2021

Social Marketing Strategies Used by Small Businesses Leaders in the Fashion Retail Industry

Kimberley Chambers
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Kimberley Chambers

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Marilyn Simon, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Jonathan Schultz, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Gwendolyn Dooley, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2021

Abstract

Social Marketing Strategies Used by Small Businesses Leaders in

the Fashion Retail Industry

by

Kimberley Chambers

MS, Walden University, 2013

BS, The University of the West Indies, 2008

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

October 2021

Abstract

Several small business leaders lack social media marketing (SMM) strategies to increase revenue. Owners in the retail apparel industry need social media marketing to help increase sales and revenue and could profit from the findings. Grounded in the technology acceptance model, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore SMM strategies five small business owners in the women's retail apparel industry used to generate growth in sales. Data were collected from semistructured interviews, the stores' business plans, and physical artifacts such as merchandise inventory. Three primary themes were identified through thematic analysis: the use of various social media platforms, evolving social media marketing, and customer relationship management. A key recommendation is for small business owners to use a variety of social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram to reach potential customers and develop a rapport with current and past customers. The implications for positive social change include the potential for business owners to increase sales, provide employment opportunities, assist local economies, keep the money close to home, and support neighborhoods and communities.

Social Marketing Strategies Used by Small Businesses Leaders in

the Fashion Retail Industry

by

Kimberly Chambers

MS, Walden University, 2013

BS, The University of the West Indies, 2008

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

October 2021

Dedication

I dedicate this study to my family with love for the continued prayers, patience, support, and sacrifices they have made to make this process bearable. My deceased mother was with me during the beginning of this journey but has now transitioned to heaven and now looking down and saying thank God; she is finally done with school. I thank my father for his continued words of encouragement and support.

Table of Contents

iii

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The advancement of new technologies makes traditional methods of advertising almost obsolete. Many small fashion retail business leaders use social media to endorse their brand, products, and services (Allan & Ali, 2017). The use of social media influences how business leaders interact with consumers and the public to increase sales. The retail industry contributes an estimated $3.53 trillion annually to the U.S gross domestic product (National Retail Federation, 2018). Small businesses account for almost half of the United States economy (U.S Census Bureau, 2016). Small fashion retail business leaders who do not have effective marketing strategies may lose existing and potential customers if they cannot compete with other companies (Taneja & Toombs, 2014). Competitive advantage is maintained when small retail business leaders implement technological strategies (Cheng & Liu, 2017). Social media marketing strategies can help retail business leaders to increase overall sales and marketing (Galati, et al., 2017). This study aimed to reveal effective social media marketing strategies used by small business leaders in the fashion retail industry to increase revenue.

Background of the Problem

Telephone, the Internet, email, and social media are common ways for business workers to communicate with consumers in the 21st century. The ability to communicate with others has steadily evolved with social media platforms (Colleoni, 2013). Since 2018, 70% of Americans use social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Pinterest (Smith, 2017) to communicate and buy and sell products and services. How consumers behave in an online environment profoundly affects how

organizational leaders strategize regarding their use of social media marketing (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014). Business leaders need to create effective marketing strategies by using social media platforms to share their goods, products, and services.

In traditional marketing, retail marketers send messages to consumers through television advertisements and print. However, with social media sites, such as Facebook and Instagram, retail marketers in the fashion industry must understand the importance of two-way conversations with consumers in the virtual marketplace. Online shopping is easy and convenient by allowing consumers to shop anytime, and anywhere, and purchase any merchandise (Chiou & Pan, 2009).

Problem Statement

Online traffic is essential for all businesses with an online presence, including brick-and-mortar stores (Herhold, 2018). Approximately 52% of small businesses post on social media daily (Guta, 2018). Furthermore, only 48% of small business leaders effectively use social media for marketing products (Guta, 2018). The general business problem was the failure of retail leaders to capitalize on social media as a marketing solution to improve the organization's brand and increase revenue. The specific business problem was that some business owners lack social media marketing strategies to increase revenue in the fashion industry.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore social media marketing strategies some business owners use to increase revenue in the fashion industry. The target population was five small business leaders in the fashion retail

industry in Atlanta, Georgia, that have used social media marketing strategies for at least one year to meet or exceed their revenue goals. The implications for positive social change include the potential for small retail business owners in the fashion industry to gain and retain customers, increase business revenue, and have a positive economic effect on their community.

Nature of the Study

The method for this study was qualitative. The conventional methods used to conduct scholarly research are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Fuller, 2017). Researchers who use qualitative methods can increase the understanding of real-life experiences (Zyphur & Pierides, 2017). Quantitative researchers focus on testing theories to determine if a relationship exists between measurable variables (Morse, 2015), which was not the focus of this study. Mixed-methods research includes collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data (Hesse-Biber & Johnson, 2013). A mixed-methods approach was not appropriate because I did not quantify variables and test hypotheses.

A variety of qualitative research designs were considered for this study, including ethnography, phenomenology, narrative, and case study. I selected a multiple case study design. Researchers use the case study design to deduce and describe phenomena by explaining the problem and the answers (Yin, 2018). The multiple case study design involves using more than one case (or unit of analysis) to understand a phenomenon. A multiple case study design enabled the investigation of an in-depth discernment of the strategies small fashion retail business leaders apply to implement effective social media

marketing procedures. A multiple case study provided a more significant opportunity than a single case study to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon by comparing conditions across different organizations (Yin, 2018). A multiple case study design allows researchers to explore real-life, bounded systems through the collection of detailed data from multiple sources and identify specific themes or patterns to enable understanding of a phenomenon.

Ethnography is a field-based study to understand social connections, behaviors, and perceptions in detail (Yin, 2018). An ethnographic design focuses on the attributes of a shared culture (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013), which was not the intent of this study. The exploration of the meanings of participants' lived experiences is the phenomenological researcher (Yin, 2018). Since I did not intend to describe what participants perceived as they experienced a phenomenon- I did not use a phenomenological design. Researchers use the narrative research design for creating a story (Paulsen, 2017). The goal of this study was not to create a story. A qualitative multiple case study was appropriate for exploring the research topic.

Research Question

What are the social media marketing strategies some business owners use to increase revenue in the fashion industry?

Interview Questions

Warm up question: What type of social media tools and communication channels do you use for social media marketing?

1. What business strategies do you use to implement social media marketing plans to increase revenue?

2. What expectations did you have when you created your strategy to use social media marketing to increase revenue?

3. How was your perception of the ease of use of social marketing strategy compare with the outcome?

4. How did your perception of the ease of use of social marketing compare with the actual use of social media marketing?

5. How do you track progress, success, and engagement of your social media marketing strategy to sell fashion brands and products?

6. What strategies do you use to establish and maintain relationships with your target customers in-store and online?

7. What motivated you to start using an online marketing strategy?

8. How do you assess the efficacy of the social media marketing strategies you used in the marketing plan?

9. How has your social media marketing changed since you began implementing these social media marketing strategies?

10. What else can you tell me about the strategies you use in your social media marketing to increase revenue?

Conceptual Framework

The study's theoretical framework was the technology acceptance model (TAM) by Davis (1989). Davis developed TAM to predict user acceptance of technologies

(Venkatesh, 2014). There are two constructs within this model: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) (Ashraf et al., 2014). PU believes that technology will be useful in obtaining a goal and increasing overall job performance. PEOU is where one believes that using technology would require little or no effort (Venkatesh, 2014). It is essential to understand what factors contribute to or hinder the acceptance of social media marketing strategies among small business owners. The TAM is a dynamic forecaster of technology approval (Ashraf et al., 2014; Svendsen et al., 2013) and fits for this study.

Operational Definitions

Boutique: A boutique is a small retail store specializing in clothing and accessories (Chotekorakul & Nelson, 2012).

Brand trust: Brand trust is a quality acquired by customers when they receive products and services that meet or exceed their expectations. Customers believe that they can trust a brand because it is credible and dependable (Chang & Hsu, 2012).

Customer loyalty: A long-term relationship between customers and companies. Customer loyalty is a product of brand trust; when customers trust a brand, they are likely to return for future business (Taleghani et al., 2011).

Customer value: The view of benefits received by customers (Agnihotri et al., 2017).

Electronic word-of-mouth: A discussion among consumers regarding products and services in an online setting (Feng & Paptla, 2011).

Small business. A business with fewer than 500 employees (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2016).

Social media: A web-based application built on conceptual and technical foundations of Web that people use for the formation and interchange of user-generated information (Malik et al., 2016).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are facts assumed accurate and cannot be verified but relevant to the study (Leedy et al., 2019). In qualitative research, assumptions are possibilities about what counts as knowledge (Nayak, 2016). Thinking that participants would respond honestly was the first assumption. Since confidentiality and participation were voluntary, this assumption was likely met. The second assumption was that small business owners in the fashion industry would openly share strategies for achieving successful social media marketing by participating in interviews and providing documents and reports.

Limitations

Limitations are probable faults in an investigation that could affect the interpretation of a study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). A limitation was that social media marketing was continually evolving, and participants may lack experience in current and most effective strategies to increase revenue for the small business. Self- reporting may be problematic because a person may not be able to give an accurate response because of cognitive biases or poor memory (Yin, 2018). A self-report is any method that involves asking a participant about their feelings, attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and so on. (citation

needed). Self-report studies have validity problems. Even if a participant was trying to be honest, they may lack the introspective ability to provide an accurate response to a question. Many people viewed themselves in a completely different light to how others see them. Thus, since the data in the study come from self-report surveys, they were subject to reference bias.

Another limitation was that this qualitative single case study's results might not apply to other workplaces, populations, and industries. This study's focus was small retail business owners in the fashion industry in Atlanta Georgia, who have successfully used social media marketing.

Delimitations

Delimitations are limits set by the researcher (Yin, 2018). A demarcation exists when participants do not have an equal chance to participate in a study (Jolley & Mitchell, 2010). The geographical area of Atlanta, Georgia was a delimitation for this study. I did not research small retail business leaders outside of Atlanta, Georgia. Also, all participants were small retail business leaders in the fashion industry. Another delimitation of this study was the small sample size of a minimum of five owners of small retail businesses. I focused solely on small business leaders who had increased revenue using social media marketing as the final delimitation. I did not address other issues that small business leaders experienced in attempting to increase revenue.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Small businesses fail at an advanced rate despite employing roughly 52% of Americans, leading to loss of jobs and a lack of economic growth (U.S Census Bureau, 2016). There was limited information on the strategies that contribute to successful marketing in the retail fashion industry. Small retail business owners in the fashion industry can use social media marketing to influence a broader audience to help deliver strong returns on investment (ROIs) for marketing efforts and maintain their employees. Small business owners use social media to increase contact with consumers, which helps develop rapport between customers and increases brand awareness (Harris et al., 2012).

