

Impact of Social Media Platforms on the Profitability of Local Businesses

The introduction of social media platforms has significantly transformed the landscape of business operations, with their impact most notably reflected in their effect on profitability. Table 3 illustrates how social media platforms have opened new boundaries for businesses, showcasing their diverse and impactful role in contemporary business strategies.

Table 3. Impact of Social Media Platforms on The Profitability of Local Business

Impact	Frequency	Rank
Increase in sales	20	1
Increase in the number of customers	15	2
Increase the brand visibility	10	3

Based on the predetermined impacts on a business, an increase in sales was a frequent outcome for all 22 respondents, ranking 1st in the table. Additionally, an increase in the number of customers was also true among 15 respondents, which made it rank 2, while an increase in the brand's visibility was a common impact reported by 10 respondents, and ranked 3 as shown in the list.

The three (3) identified social media applications by the sampled local business owners are truly a conduit for the achievement of increasing sales, attracting more customers, and enhancing brand visibility. Facebook advertising allows businesses to increase the reach of certain groups of customers. This can yield both increased sales and the number of customers. The visual appeal of Instagram makes it ideal for showcasing products and services in the digital world. This feature of Instagram attracts more clients, thereby increasing sales. Meanwhile, the viral potential on TikTok, particularly the content designed by the business owners

can significantly boost brand visibility and attract new customers.

Many literary sources have extensively discussed the impact of social media in enterprises of all sizes including local businesses. From these results, it is evident the significant increase in sales through the use of social media platforms is possible. The number of customers tends to increase as well because of the social media platforms. In the same manner, brand visibility is highly possible through the social media platforms.

Issues and Gaps Encountered by Local Businesses in Using Social Media Platforms in Their Business Operation

Like any new technology, the utilization of social media platforms is not without its shared problems for full implementation. Table 4 presents the predetermined gaps and issues encountered by local businesses in using social media platforms.

Table 4. Gaps and Issues Encountered by Local Businesses in Using Social Media in Their Business Operation

Gaps and Issues	Frequency	Rank
Poor internet connectivity	14	1
Lack of qualified staff	12	2
The challenge in content creation	11	3
Costly implementation	10	4
Limited reach	4	5

Based on feedback from respondents, poor internet connectivity in their area was the most frequent issue with social media platforms, with 14 as its obtained frequency and ranked 1st. This has been a common issue in the country in fact in the 2023 edition of the Worldwide Broadband Speed League, the Philippines ranked 86th out of 220 countries. This was followed by a lack of qualified staff, cited by 12 respondents and ranking 2nd. This reflects the scarcity of qualified staff who can attend to the utilization of e-commerce in the sector of local business.

The challenge of content creation in social media platforms ranks 3, with 11 responses. This refers to the competition along with creative marketing with the use of social media platforms.

Costly implementation was cited by 10 respondents, ranking 4th, while limited reach received 4 responses, ranking 5th. Despite the lowest ranks accorded to these challenges, such results manifest the financial responsibility once social media platforms are integrated into operating a business. Likewise, the issue of internet speed may result in lesser market reach.

With this data, digital infrastructure and know-how are shown to be prone to problems that local business owners face in their operations. Addressing these identified issues will yield customer engagement and bring local business owners to their competitive advantage in the world of e-commerce.

The impact of social media platforms on business operations among local owners has been manifesting in a favorable direction. Harnessing the benefits that social media offers in running small businesses is expected to yield better sales in small local businesses. The proposed action plan supplements a road map in the utilization of social media platforms.

Proposed Action Plan to Address the Identified Gaps and Issues

To address the identified gaps in utilizing social media platforms, a multifaceted undertaking is necessary. As pointed out from the discussions of McCaffrey & Ryan (2017) and Syaifullah et al. (2020) businesses need to plan carefully and produce high-quality content to mitigate these risks and make the most of social media.

Tackling poor internet connectivity requires collaboration with local service providers to improve

infrastructure and explore alternative solutions like satellite internet such as implemented in far-flung areas.

Addressing the lack of qualified staff involves implementing comprehensive training programs for existing employees and potentially hiring or outsourcing to professionals with expertise in social media management. On February 2, 2024, The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) announced it is developing a course for content creation translating concepts into multimedia content, and propagating content which is something businesses should look forward to.