Owners of small fashion retail businesses could learn from each other's success using a relatively inexpensive tool for marketing their products and learning customer perspectives (Phillips & Knowles, 2012). By understanding the techniques small business owners use to develop practical advertising approaches using social media, marketers can integrate technology into business marketing practices and attain profitability.

Implications for Social Change

Businesses can bring positive social change to the community by making financial contributions and charitable donations and creating new employment opportunities. The failure of small businesses leads to job and income loss. Loss of employment and income threaten the economy and affects both communities and families

(Doumpos et al., 2017). The strategies shared may help to prevent business closure and increase job creation and longevity.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The intent of a literature review is to analyze existing studies as they relate to the research topic (Wakefield, 2015). In this literature review, I synthesized information from various sources related to social media marketing in small businesses. These sources included journals, seminal scholarly books, and reports. The review of the literature consisted primarily of peer-reviewed articles. The literature review is a way for researchers to acquire knowledge while setting a study (Onwuegbuzie & Weinbaum, 2017). This study's research question was: What strategies do small retail leaders in the fashion industry use to implement social media marketing plans to increase revenue?

Literature Search Strategy

I used the Walden University library research database and the search engines provided. The following databases were explored: Business Source Complete, ABI/INFORM Complete, ProQuest, SAGE Premier, and Thoreau Multi-Database Search. The keywords used in searches, both individually and in combination, were as follows: *small business, social media, marketing, online marketing, traditional marketing, marketing strategies, perceptions of social media, CRM, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, profitability,* an *online marketing tools,* and the *Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).* Of the 290 sources used, 90% were peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles, and 117 of the sources have publication dates from 2014-2020. Eighty sources are unique to the review of academic and professional literature. In the literature review, I established a

basis for the conceptual framework, examined trends in the research, and investigated underlying assumptions related to this study. The analysis of the literature is a means to provide a deeper comprehension of the techniques used to improve social media marketing within small retail businesses in the fashion industry. Within this literature review are themes that include communication, word-of-mouth (WOM) and electronic WOM, traditional marketing, consumer behavior, branding, social media marketing, and improve business practices.

The literature search resulted in a wide variety of research, including literature about marketing, social media, and small business marketing. An exploration of the conceptual foundation of social media marketing can only provide a partial view of the relevant interdisciplinary literature. Therefore, it led to a need for further discussion of the topic. The Internet is the primary way businesses market their products and services (Al-Hakin & Lu, 2017). The use of different social media platforms varies by generation, socioeconomic class, and gender, with younger business owners more likely to embrace social media than older business owners (Sargent, 2013).

Social media, as a marketing tool for businesses, can help create favorable customer experiences, boost innovation, and enhance workforce efficiency. Company leaders that do not take advantage of social media limit opportunities to expand their marketing and advertisement (Trott, 2014). The study intended to explore strategies that business owners in the fashion industry used to implement social media marketing plans to increase revenue. Using social media helps organizational leaders generate revenue by

providing access to consumers who contribute to cross selling while helping to improve the bottom line (Billington & Billington, 2012).

Conceptual Framework: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Theory

The theory that informed this research was the technology acceptance model (TAM) theory developed by Davis (1989). Davis developed TAM to forecast user acceptance of technology (Lin, 2013). Davis (1989) claimed that the research developed and validated the two specific variables, perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease-of-use (PEOU), as the fundamental determinants of user acceptance. PU is where one believes that using technology would improve job performance, and PEOU, on the other hand, believes that using technology would require little or no effort (Venkatesh, 2014). Small business leaders experience challenges in adopting social media and deploying various social media marketing strategies for communicating with consumers.

Rauniar et al. (2014) conducted a study regarding social media focusing on Facebook using the TAM. The authors developed a revised social media TAM model to include perceived usefulness (PU) and intention to use (IU), which resulted in the adjusted model. The researchers revised the TAM model specifically for Facebook to conduct their study. The revised model was consistent with prior results of the hypothesis that relate to the original TAM model. Their study's results were that the TAM model constructs were consistent with the original TAM model with social media and Facebook. Their study was limited to a small number of U.S. based university business students. Further research should include other participants and other social media sites such as Google, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

Small businesses tend to fall behind larger firms in adopting social media marketing (Taneja & Toombs, 2014). Thus, there is a lack of understanding of the factors prohibiting social media acceptance among owners, and the TAM model is suitable to fill this gap in the literature. The TAM posits that perceived usefulness is essential in determining an individual's acceptance and use of information technology (Yoon & Kim, 2007). Within the TAM, perceived value refers to how a system will improve one's performance and how a user believes they will be impacted by the change (Davis, 1989).

Perceived usefulness is the most potent construct of TAM (Davis, 1989). Users need to believe that the system is useful and easy to use and navigate to accept the system. It is essential for business owners to understand the factors that contribute to or hinder social media marketing acceptance among small business leaders. Many factors affect business leaders' approval or rejection of social media marketing. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors significantly impact using social media marketing, even higher than the perceived ease of use (Caniëls et al., 2015). Customer pressure to use social media marketing is an example of this (Schaupp & Bélanger, 2014). These factors suggest that the total available market (TAM), which includes market demand for a product or service, might be an appropriate conceptual model to view the problem identified in this study.

Carlos Martins Rodrigues Pinho and Soares (2011) used the TAM better understand new technology adoption. The quantitative study was limited to 150 university students. The researchers applied a survey method of data collection. The results of the study were consistent with the TAM in the adoption of social networks. Lin

(2013) conducted a study different from other researchers who used the TAM constructs. Lin explored the relationship between TAM and usability testing. Researchers frequently develop tests to determine how well technology users understand specific technology. Lin performed the usability test on an eCampus learning system with a personal digital assistant (PDA) mobile device. Lin did not find a relationship between the TAM's perceived usefulness and usability.

Researchers have investigated small business owners' use of web-based technologies using the TAM. For example, Mohabbattalab et al. (2014) examined the factors that lead Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to move traditional services to cloud computing (i.e., Internet-based) services. Their sample consisted of 410 Malaysian SMEs. They found that scalability, security, and flexibility were the most critical factors influencing SMEs' decision to adopt cloud computing (Mohabbattalab et al., 2014).

Venkatesh and Goyal (2010) expanded the TAM with new variables uncovered through exploratory research at a small law firm. Venkatesh and Goyal found that the TAM was suitable for understanding the adoption of new technologies in the research setting. However, this finding may not be generalizable to small businesses in the retail clothing industry. Despite the limited research available, the TAM was an appropriate theoretical framework for this research. Additionally, one of this study's contributions was to examine the suitability of the TAM to the research setting, adding to the available literature on the TAM and social media use among small businesses.

As with other researchers, Pinho and Soares (2011) used TAM to better understand new technology adoption. The quantitative study was limited to 150 university students. The researchers applied a survey method of data collection. The results of the study were consistent with the TAM in the adoption of social networks. Lin (2013) conducted a study different from other researchers who used the TAM constructs. Lin explored the relationship between TAM and usability testing. Researchers frequently develop tests to determine how well technology users understand specific technology (Lin, 2013). Lin performed the usability test on an eCampus learning system with a personal digital assistant (PDA) mobile device. Lin did not find a relationship between the TAM's perceived usefulness and usability.

Pentina et al. (2012) chose TAM as a theoretical framework to explore SMEs' social network marketing technology adoption. TAM aims to predict behavioral intentions. Since my study's goal is to measure and predict small fashion retail business actions to adopt Internet marketing, TAM is a feasible theory to use.

Contrasting Theories

Social Identity Theory

The social identity theory explains how an individual's identity comes from his or her environment (Barker, 2012; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). People have several characters through their association with different groups socially (Barker, 2012). A group consists of people that share comparable opinions or share a common goal. Within a social group, an individual's view of technology forms and sustains. Exploring consumers' viewpoints

on links with companies as opposed to a focus on approaches that fascinated consumers in the business is a part of the social identity theory.

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Researchers use a diffusion of innovation (DOI) theory to explain how and why different innovations and technologies spread, and the rate of their spread as well as determine the price of escalation. The diffusion process involves the penetration of a new idea (Dearing, 2009). DOI theory is appropriate to discover the tactics that small retail business owners in the fashion industry adopt to achieve successful social media marketing. With the new wave of technology, small business owners should decide whether to use it (Mergel & Bretschneider, 2013). The positioning of the DOI theory in marketing to users has been thriving since the 1970s (Al-Hakim & Lu, 2017).

Diffusion transpires in phases and progresses over time (Mergel & Bretschneider, 2013). There are three identified phases of the diffusion process. Experimentation and intrapreneurship are in the first stage. During the early stage, individuals who act as change agents will integrate social media into their business practices. This phase is informal and steered by individuals, personal preferences, and prior experiences. The second phase is establishing the order from chaos. During the second stage, organizational leaders accept technology and establish principles founded by marketers to use in the company (Mergel & Bretschneider, 2013). The researchers determined institutionalization as the last stage. Throughout the last stage, organizational leaders will implement a standardized procedure for using the new technology (Mergel &

Bretschneider, 2013). The DOI theory aids with examining motives of social media usage and the impact on the economic performance of an organization.

Diffusion of innovation was a baseline theory for authors Al-Hakin and Lu (2017). Based on the DOI theory, a researcher can discover prominent elements (Ainin, et al., 2015) and the impact of social media platforms Facebook use on organizations. Ainin et al. found that Facebook has a positive effect on organizational performance. Marketers can implement Facebook in any small business for daily transactions that require essential information technology expertise (Derham et al., 2011). Degerli et al. (2015) posited that individuals are not always willing to adopt a new product or service. Peoples' reluctance to change could result in innovation being challenging (Raynard, 2017).

When organizational leaders recognize that technology is compatible, the leaders are more likely to adopt the technology. The DOI theory helps small business leaders implement changes that will improve the organization (Dearing, 2009). Implementing technology such as social media within a small business would be ideal, as computer-based technology effectively positions the target audience, and the business leaders can share products in real-time (Derham et al., 2011). The way individuals relate to technology is a result of their attitude toward technology. The user is more apt to use technology when a user has a clear understanding of technology use (Hayes, 2012). The DOI theory also serves as a valuable change model (Shinkevich et al., 2016). Researchers use this theory to gain insights from aspects that influence the adoption of new technologies in an organization (Ball et al., 2014).

The elements of the DOI concept may help explain the adoption and use of social media (Lin, 2013). When small business leaders develop new products, diffusion is the process of moving products through a market. The critical mass theory also relates to this study. This theory states that if one person engages in a new phenomenon, everyone will acquire it at some point in time (Lin, 2013). Critical mass theory serves as a framework to explain that the users of an event such as social media can influence the frequent use of the platform.

Gratification Theory

In 2020, people are looking for efficient and effective ways to gain and disseminate information as well as to become informed. Social media platforms can address those needs interactively and in real-time for users. I also considered other theoretical constructs. Katz et al. (1974) proposed the use and gratification theory (UGT) to explain how the media influences gratification. UGT explains how media can appeal to people's need to belong to and enhance self-esteem.

Social Media Marketing Strategy Theory

The social media marketing strategy theory, originated by Richardson et al. (2016), is also relevant to this study. Small business marketers use social media platforms, such as Instagram, Reddit, and Facebook, to influence people's spending habits. Researchers have used both the uses and gratifications theory to explain the popularity of social networking and social media platforms. Digital technologies tend to follow trends socially. Quan-Haase and Young (2010) identified essential trends of users that reflect social habits and identified six motivating factors of social media platforms.

Small business marketers use social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, to solicit consumers' involvement in online comments and posts to increase brand awareness (Galati et al., 2017). Moreover, customers can be challenging to influence and retain (Lou & Koh, 2017). Small business marketers must have strong customer-brand relationships to improve overall marketing.

Relationship Marketing Theory

Berry presented the relationship marketing theory in the early 1980s (Berry, 2002). Leaders can use relationship marketing to maintain customer retention. Relationship marketing is an approach to interactive marketing that helps in developing interactions that include real-time customer communication for long term customer relationships (Grönroos, 1994).

Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory is a benefit to business owners. Business leaders use the social exchange theory to engage individuals with social media by rewarding the individual through communication, cost avoidance, and maximization of benefits (Malik et al., 2016). Cropanzano et al. (2017) noted that the social exchange theory incorporates a sequence of connections between multiple parties. The exchange occurs when one party repays the good or bad deeds of another party.

Evolution of Marketing

Marketing is a means to influence consumers to buy a product or service. The concept of marketing has evolved. Marketing is a unique business function that goes

beyond selling and includes all areas of an organization with the customers' point of view as a guide (Drucker, 1954).

Social Media Marketing History

In 1969, the world was introduced to the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET), which developed into the World Wide Web and the Internet. The World Wide Web was created in 1993 by network specialists (Campbell-Kelly & Garcia-Swartz, 2013). Small business owners and business marketers have used the World Wide Web to reach new customers since its creation. The Internet has vastly transformed the way people communicate, as well as the way business, owners provide communication (Srivastava et al., 2016). The methods business owners use to communicate using the Internet includes instant messenger, video chatting, and other web-based applications.

Atwong (2015) explained that small marketing business leaders enthusiastically gravitate towards the development of Internet marketing to create tools such as websites to conduct business, provide data on products and services, and digitally advertise. Kurtin (2016) explained that marketers shifted from traditional marketing methods to search engine marketing sites and social media marketing sites, including Facebook and Twitter.

Edmiston (2014) and Kucuk (2016) explained that a substantial Internet presence is noteworthy for businesses as an important tool to increase consumer awareness, appeal to prospective customers, and aid dialogue with the company's core customers. Business leaders and marketers can effectively integrate marketing strategies by using social media to advertise beyond traditional methods.

Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms play an integral role in keeping users informed on current news and offers an outlet for voicing concerns and sharing opinions (Go & You, 2016). The most used social media platforms are Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Blogs, and YouTube. Erdur (2016) posited the online marketing of business leaders contributes to the web economy. Drummond et al. (2018) noted the effect of social media tools range in virtual platforms and provided resources to improve relationships with existing and potential customers while developing business relationships. Social media is an influential business tool with prospects and benefits for small and large businesses.

Facebook

Facebook is the world's largest social network service (SNS) and became accessible to consumers to use in 2004 (Smith et al., 2018). Users create individual profiles on Facebook, post photos, and encourage others to become friends on *fan* pages. Furthermore, 93.7% of businesses use and are active on Facebook. Formerly an internal communication tool at Harvard University, Facebook developed into a means to connect friends and family throughout the world (Facebook, 2018). Facebook includes a friends' list, a wall, photos, videos, messages, chat, and the *like* feature (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012). Facebook users usually participate by writing on friend's walls, making comments, participating in discussions, exchanging information, and sharing feedback on brands (Smith et al., 2018). These activities help to influence purchase behavior.

Facebook users often post updated information, share news, provide updates on activities, and connect with friends (Alloway & Alloway, 2012). Facebook users also

develop social relationships, communicate, and interact with other users (Smith et al., 2018). Facebook is the worlds' most extensive social media site. Half of all Facebook users frequently access the platform to communicate. Social media users often use Facebook to establish and maintain social ties and connections (Wang et al., 2012).

Twitter

Twitter is a social media platform for users to communicate with other users (Smith et al., 2018). Twitter is a cross between instant messaging and blogging that limits users to sending short updates of no more than 140 characters. Twitter is a micro-blogging site where users create, publish, tweet, read, and retweet messages to followers (Smith et al., 2018). Since its creation in 2006, Twitter has reached more than 19 million users (Bradley, 2009). Twitter is a social media tool used to win the trust of existing and potential customers (Todor, 2016). Twitter is a free social site that enables users to stay connected in real-time.

Users send tweets on their profile page using up to 140 characters (Bradley, 2009); this increased in 2018 to 280 characters (Twitter, 2018). Business leaders in many large organizations use Twitter to provide updates on products and services launched. Users on Twitter use the social media platform to measure the dialogue of consumers about their business and opponents (Schlinke & Crain, 2013). Small business owners can use Twitter to market, to make policy, and to manage different campaigns (Yıldırım et al., 2016). When customers discuss businesses on Twitter through tweets, they typically gain more followers, as opposed to brands not mentioned on Twitter, which indicates that

Twitter as a social media tool attracts new followers and helps to increase credibility

through retweets (Wolny & Mueller, 2013).

YouTube

YouTube is a content community that became available for individuals to use in

2005 (Smith et al., 2018). YouTube is a platform for video sharing among users

(Alloway& Alloway, 2012). Users of YouTube can post, view, and link to other videos

on the site (Smith et al., 2012). YouTube users create individual profiles and can post

recent activities, comments, and favorite videos. Users often use YouTube, to transmit

information on things, such as music videos and live performances. Peer communications

online often influence consumers and transform online users into Internet shoppers

(Wang et al., 2012).

Retail marketers need to establish tell-a-friend functions on websites (Wang et

al., 2012). Online users generally create, develop, and share content on the Internet

instead of relying on content generated by site designers or managers (Fischer & Reuber,

2010). Retail marketers need to maintain consumer brand awareness and perceptions in

social network services (Smith et al., 2012).

Blogs

Blogs are comparable to WOM and can help to increase the reputation of an

organization (Fan & Gordon, 2014). The leaders of some large organizations do not have

the means and resources to manage effectively blogs effectively because of a lack of clear

understanding of the benefits. Wang et al. (2015) commented that some media users

appear to be dependent on social media to gain information and news and to review

products and services. Consumers use blogs to learn, share, and express thoughts; blogs are an information source for businesses to receive feedback (Wang et al., 2015).

Blogging helps to increase information from a human standpoint (Wu et al., 2013). Toombs and Harlow (2014) encouraged small business leaders not to turn away from blogs as this form of technology is significant for helping to grow online communities. Small business marketers should use blogs to increase the company's awareness of goods and services and to gain customer feedback. Consumers to express thoughts use Blogs and blogs serve as a medium for companies to get feedback (Wang et al., 2015).

Instagram

Instagram is a photo and video sharing social network launched in 2010 that has gained immense popularity. By 2015, users had uploaded more than 40 billion photos to the site (Instagram, 2018). Instagram can be a powerful and cost-effective way to grow a small business. Using visual content to promote a business can be beneficial for a small business. Consumers frequently turn to several social media platforms to conduct searches and obtain information before making a purchase (Vollmer & Precourt, 2008). Instagram can be an effective way for brands to connect visually with millions of users.

Communication

Effective communication involves sending information from one individual to another, even if one party misinterprets it (Gallivan & Keil, 2003). People can share information through both verbal and nonverbal communication, which may include gestures. Consumer-generated communication (C2C) is an essential feature of social

media (Furlow, 2011). Many social media sites have discussion forums where users can leave comments. This feature allows consumers to research sites during the pre-purchase phase (Wang et al., 2012). Other mediums such as YouTube and blogs allow members to comment on videos freely. Users of social media sites can leave messages that others can see, and these messages may change a customer's perception of a company and overall purchase decision.

Traditional Marketing

Traditional marketing strategies small business owners use in the fashion retail industry include fashion shows, flyers, newspapers, and magazine advertisements (Goi, 2014). Traditional marketing methods have declined since the use of social media has increased. Lepkowska-White (2017) found that small business leaders want to use a marketing strategy to increase consumers' number, increase sales, and reduce costs. Small business leaders have created applications through social media accessible on portable smartphones or devices to connect and promote small businesses (Yadav, Joshi, & Raman, 2015). With traditional marketing strategies, consumers are unable to provide feedback in real-time.

Through social media, users maintain social exchange relationships by communicating with other members online (Chen et al., 2015). When using traditional marketing strategies, retailers find it challenging to reach and understand consumers (Wang et al., 2012). Social media marketing is cost-effective, fast, and connects consumers globally.

Social Media Marketing

Social media swayed the way leaders of organizations promote their merchandise and services (Taneja & Toombs, 2014). Social media users can market new products through Facebook and Instagram at no cost. Furthermore, while visiting social media platforms, consumers can identify products and services that they are interested in and can proceed to the merchants' website for further details with just a click.