Supporting content creation entails providing resources, tools, and workshops to assist businesses in producing engaging content, including user-generated content such as researching the trends in social media or purchase of better documentation equipment such as high-performance cameras.

Cost reduction strategies involve evaluating current expenses and seeking cost-effective alternatives while considering collaborative partnerships with other local businesses such as the creation of partnerships that promote both brands without conflicting with each other.

Meanwhile. Expanding reach requires targeted marketing efforts, social media advertising, engagement with social media influencers, and optimization for search engines to reach a wider audience. Most social media platforms now offer an option to boost the presence of their posts by allowing the user to select their target audience for a fee.

Also, continuous monitoring and evaluation ensure that strategies remain effective, with adjustments made based on feedback and data-driven insights. By implementing these measures, businesses can mitigate the identified gaps and maximize the benefits of social media platforms for their operations and growth.

Rationale:

The impact of social media platforms on business operations among local owners has been manifesting in a favorable direction. Harnessing the benefits that social media offers in running small businesses is expected to yield better sales in small local businesses. Thus, this action plan supplements a road map in the utilization of social media platforms.

Goal: Optimize the use of social media as a marketing tool in the operation of small local business.

Matrix						
Areas of Concern	Objectives	Activities	Time Frame	Persons Involved	Resource Requirements	Expected Outputs
Limited Platforms	-identify the right platforms appropriate for business promotion	-Determining the target audience that the platforms cater to	Before product launching	Business owner ICT expert	Laptop, Internet connectivity	Appropriate social media platforms were determined
Customer Interaction	-engage with audience/clients by responding to them and allowing them to give reviews	-Allowing clients to provide online feedback, comments, and reviews. -Form local groups	Year-round	Page in charge Owner	Platform page	Functional page that accepts feedback and addresses issues
Brand Identity	-Create a complete and informative business/product/services offered profile	-Designing business/product/services offered logo or content. -Build and boost community -Run contest and giveaways -Leverage video content	Before business/product launching	Owner Content creator /Artist	Laptop/ICT	Business/Product logo
Market Reach	-Use influencer marketing	- Collaborate with social influencers - Promote content with location-based hashtags	Year-round	Social media influencer Content Creator	ICT Content	Collaboration between and among social media influencers for better reach
Business Profitability	-allow targeted ads to run	Permitting for an advertisement to be part of the page	Year-round	Owner Advertiser	Page administrator Owner	The presence of advertisements on the page

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the preceding findings, the researcher concludes that a limited number of social media platforms are employed by local business owners with Facebook being the most favored, followed by Instagram and TikTok. Local business owners use social media to promote their products and services by posting promotional ads, respond customers' queries, for online purchases, and showing off their logo to boost brand presence. Increased sales, greater customer reach, and visibility of business are the impacts of social media utilization in the operation of local businesses. The poor internet connectivity, lack of qualified ICT-skilled staff, the challenge in quality content creation, and the costly implementation are the gaps and issues encountered by business owners in using social media platforms in the operation of their businesses. The proposed action plan is necessary to address the identified gaps and is a great help for the optimum utilization of social media platforms in business operations.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are given: (1) Explore Additional Social Media Platforms. Other social media platforms be explored by business owners as additional media for digital marketing. Business owners should consider

diversifying their digital marketing efforts by exploring and utilizing a broader range of social media platforms beyond the current primary choices to offer unique opportunities and reach different audience segments. (2) Leverage Social Media for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The potential side of social media platforms as a channel for discharging the social responsibility of business be considered. (3) Benchmarking Through Social Media. Social media platforms are the channel for business owners to benchmark along with product and service quality. Business owners can gain insights into industry standards, customer expectations, and innovative practices by monitoring competitors' social media activities and customer feedback. (4) Adopt the Proposed Action Plan. Adoption of the action plan be considered in resolving the identified gaps and issues. This includes improving internet connectivity, enhancing ICT skills among staff, and developing strategies for effective and cost-efficient content creation. (5) Enhance the Action Plan. Continuously refine and enhance the proposed action plan to fully harness the benefits of social media. Regular updates and adaptations based on emerging trends and technological advancements will ensure that the action plan remains relevant and effective in maximizing social

media's potential for business growth. (6) Encourage Further Research. Researchers should be encouraged to conduct further studies on topics such as best practices in utilizing social media for business operations and the influence of social media on consumer behavior and preferences.

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