Using social media marketing gives small business leaders the autonomy to respond in real-time to customers' concerns. When paying attention to customer criticism, business leaders must shift consumers (Kohli et al., 2015). Organizational leaders can use social media to promote products and activities developed by the organization. Social media marketing is an inexpensive way for marketers to reach a broader market. According to researchers, social media is a relationship builder for organizations and customers (Barger & Larecque, 2013). Small business leaders should create brand awareness and build relationships to increase retention among new customers.

Social media marketing is beneficial when small business leaders can want to reach customers directly. Customers can then contact other customers, which creates WOM. This interactive environment allows customers and small business leaders to influence other customers (Alameddine, 2013). Customer's tweets or positive comments about products or services; may impact the decisions of other customers about purchases in a positive manner.

Social media provides customers with instant access to information on products, services, and businesses. Accessing and producing information using social media is not expensive, and, as a result, both customers and organizations are using this technology more. Small business leaders can gain competitive advantage by understanding customer behavior (Almaddeine, 2013). Small business leaders review consumer profiles and engage customers in ways that fit their needs once they understand practices.

Social media and traditional media are different in closeness, cost, and scope (Katona & Sarvary, 2014). Unlike conventional marketing, social media involves receiving feedback from the receiver (Nevin & Torres, 2012). Listening to consumer feedback helps business leaders develop responses that can influence consumer purchasing decisions and aid in new product development. A low-cost advertising option for businesses of all sizes is social media (Kohli et al., 2015). Social media enables business owners to increase their customer base, improve their marketing plans, obtain feedback from customers and potential customers, and make their companies more competitive (Allan & Ali, 2017). Also, satisfied customers can provide testimonials and relevant consumer information to attract new customers (Ismail, 2017).

Social media marketing allows users to voice opinions about products or services, whereas in traditional marketing, small business leaders provide buyers with information about goods and services (Bruce & Solomon, 2013). Traditional advertising involves online content usage by marketers to disseminate information to customers (Kwok & Yu, 2013). A conversation within social networks then occurs, allowing consumers to craft unpaid online contributions, which usually comes in the form of an online post; this is

Word-of-Mouth (WOM) promotion (Kwok & Yu, 2013). Small businesses can leverage consumer's desire to network with people who have similar interests and fascinations by creating communities with shared interests and values.

Word–of–Mouth (WOM) and Electronic Marketing

Social media in the retail industry influences the buying behaviors of consumers. Word-of-Mouth (WOM) communication is an influential marketing tool (Dadzie et al., 2017) that occurs when one individual tells another about an experience with an organization (Kawakami et al., 2013). According to Curran et al. (2013), WOM occurs when one consumer recommends a product or service to friends, family, or coworkers. During the 1970s, marketing researchers introduced the marketers' influence model, where opinion leaders shared information with consumers via WOM (Curran et al., 2013). Word-of-mouth marketing plays a crucial role in consumer behavior and attitudes (Diffley et al., 2011). Consumers typically use WOM as a source of information to help with making purchases online and in-store.

Small retail business owners should know that WOM affects consumer decision-making processes (Heriyati & Siek, 2011). Business owners should provide consumers with product-related information using social media, and understand and engage online. In an online setting, WOM can be either positive or negative, and negative WOM can affect a business brand, resulting in consumers choosing not to make purchases from that company (Tuzovic, 2010).

WOM is a reliable way for small business leaders to market because of the credibility customer feedback offers. When two or more people informally communicate

about a product or service, the information can be influential and can alter consumer behavior (Del Río-Lanza et al., 2013). Organizational leaders should be aware of the impact of WOM, including its overall impact on purchase behavior.

Electronic WOM has the potential of rapidly spreading information with the use of the Internet. Positive electronic WOM can result in positive purchase behavior, thus increasing sales and revenue for an organization (Colvin, 2013). In contrast, negative comments can lead to decreased sales. As a result, business owners must develop effective strategies to engage consumers quickly and effectively to recover from negative feedback.

WOM is simply not limited to friends and family; instead, social media allows WOM to spread among strangers. Facebook and Twitter are platforms for WOM, and users can post comments and link businesses (Chen et al., 2012). Social media WOM helps small business owners promote their business and send information in real-time to many potential customers (Bruhn et al., 2012).

WOM is a beneficial and useful marketing tool. Those small business owners should use to encourage happy and satisfied customers to post positive comments and reviews. Such positive comments help to increase popularity and strengthening brands. Negative comments will do the opposite. Controlling online comments is challenging for small business owners to manage the comments customers may post on an online social platform. Still, it is significant for these sites to have careful monitoring to maintain the online reputation of the company.

WOM, as a marketing strategy is essential for marketers' desired result (Castronovo & Huang, 2012). WOM marketing can have both positive and negative influences on businesses in the same environment. Building consumer trust is essential because small business leaders can measure threats and ambiguity in online transactions (Hajli, 2014).

Business leaders should create an environment that builds trust among consumers in an online environment is essential (Hajli, 2014). When consumers perceive comments and reviews as beneficial, it helps consumers make easy purchasing decisions. Electronic WOM occurs when consumers voice their opinions on social media platforms. Positive messages from consumers can influence positive purchase behavior that can help boost sales (Colvin, 2013).

Role of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) is a means for small business marketers to expand customer satisfaction and retention resulting in increased sales (Ismail, 2016). Traditional marketing methods differ from those of social media marketing because of conventional marketing, enhanced partnerships, and social media marketing results in post-like and impressions (Colvin, 2013). Businesses with large marketing budgets are in a better position to spend considerable resources on customer engagement strategies based on the notion that is improving customer engagement rates lead to noteworthy increases in sales and overall profit (Lim, 2018).

Customer relationships improve using social media by business leaders. Customer relations are critical to organizational success. Small business owners become successful

when they use the most effective marketing methods to support product production and customer service (Sherbaniuk, 2014).

Customer retention is an essential element of marketing. Marketers need to develop a strategy that includes an atmosphere of emotional attachment to products and the business (Venkatesan, 2017). Furthermore, if a customer enjoys using different social media platforms, the customer is more likely to communicate with other online users by WOM, which increases the potential for repeat business and new customers (Braojos et al., 2017). Improving online customer engagement is a function used to ensure the consumer trusts the company, the brand, and the process of buying a product online.

Social Media Use in Small Businesses

Social media refers to a collection of online services used to communicate and share content (Crumpton, 2014). Social media tools assist in building networks, achieving instant distribution of information, and encouraging trust and confidence within the public.

Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and blogs are the highest four social media platforms used by marketers (Gismondi, 2021). As social media use continues to increase, the distinctive features of the technology and how this form of advertising differs from traditional marketing communication channels is challenging for some marketers in some organizations who seek to implement and deploy social media strategies (Valos et al., 2015).

Business leaders use social media to communicate with audiences. Effective social media use gives leaders in small businesses the capacity to reach audiences that

they would not usually access through traditional communication. Organizational leaders use social media for many purposes. Social media technologies allow business leaders to engage in two- way communication that is interactive to spread messages (Lillqvist & Louhiala-Salminen, 2014). It also provides a means to expand brand awareness. Some small business leaders use social media to communicate with the community, consumers, and other stakeholders. However, some leaders may experience challenges in adopting tools if they lack adequate social media strategies.

Small business leaders who do not understand social media fundamentals could fail to attract or retain customers (Durkin et al., 2013). Having social media presence online is beneficial for a small business; it helps leaders to stay competitive and survive in an ever-changing digital business environment. The uses of social media tools are slowly replacing traditional marketing (Henderson et al., 2015). Social media represents a paradigm shift in communication, enabling communication at a much lower cost (Charalabidis et al., 2014). Small businesses drive economic growth and create jobs in the US economy, yet there is still little knowledge about social media marketing usage (Broekemeir et al., 2015).

Social Media Marketing (SMM) Advantage

Defining the value gained through social media marketing is challenging (Hutter et al., 2013). SMM creates value by sharing customer perception (Lacoste, 2016). Customers make informed decisions before making a purchase, decision and share their opinions on products and services. When customers value a product or service, they are likely to remain. Loyalty is an essential component of small business leaders. Small

business leaders who grasp the significance of commitment can gain and maintain a competitive advantage over other companies (Gismondi, 2021).

Valuable SMM strategies involve learning ways to contact different target populations, use demographics, and use virtual stores (Ceric et al., 2016). Social media marketing includes engagement from marketers, and a lack of commitment can lead to challenges in implementing a successful online platform (Keegan & Rowley, 2017). As a marketing tool, social media has many possibilities (Schwarzl & Grabowska, 2015).

Small businesses tend to be more individual and community-focused. Small business leaders and workers are also able to connect with customers online through comments. Small companies can foster connections with individuals on social media (Hajili, 2014), and customers and potential customers will appreciate the level of service received from timely responses. Some social media platforms, such as Facebook, have paid to advertise, and marketers can use this medium to reach people within a specific demographic or geographic location (Facebook, 2018). Social media users can craft an avenue to attract new consumers, expand customer bases, build relationships, share compelling visuals, and drive traffic to its website.

Managing Negative Comments Posted on Social Media

Negative comments posted on social media sites can hurt the bottom line for a business. Consumer complaints are inevitable (Ang & Buttle, 2012), and consumers find it essential for organizations to handle complaints reasonably and take responsibility for the issue. Leaders must promptly handle customers' complaints, provide some form of resolution, and take responsibility for the problem (Gurău, 2012). Furthermore, Kähr et

al. (2016) explained the concept of consumer brand sabotage. Consumer brand sabotage

occurs when consumers deliberately display aggressive, hostile behavior to harm a brand.

Other forms of malicious consumer behavior can occur through negative WOM,

customer boycotts, and customer retaliation when marketers do not display positive

attributes or provide positive feedback representing the brand (Kähr et al., 2016).

Businesses use a software management system to read and respond to customer

complaints (Ang & Buttle 2012). Answering customer complaints promptly, allows

customers to learn more about a product or service, and to make an informed purchase

decision. Furthermore, accusations left unanswered can leave negative impressions on

customers. Marketers note that negative comments create an opportunity for service

recovery (Dekay, 2012). Negative comments have the potential to become positive

experiences if small fashion retail businesses use comments to prevent future

occurrences.

Marketing Strategy Issues

Small fashion business owners need strategies to support initiatives to help with

growth. Identifying trends with consumers through marketing initiatives will help with

cost savings and fulfill other goals that may help with organizational growth. To keep

abreast of trends and innovations, small business leaders must market new products to

keep customers engaged with new offerings (Singh et al., 2012). Small retail business

owners can attract new customers and retain existing by using flyers, advertising, and

brochures (Zheng, 2017). Sales training in organizations is critical in the marketing plan

(Janicic & Jankovic, 2014). One of the strategic marketing issues small businesses face

includes increased competition. Small businesses need to find ways to remain innovative in a fast-paced environment. Bennett (2017) indicated that a primary barrier to social media adoption was a lack of knowledge and understanding by management. Marketing managers must learn how to explore, digest, and synthesize social media changes to remain competitive (Micu, 2011).

Issues With Social Media Marketing

In the past, **s**ome small businesses were hesitant to use social media marketing. Suppose small retail stores in the fashion industry are reluctant to take the necessary steps to learn how to market using social media. In that case, the company could lose profits and not gain new customers (Lee, 2012). Social media is vigorous in any business and an approach that requires commitment and monitoring. Small business leaders should determine the appropriateness and usefulness of social media at any given time (Bruce & Solomon, 2013).

Some small business leaders are ill-equipped with the techniques needed to succeed with social media marketing, particularly the means required to reach their intended audiences (Durkin et al., 2013). Social media, if used effectively, can help business owners connect with new customers (Hassan et al., 2015). Maintaining relationships with clients can be challenging for companies new to using marketing technologies (Durkin et al., 2013). Twenty-six percent of smaller enterprises understand how to use social media marketing as a useful tool to influence potential clients and increase sales (Taneja & Toombs, 2014).

Measuring ROI has been a challenge for marketers (Luke, 2013). Integrating social media marketing seamlessly into marketing efforts for a small business can be challenging for business leaders. The prospect of getting involved in networking with peers has five conditions. First, small business leaders must clearly explain the learning opportunities they lack and the different tools available for using social media (Taneja & Toombs, 2014). Committing to networking is another step a business manager must take. Also, establishing confidence and maintaining communication evolves.

Content creation is an area of social media marketing that some small business owners take advantage of (Taneja & Toombs, 2014). It is essential to develop a strategy and implement tactics to achieve the sales goal or any other goal set. Succeeding in social media marketing requires quality content. For example, a small retail business owner in the fashion industry may want to promote new dresses in stock. The creativity of the person who handles the social media platforms should help find ways to display the dresses and make that merchandise appealing to potential customers.

In addition to content creation, obtaining and retaining a following on social media platforms can be challenging. Small business owners in the fashion retail industry must learn how to optimize social network platforms and search engines content. Optimization may involve posting content from one dashboard to several social network applications. Mobile applications such as *Hootsuite,* social media management and marketing platform, allow users to integrate social media accounts such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn and manage messages and updates.

Some small business leaders deal with challenges in implementing effective social media strategies, such as resources and workforce (Kacker & Perrigot, 2016). Small business leaders hire employees with social media knowledge to understand (Bakeman & Hanson, 2012). Interacting with customers is beneficial for small business leaders by including social media marketing, and failure to do so will result in missed opportunities (Oestreicher-Singer & Zalmanson, 2013).

Understanding the benefits of social media marketing may be initially challenging, and some small retail business owners may fail to see the benefits (Felix et al., 2016). Facebook and Twitter have unique functions and features that companies should consider to take full advantage of results (Go & You, 2016). Social media users must be flexible because of the immense number of social media tools available; a single successful approach may not exist for all businesses.

Hiring employees to incorporate social media efforts into communication and marketing plans is not a challenge for larger organizations due to the resources available (Taneja & Toombs, 2014). In contrast, smaller organizations do not have easy access to resources or do not have the resources and workforce needed to integrate effective strategies for social media marketing (Kacker & Perrigot, 2016). It is most beneficial for small business leaders to hire personnel with social network site experience (Bakeman & Hanson, 2012). If leaders cannot, small business leaders face the education on business curricula that involves social media marketing. Small business leaders must become educated on social media to implement effective marketing campaigns.

There is limited control over the content that is shared by CEOs who use social media to engage with their audience (Kohli et al., 2015); this may pose as a disadvantage for business leaders who are unable to control content (Austin & Upton, 2016). Online content submitted by social media users, can occasionally be misleading; as a result, small business leaders must make themselves aware. When there are no control mechanisms in place, it enables people to be misled. Blogs and microblogs do not have control mechanisms (Tsikerdekis & Zeadally, 2014). Furthermore, social media posts are not always reliable (Kugler, 2014). When a consumer posts undesirable information on a company's social media platform, it can be quite challenging to stop the spread of harmful reactions (Austin & Upton, 2016).

Improved Business Practice

Social media platforms help businesses innovate their means of reaching (Durkin et al., 2013). Marketers and small business owners must refine their marketing strategies, and leaders who successfully use social media have noted the importance of having a social media plan to engage customers (Coleman et al., 2013). Cohesion amongst departments in an organization is essential in making social media marketing successful (Eisenberg et al., 2015). Members of a sales team should understand how to connect with customers through social media, whether through replying to comments, answering questions, or meeting customers, such as creating new products. Understanding how to influence customer connections with social media gives small business leaders an advantage over preserving customers (Harris et al., 2012).

Social media helps bridge communication gaps between customers and business leaders (Singh et al., 2012). Engaging with customers through social media allows employees in a small business to respond to customers' posts or questions in real-time. New markets are met through social media platforms, which are similar to WOM (Bakeman & Hanson, 2012). Small fashion retail business leaders who understand how to influence consumers' decision-making with social media have a better advantage of gaining new customers (Harris et al., 2012). Conventional systematic techniques help organizations inspect, gain insights from the information collected from Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube (Fan & Gordon, 2014). Positive purchase decisions can be attained through social media platforms, influencing consumers purchasing decisions (Stephen & Galak, 2012). Purchase decisions remain defined by a customers' emotional experience (Chang et al., 2015).

Relationship Management

Marketers traditionally used the mass marketing approach to gain customers, but marketers have turned to relationship management to retain customers, instead of searching for new customers (Bauer & Grether, 2005). Engaging customers is vital to help boost sales and increase brand awareness. Existing customers will potentially refer other customers to an organization, which helps to boost sales. Small business leaders to take heed to consumers' needs, as they implement, and establish product strategies and other marketing initiatives; the maintenance of customer interaction is essential (Obadia et al., 2017).

Consumers communicate with organizations through social media, which enhances their relationship with the organizations. Customers can ask questions through social media and receive instant feedback, almost like calling a store to ask about a product. Relationship building is the key to success (Colvin, 2013) even though social marketing is a strategy to gain a competitive advantage for small businesses, both traditional and social media marketing help build relationships with customers.

Small business leaders can use social media to develop deeper relationships with their customers and build rapport. Relationship management aims to build customer retention and foster mutually beneficial relationships (Rodriguez et al., 2012). Small business leaders who can acquire new customers while retaining existing customers can leverage relationships and maximize revenue. Essential constituents of relationship marketing are an increase in revenue and competitive advantage for organizations (Paliouras & Siakas, 2017).

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Small business marketers' strategies and technologies to manage and analyze customer interaction are critical components in customer relationship management (CRM). Customer relationship management systems can help small business leaders learn detailed information on customers' buying preferences and concerns. Customer relationship management helps businesses acquire their customers, retain customers, and engage customers, improving overall customer service (Rosman & Stuhura, 2013). Customer relationship management is critical to marketing as it helps build relationships

with existing customers and develops long-term commitment (Armstrong & Kotler, 2015).

Small business owners need suitable social media strategies for brand management that balance revenue with long term presence (Gautum & Sharma, 2017). Small retail marketers should use social networks to network and connect with customers. A study on global organizations that used Internet tools such as websites, Facebook, and Twitter to maintain relationships with the public revealed an everyday use for social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (Wonsun, 2015). Social media has helped develop a bond between customers and brands (Gautam & Sharma, 2017). Conversations on social media feel more personal, and customers feel more engaged.

Social media has shifted the way small business leaders implement their CRM practices (Felix et al., 2016). Social media marketing emerged as a dynamic marketing channel allowing relationship building (Ananda et al., 2016). Social media marketing incorporates social media to create exchange between consumers and businesses and improves customer-brand interaction (Yazdanparast et al., 2016).

Social Media With the Fashion Retail Industry

Millions of people use social media sites every day to interact with others who share similar interests. Reviews posted on social media websites significantly impact consumers when making purchase decisions about clothing because people believe that the information is trustworthy. Social media usage plays a vital role in the fashion industry. It is a marketing tool allowing sellers to connect with their target markets through mediums such as Facebook and Twitter (Ananda et al., 2016). The fashion

industry has adopted social media as a marketing platform to reach customers online and to increase customer loyalty (Ananda et al., 2016). Small businesses can decide which site to use and control the perception of the company on any website.

The use of social media helps entrepreneurs connect their customers with product information and services. Despite these positive benefits, the virtual entity's inherent customer trust can be challenging (Augenti, 2007). A business can lose potential customers in the traditional purchase path when moving closer to the purchasing stage. Business owners should remove any unnecessary barriers to the online shopping experience. With the development of technology and the Internet, online shopping has become convenient. Brands are online, and people are starting fashion blogs every day. Fashion is the second-largest and fastest-growing e-commerce category in the United States.

Social Media Influence on Consumer Behavior

Social media marketing positively impacts consumer behavior (Mehra et al., 2017). Social media marketing can also nurture a consumer base that can influence purchase behavior more than brand information (Xie & Lee, 2015). Fulgoni (2015) found that social media marketing is a marketing tool used to substitute traditional advertising methods, particularly when a company or brand fails. Consumer behavior can be influenced negatively by social media users. Social media marketing leads to adverse effects on the purchase decisions of consumers. Notably, the spread of negative press and word of mouth complaints causes brand failure (Tuten & Angermeirer, 2013). Business

leaders should use all aspects of social media, as some managers may not use it fully

(Lacoste, 2016).

Social Media Marketing Return on Investment

MROI can be challenging (Luke, 2013). Lee (2017) examined factors to

determine if a profitable revenue stream could be the result of social network sites and

assessed the costs of using social media are low but noted there is still a lack of tangible

metrics. One of the main challenges for small businesses is the value of some social

media platforms such as Facebook and measuring the amount of ROI efforts (Mitchell &

Olsen, 2013). Small businesses question social media efforts due to the inability to

measure the lack of knowledge associated with social media (Bufquin et al., 2017). Social

media users can influence the purchasing decisions of others, and a new link exists

between consumer shopping and social media referrals via posts through Facebook and

Instagram, tweets through Twitter, and statements on blogs (Guo & Zheng, 2017).

Measuring (ROI) is complicated for marketers (Luke, 2013). Calculating social

media MROI is difficult for some marketers (Indrupati & Henari, 2012). Expenditures

made on marketing efforts are MRO (Mitchell & Olsen, 2013). Researchers believe that

the return on investment for companies will grow immensely for companies that use

social media marketing (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

Branding

Small business owners can promote products and brands to locate market

tendencies, propose business marketing strategies, and execute marketing online (Lee et

al., 2016). Small retail business owners should innovative generative concepts to increase

brand growth. The image of a brand can influence a customers' complaint. Small

business marketers must implement strategies that can improve communication levels to

determine which customers are likely to impact purchase behavior and ultimately

influence sales and profitability (Archer-Brown et al., 2017).

Small business owners should implement viral marketing and email message

execution regarding brand promotion. This messaging should appeal to the recipients and

contextualize the marketing strategies (Pöyry et al., 2017). Coca-Cola and Sony are two

examples of companies that have established a global reputation through branding

(Whittler & Farris, 2017). Developing a valuable brand helps increase the profitability

and sustainability of a product, and increase customer loyalty, value, and perception

(Eryigit, 2017).

Social media allows consumers and small businesses to interact and changes brand

management dynamics, which can affect brand performance (Gensler et al., 2013).

Marketers do not always have control of their social media pages because customers

generate the content. When consumers post content about a brand, marketing managers

can use the information to promote content (Gensler et al., 2013). Understanding

customer value and using marketing activities for positive investment may improve brand

performance (Cao et al., 2016). Some small business leaders use this information to run

advertisements online that show real customer feedback and content. Also, managers

must reply to negative feedback on these platforms.

Small business marketing managers must create positive brand awareness by

reacting to any negative stories. If left unaddressed, social media platforms' complaints

can hurt brand awareness (Boo & Kim, 2013). Engaging in dialogue with customers is essential to maintaining brand integrity. Brand management is an important marketing strategy for small businesses.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty refers to the level of commitment from a consumer to making repeat purchases from the same brand. It develops when consumers commit to purchase and repurchase an item from a brand (Balakrishnan et al., 2014). Small business leaders must focus on creating brand loyalty. Social media platforms help market products, promote WOM marketing, and provide a space to build online communities (Balakrishnan et al., 2014).

When small business leaders use social media to build communities online, existing and potential consumers can view products, services, and all posted reviews that could lead to brand trust and loyalty (Laroche et al., 2012). Marketers in small businesses should think like their customers and give consumers reasons to be loyal to the brand. Incentives and rewards are one way to leverage the benefits to customers. Small business leaders must use social media platforms to establish brand communities (Laroche et al., 2012).

Innovation

The Internet has become a powerful engine to foster sales and revenue (Leeflang et al., 2014). People spent an average of 17% on mobile apps such as Facebook (Moreno-Munoz et al., 2016). These apps are readily available and help to increase consumer behavior because of the convenience of these apps. If a small business leader has limited

resources and funds to spend on marketing efforts, it could fail (Karadag, 2015).

Globalization has forced small businesses to increase competitive advantage and improve

marketing position (Story et al., 2015). Taalbi (2017) explained that innovation drove the

demand for products through the need for change. Marketers must develop new ideas that

fuel and help to keep small businesses competitive.

Benefits and Importance of Social Media Marketing

Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter provide free access to

consumers, and marketers need to use the platforms efficiently to promote goods and

services (Schaupp & Bélanger, 2014). Popular social networking sites consisting of

Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Twitter (Surma, 2016). The vast development of the

Internet and social media has transformed the ways small business leaders' market

(Sheikh et al., 2016). Unlike traditional marketing, the use of social media tools can meet

the marketing needs of small businesses gainfully. Small business leaders can connect

with followers in real-time. Two- thirds of adults in the United States reported that they

are Facebook users, and three-fourths access Facebook daily basis (Pew Research Center,

2018).

Social media posts and advertisements are critical drivers of traffic to small

business websites. These posts serve as an easy way for consumers to express interest in a

product that results in leads. Marketers need to create useful marketing materials that will

result in customer engagement and leads. WOM drives the purchase decisions of

consumers and involves consumers' opinions of products or services based on their

experience, which could influence the receiver's purchase decisions (Ismagilova et al.,

2017). Businesses fail when business owners fail to implement marketing strategies (Amankwah-Amoah, 2017).

Mitchell et al. (2015) explored branding and WOM marketing to increase brand awareness in the current marketplace. Social media is a resource for business owners to advertise, generate new leads, and improve sales. In agreement with Schultz and Peltier (2013), Ismail (2017) suggested that social media is a hub for promoting goods and services that business leaders use to communicate actively with consumers. Unlike traditional print, radio, television, or billboard advertisements, social media marketing is a means for two-way communication between the consumer and the business.

Wang and Kim (2017) and Witkemper et al. (2012) determined social media could transform how users can actively participate online. Small business marketers identify that using social media is a useful tool to expand the customer base. Notably, 85% of a business's fans recommend the brand to others, and 71% of online users are more likely to purchase from a brand that they follow online (Top Rank Marketing, 2013).

Overall, the literature reviewed indicated that social media is a useful marketing tool for small business owners to increase sales. Business owners need to take advantage of social media marketing (Wang & Kim, 2017). Wang and Kim proposed that effective social media marketing is a means for small business owners to build relationships and increase brand awareness. Social media is a resource for small business owners to promote, generate new leads, and increase sales.

Transition

Section 1 included an introduction to social media marketing. The goal of Section 1 was to discover appropriate social media marketing strategies used for marketing. In Section 1 of this study, I introduced the foundation and background for the study. This multiple case study explored the strategies small retail business leaders need to use social media marketing to increase revenue.

Section 2 includes the following sections: purpose statement, the role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization technique, data analysis, and reliability and validity. Section 3 provides the results from the data analysis and suggestions for social variation. Section 3 also provides extensive discussion and recommendations for appropriate social media marketing strategies for small retail business leaders.

Section 2: The Project

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore the social media marketing strategies that small business leaders in the fashion retail industry used to increase revenue. This section includes the comprehensive plan used for exploring the social media strategies that small retail business owners used to boost revenue. In this section I explored the researcher's role, the eligibility for participants, research method and design, population and sampling, and the steps taken to ensure ethical research standards are maintained. Section 2 also includes data collection instruments, data organization techniques, data analysis procedures, and reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore social media marketing strategies some business owners use to increase revenue in the fashion industry. The target population was five small business leaders in the fashion retail industry in Atlanta, Georgia, that have used social media marketing strategies for at least one year to meet or exceed their revenue goals. The implications for positive social change include the potential for small retail business owners in the fashion industry to gain and retain customers, increase business revenue, and have a positive economic effect on their community.

Role of the Researcher

I was the primary data collection instrument for this study. My responsibility as a researcher was to choose a business problem that requires more research, select the method and design, maintain neutrality, select possible participants, and examine and

interpret the data collected. A challenge that my role as the researcher faced was eliminating bias from my personal experience. As the researcher, I ensured that my research questions did not dig for answers to my preconceptions. Researchers should demonstrate active listening, abstain from casting judgment, and remain vested in the responses of each participant (Hoff & Bashir, 2014).

My social media experience included five years of having a Facebook personal account. My experience included, sending messages to friends and liking each other's photos. I avoided bias due to my history with social media by remaining objective. As a consumer I have purchased items through social media marketing. In addition, I have contributed in promoting events using social media marketing platforms.

According to *The Belmont Report,* there are fundamental ethical principles to which a researcher should adhere. The three ethical principles are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. The ethical standards and guidelines for protecting humans, which I stuck to while conducting my study (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research [NCPHSBBR], 1979). Therefore, all participants will be shown respect and treated fairly and equally. I did not compromise the principles of *The Belmont Report,* and participants understood their rights and voluntarily chose to participate in interviews. Additionally, the participants received information on the purpose of the study and the benefits of joining.

De Mooy and Yuen (2017) postulated that ethics must be part of any research discussion. Despite having a personal interest in social media and marketing, I followed Marshall and Rossman (2016) and did not display bias within the investigation. To

mitigate bias, I adhered to the participants' phenomena' interpretation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I ensured that the two critical components of ethical research, did not harm, and provided full disclosure to participants to ensure ethical practices (Bromley et al., 2015).

Bias can occur at any research stage and maybe hard to reduce (Smith & Noble, 2014). With a clear understanding of research bias, I created mitigation strategies. Member checking includes verifying what was said for accuracy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I restated or summarized information and requested that participant determined accuracy. In addition, the literal translation was cross checked to ensure participants meant what was recorded (Shenton, 2004). During these checks, I asked for clarification.

Participants

I selected participants in Atlanta, Georgia who successfully used SMM strategies for at least three years to meet or exceed their revenue goals. I used purposive sampling, a nonprobabilistic sampling procedure, to fit my study's purpose. Purposive sampling is a form of nonprobability sampling where the researcher selects certain research participants from the population based on criteria relevant to the phenomenon being studied, and excludes other members of the population (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

The process for identifying potential participants included reviewing the list of small fashion retail businesses located in Georgia available on the City Business Look-Up page. The City of Atlanta's Business License Look-Up page has a platform that allows members of the public to identify businesses with a current Atlanta business license. The City of Atlanta business lookup provides an available database that includes physical addresses, phone numbers, and other information for small fashion retail

business owners to identify suitable participants for this study. I searched social media to identify those owners from the database who have a social media presence. I contacted those potential participants and asked them to self-report how SMM has affected their revenue. I selected participants who possessed the knowledge and understanding of social media marketing and who met the sampling criteria.

I used an accepted method to obtain data saturation by a two-step process (Francis et al., 2010). To apply this method, the researcher selects a minimum sample size (based on the methodological literature) for initial analysis. Based on the literature (Yin, 2018) a minimum sample size of five was sufficient. If data saturation is reached, then the second step involves two or three more interviews. If no new ideas emerge, then the researcher can stop interviewing at that point. If need be, the second step is repeated until data saturation is met. The recommended sample size for a case study is between two and six participants (Malterud et al., 2015).

To conduct research, it is imperative for the investigator to gain participants' access and establish a relationship with their participants (Peticca-Harris et al., 2016). I obtained permission directly from business owners that met the sampling criteria. Recruiting participants due to the COVID 19 pandemic occurred via the phone, email, and virtual Zoom meetings. Researchers must receive Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from their university of study (Grady, 2015). I began conducting my research after receiving permission from Walden University's IRB.

When I contacted the selected small business leaders, I provided a synopsis, and revealed the study's goal and expectations of their participation. McDermid et al. (2014)

noted that researchers should communicate the study's purpose, the potential benefit and risks of participation, and the need to research participants to help build a working relationship. The small business leaders who chose to participate in this study received an electronic consent form, a signed copy of the form before the start of the interview and did a Zoom interview to ensure confidentiality. I held a phone conversation to ensure participants felt comfortable with the process, confirmed that they meet the study criteria, and ensured participants understood that the data would be confidential and held in a secure location.

Research Method and Design

The researcher should determine a method and design appropriate for answering the research question (Yin, 2018). The research method was qualitative, as the objective of this study was to discover effective social media marketing plans used by small retail leaders to increase revenue. Yin posited that qualitative research explores a phenomenon through participants' lived experience, knowledge, and expertise.

Research Method

The three research methods were qualitative, quantitative, and mixed (Yin, 2018). Researchers use a qualitative approach to obtain information through discussions, observations, and records (DeMassis & Kotlar, 2014). The qualitative research method was relevant to explore strategies small retail business leaders use to increase revenue. Gaining in-depth knowledge is a reason to conduct qualitative research (Yin, 2018). A qualitative approach is suitable when a researcher seeks to understand a particular issue

faced by small business owners. This method is ideal because it encourages the observation and gathering of data (Kohler et al., 2019).

Researchers collect quantitative data to examine concepts by observing the associations and dissimilarities among variables (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). The focus of quantitative research is using numbers and statistics to present findings (Barnham, 2015). The results of quantitative analysis involve measuring the relationship between variables (Parker, 2014). The quantitative research method did not provide the information essential to comprehend the tactics that small retail business owners use to market their business using social media. Researchers combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to create a mixed-methods strategy (Almalki, 2016). A mixed-methods approach is valuable in understanding the basis of a phenomenon moreover the fundamental truths of the case (Maxwell, 2013). I did not use a quantitative or mixed research method because my study did not intend to examine relationships or determine the degree of differences among groups.

Research Design

The researcher needs to use the appropriate research design (Yin, 2018). I considered three research designs: phenomenology, ethnography, and case study. I selected the multiple case study research design. A researcher doing a case study aims to understand a specific and unique event of a case or of multiple cases. Moreover, a researcher doing a case study research focuses on an individual, a process, a system, a classroom, or a clinic in a research study (Petty et al., 2012). This research design was useful in exploring a real-world phenomenon within a contextual setting (Yin, 2018).

Case studies involve defining the research question, selecting the cases, collecting data, analyzing, and reporting the findings (Alnaim, 2015). I collected data using semistructured interviews and reviewed the organization's documents to engage in methodological triangulation. I conducted a multiple case study to collect diverse data and increase the findings' credibility.

Ethnographic researchers study phenomena by gaining access to environments where they can observe participants in their natural setting and learn more about their culture to understand an ethnic group (Sangasubana, 2011). Ethnography design is inappropriate for this research because I did not explore the culture of this group. Grounded theory is one that derives from the study of phenomena. It was not the intent of this study to develop a new approach. As a means of telling life stories, researchers use the narrative design (Julkunen, 2016). This design was inappropriate because telling life stories was not the purpose of this research. The final design consideration was phenomenology, which involves inquiring about participants' lived experiences related to a phenomenon (Kaszynska, 2015). I explored strategies business leaders use in social media marketing to increase revenues and did not study participants' lived experiences.

Data saturation occurs at two points; first in data collection and then in the analysis. Saturation is the point in the interview process where the researcher ceases to identify new themes (Morse, 2015). Data saturation is the point at which data collection can cease. This point of closure is arrived at when the information that is being analyzed by the researcher becomes repetitive and contains no new ideas, so the researcher can be

reasonably confident that the inclusion of additional participants is unlikely to provide new findings (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Population and Sampling

In a qualitative research study, the study results are specific to the context (Petty et al., 2012). Generalizing the research findings is not the goal of the researcher. Purposive sampling is a form of nonprobability sampling where the researcher selects certain research participants from the population based on criteria relevant to the phenomenon being studied, and excludes other members of the population..

Population criteria are valuable to ensure that selected participants have experienced the phenomenon that focuses on the research firsthand and can address the research questions (Rahi, 2017). Sampling is vital to research validity in studies conducted through interviews (Robinson, 2014). According to Robinson, sampling in qualitative research consisted of four parts: (a) deciding on the target population, (b) deciding on adequate sample size, (c) choosing a sampling strategy, (d) and sample sourcing. Participants of this study were qualified to be a small fashion retail business with a minimum of three years' experience with social media marketing located in Atlanta, Georgia, and used social media marketing strategies to increase revenue.

The participants, experienced in online fashion retail marketing, provided insights, and shared experiences and discussed social media marketing concepts and how to use it as an effective marketing tool to serve customers. The participants included those experienced in the fashion industry and at least one year of social media (Jap, 2010). Purposeful sampling presents various participants within a population that

demonstrated different interest (Brod et al., 2009). Qualitative researchers use purposive

sampling to explore and secure the objectives of a research problem and allow

transferability of research findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2018). I used

purposive sampling to select the study participants. With purposeful sampling,

participants in the fashion retail industry provide information and insights to understand

marketing strategies' value through social media (Jap, 2010).

A small sample size is acceptable for qualitative studies (Palikas et al., 2015) and

for purposive sampling (Yin, 2018). Use of a small sample size can be warranted for a

researcher to realize quality and to gain a full understanding of a study phenomenon

(Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Qualitative researchers can accomplish data saturation

using a sample size in a range of 5 to 50 participants (Emmel, 2015). I selected at least

five small business leaders who met the requisite experience and knowledge of this

multiple case study. Fusch and Ness (2015) explained that data saturation is achieved

when one can no longer uncover new information or new themes, and there is

commonality in responses from participants.

With purposeful samples, I ensured that the participants understood the research

study's purpose and respond to the research questions. The criteria for selecting the

participants or experts were fashion industry online marketers who had experience and

knowledge both in the fashion industry and in social media (Lindgren et al., 2010). The

concept of information saturation is that additional information collection,such as themes,

perspectives, or insights, will not add meaning to the subject phenomenon (Suri, 2011).

When the participants repeated similar themes and ideas, my research was ready for the conclusion and further analysis.

In qualitative research studies, there are six data sources to use. I used interviews to collect data from qualified participants with different perspectives on the phenomenon researched (Yin, 2018). I allocated 45 minutes to an hour for facilitating interviews remotely with all participants, due to COVID 19 pandemic. Researchers used consent forms as a tool to safeguard the confidentiality and the security of participant rights during the data collection process (Koonrungsesomboon et al., 2015). I used the consent form (see Appendix A), to share information about the study, the intended use of the data, and also to share information about their rights if participating or withdrawing from the study.

Ethical Research

Ethical considerations are required in scholarly research (Cartwright et al., 2013; Unluer, 2012). A researcher's concern is to protect the participants' rights, as described in *The Belmont Report.* I obtained permission to conduct this study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University before conducting the study. The participant received informed consent forms before participating in the study once they agree to participate in the study. Each participant received my contact information along with an informed consent form which detailed the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and participation guidelines.

I emailed the informed consent form to the participants with a date for the returned document. Before the interviews, potential participants signed and returned an

informed consent form via email. Informed consent involves explaining: (a) the purpose

of the study, (b) how the research might contribute to the business, (c) the procedures for

conducting the study, and (d) the nature of the study. Furthermore, the informed consent

process includes an explanation about: (a) risks and benefits of participating in the study,

(b) compensation, (c) confidentiality, (d) contact information to request additional

information about the study, and (e) participant rights (Sanjari et al., 2014).

The informed consent form complied with IRB requirements and included the

study's purpose, the interview structure, and the request to record the interview.

Participants also received information about the jeopardies and benefits of contributing to

the study. Participants in this study volunteered and did not receive compensation.

Participants had the option to withdraw from the study at any time. To protect the identity

of participants, I used code names such as P1 and P2. Code names ensure confidentiality

(Spillane et al., 2017). All data from the study were safely put away in a fireproof safe

that I only have the means to access. I secured data for five years; after five years, the

data will be shredded and destroyed.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument for this multiple case study by using

semistructured interviews with five small fashion retail business owners. The different

methods to collect data are interviewing, document reviews, and observation (Jap, 2010).

The most common forms of data collection are interviews (individual or group),

questionnaires, surveys, and observations (Yin, 2018). With this research study, I

collected information through in-depth interviews with open-ended questions, over the

phone, or a virtual meeting such as WebEx with experienced fashion retail industry social media marketers in the fashion industry. The semistructured interviews contained 10 open-ended questions to explore how small fashion retail business owners use social media marketing to increase revenue.

I used organization documents such as sales reports and accounts receivable reports and review their social media presence to strengthen the study. The four triangulation types are (a) data triangulation, (b) investigator triangulations, (c) triangulation of theory, (d) method triangulation, and (e) environmental triangulation (Yin, 2018). Using triangulation could aid in collecting and analyzing data from numerous sources such as interviews and documents (Joslin & Müller, 2016; Yin, 2018). Conducting a case study should include using multiple sources of evidence (Yazan, 2015). I used data triangulation to compare and contrast each interview with documents regarding social media strategies and plans. The interview protocol assisted in obtaining data for this research and included an outline of what I said before the interview, interview questions, a reminder to ask the participants if they would like any information pertaining to the interview.

I obtained approval of my research proposal from Walden's IRB, and followed the ethical guidelines as outlined in the Belmont Report (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979). I conducted all interviews remotely via Zoom due to the COVID 19 pandemic outbreak. I used Zoom for video conferencing, once completed I saved the transcript from the interview. All participants completed and signed the informed consent form via e-mail as an unpaid participant, which allowed me to take notes and have the

conversation recorded. I transcribed the interviews using these audio recordings to increase data accuracy.

Data Collection Technique

Interviews are one of the best tools to obtain information about a phenomenon from the participant's perspective (DeMassis & Kotlar, 2014). I used semistructured interviews to collect data from small business owners who implement social media marketing to increase their business revenue.

The interview protocol for this study consisted of identifying study participants, establishing the interview length, and concentrating on the participants' experience as recommended by Castillo-Montoya (2016). Using a semistructured interview technique is an effective means for a qualitative researcher to collect rich data from the participants' point of view (Baškarada, 2014). Using semistructured interview techniques allowed me to engage with participants, gain knowledge from participants, and collect quality data.

The potential for researcher bias, steering participants, and overly controlling the interview are disadvantages of the semistructured interview technique (Vass et al., 2017). Conducting semistructured interviews, transcribing the audio recordings, and interpreting the meaning of the participants' responses is time-consuming, potentially laden with researcher bias, and results in large volumes of data in need of coding and labeling in preparation for data analysis (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

As noted by Yin (2018), case study researchers should collect data from multiple sources to engage in methodological triangulation, which improved the credibility of the research. I collected data from organizational documents to verify the information

collected through semistructured interviews. I used a document review as a data collection technique. Organization documents, interview data, and observations are essential to achieving triangulation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2018).

Member-checking refers to the research practice of securing feedback from study participants to strengthen the accuracy, validity, applicability, and credibility of interpreted responses (Emrich, 2015; Nyhan, 2015). Audio recording interviews can help ensure study participants' responses are accurately captured and described (Yin, 2018). Using a member-checking process, I provided participants the occasion to review and edit my written version of their responses to guarantee accuracy.

Data Organization Technique

I transcribed data accurately using notes taken during interviews. I used a research log to keep records from the meetings and transcribed audio recordings derived from interviews to identify recurring themes. Trace and Karadkar (2017) posited the significance of data organization because researchers may benefit from stored data when analyzing the data to understand developing themes. New themes can become apparent during the coding process (Batabyal & Chowdhury, 2015; Pasila et al., 2017; Yin, 2018).

The research log and all other relevant data remained stored safely for safekeeping in my home. I maintained an electronic database to store data (Munn & Branch, 2018) and used Microsoft Excel to manage data sources effectively (Yin, 2018). After five years of completing the study, I will destroy the data by shredding documents and erasing all digital information stored on an external hard drive. Researchers organize data into sets to manage the several systems of data received (Yin, 2018).

I stored study participants' information by creating a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel with participants' names. The spreadsheet included each participant's email address and whether the participants had signed the required consent document and other relevant information. The spreadsheet will remain in a password-protected file on an external hard drive, and I will eliminate it after five years. Researchers who store data securely and destroy the data after a specified timeframe help protect their study participants' privacy (Diesburg & Wang, 2010).

Spillane et al. (2017) noted that researchers should maintain participants' confidentiality by using code names within the published study. I clearly explained to participants that their personal and business names would not appear in the published research and that I used P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 to maintain their confidentiality. I coordinated research data using NVivo (Nassaji, 2015; Stuckey, 2015). I used Nvivo 12 for Windows to store the data for the study and NVivo's qualitative data organization software to upload and analyze data from NVivo. Using NVivo could aid in storing and organizing data within a study (Sarma, 2015; Woods et al., 2015). Using password-protected digital files with unique identification numbers could preserve data privacy and privacy (Alimo, 2015). To maintain security and confidentiality, I arranged the information in password-protected digital files.

At the end of the interview, I reminded each participant of the need for a 30-minute follow-up meeting to review my interpretation of their interview responses that I audio recorded. All electronic and hard copy files was stored securely in a fireproof safe.

Data Analysis Technique

I used thematic analysis to analyze the data collected. In qualitative research, thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning and expressing these findings as themes (Braun & Clarke, 2016). Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set. Different versions of thematic analysis are underpinned by different philosophical and conceptual assumptions and are divergent in terms of procedure. However, the most prevalent method used by qualitative researchers is found in Gareth et al. (2017), and is based on Braun and Clarke's (2016) method. I followed Braun and Clark's six steps in performing thematic analysis:

1. Gain familiarity with data.

2. Assign preliminary codes to your data in order to describe the content.

3. Search for patterns or themes in your codes across the different interviews.

4. Review themes.

5. Define and name themes.

6. Produce a research report.

Using qualitative software like NVivo aids in sorting, categorizing, and arranging data during data analysis (Woods et al., 2015; Zamawe, 2015). I used NVivo during the data analysis process to assemble data into a coherent order. Using a member-checking process, I transcribed the responses to the interview questions and send to the study participants to ensure that my interpretation is correct. Using member-checking could improve the credibility, validity, accuracy, and applicability of qualitative research by

giving participants an opportunity to verify the accuracy of the data collected (Yin, 2018). I started the data analysis process once study participants approved that my interpretation is accurate.

I used Yin's (2018) five phases to analyze the data: (a) compilation, (b) disassembly, (c) reassembly, (d) interpretation, and (e) closure. I disassembled the data into smaller sets after compiling the data. Disassembling data means making practical groupings after separating the data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Using coding protects the data of participants and establish the relationships between the coded information and the phenomenon (Emmel, 2015; Kelsey et al., 2017). Coding is often used by researchers to disassemble and reassemble data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). After disassembling, I used smaller data sets to create meaningful groupings.

After disassembling the data, I reassembled the information into groups for coding (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). In a qualitative study, the identification of themes is an important phase (Kelsey et al., 2017). Using coding establishes the relationship between the coded information and the phenomenon being studied (Emmel, 2015). Using thematic analysis, which requires an interpretation and integration of themes, I analyzed the data after reassembly. Interpreting data aided in identifying themes using thematic analysis involving the abstraction and synthesis of themes (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Padilla-Diaz, 2015). Castleberry and Nolen (2018) noted that using the experience of participants aided identifying the themes and relate themes to phenomena.

Upon arranging the data, analyzing the data broadly, and discovering regularities, I confirmed the conclusions and determine what trends stand out in the data between the

responses of the participants. Using quotes from respondents could aid in obtaining credibility (Madu, 2017). Using member-checking could aid in enhancing the validity of research findings (Emrich, 2015; Nyhan, 2015). Oghuma et al. (2016) referenced correlating the concepts associated with the literature and the theoretical context. Eventually, with the accompanying literature and the analytical context, I compared relevant topics from interviews and relevant company reports. The data analysis results can provide successful strategies for innovation used by hospital leaders to maintain business office productivity during a merger. I based my selection on NVivo being a more user-friendly software for coding data analysis to establish themes, and to sort, manage, and analyze the data I collected during interviews, direct observation, and review of documents.

Yin (2018) suggested using flowcharts to categorize the association between themes. I followed Yin's suggestion. I used reflexivity to evaluate themes I identified in the interview, through direct observation, and other documents. I continued to analyze the data for emerging themes until I achieve data saturation. When applicable, I used verbatim quotes of participants to support data analyses. The research question is congruent with the aim of the study. The style of the research question is different than the style of the interview questions; as the research questions formulates what I want to understand; whereas, the interview questions are what I ask participants to gain that understanding (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Patton (2015) posited that the hope of the interviewer is to elicit relevant answers that are meaningful and useful in understanding

the interviewee's perspective. Inquiry-based questions was used to gain specific

information related to the aims of the study (Patton, 2015).

Reliability and Validity

Essential components of scholarly research include the reliability and validity of

the data findings (Yin, 2018). Qualitative researchers' role is chief in creating excellence

and thoroughness by detailing their use of strategies to achieve credibility, dependability,

confirmability, and transferability. In the following subsections, I described how I

achieved validity and reliability. Qualitative reliability occurs when there are consistent

outcomes from different researchers' studies (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Reliability

helps to minimize bias. It is imperative to document procedures in a study to ensure

consistency (Kikooma, 2010). Validity refers to the appropriateness of the measures used,

the accuracy of the outcomes' analysis, and the data (Saeed & Meisam, 2018). Users

minimize error and bias when they establish, gather, and examine data critically (Trotter,

2012). I collected data thorough interviews with open-ended questions. The participants

shared their experiences using social media for marketing. Researchers who use an

interview code of behavior (Trotter, 2012) will strengthen the reliability, using a

discussion process for each interview.

Member-checking is the process of reviewing the study participant's ideas of

confirmation and collecting materials to develop categories (Emrich, 2015; Nyhan,

2015). Reliability and validity were typically characteristic of quantitative researcher

studies (Kasim & Al-Gahuri, 2015), but contemplating dependability, credibility,

transferability, and confirmability reliability and validity are reconsidered qualitative

research criteria (Thomas & Avenier, 2015). I used the reliability and validity criteria to strengthen this study.

A key difference between quantitative and qualitative researchers is that qualitative researchers typically use four criteria to confirm that their study is reliable and valid. The four criteria are dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Wang & Lien, 2013). Dependability refers to the reproducibility of study findings through a transparent process containing limitations and the study's anticipated contribution (Connelly, 2016; Yin, 2018). Credibility and transferability are associated with validity, while confirmability is a theoretical viewpoint of objectivity (Kornbluh, 2015; Yin, 2018). Reliability involves the researcher's ability to repeat a previous research design and yield the same findings (Saunders et al., 2014). As the researcher, I was mindful of potential bias and try to mitigate it as recommended by Keeble et al. (2015). I followed the interview protocol to ensure the reliability of findings during face-to-face interviews (see Appendix B).

Dependability

Consistency and dependability are essential in qualitative research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Mitigating bias helps to ensure reliability when conducting research. While researching, I remained neutral and remain objective while collecting data and using member checking to avoid bias. Participants are allowed to validate the researcher's understanding of their responses through member checking (Yin, 2018).

Member checking is used by qualitative researchers to ensure the credibility of the study (Birt et al., 2016) and help mitigate bias through validation and confirmation of

accuracy of the experiences and perspectives of the participants as noted in the interviews (Thomas, 2017). After transcribing the interviews, I summarized and interpreted the participants' responses. To assure accuracy, I scheduled a follow-up meeting using Zoom video conferencing software to review the summary and my interpretation of the interview held with each participant. Participants had the opportunity to confirm, clarify, correct, or add to their initial responses, which should ensure the reliability and validity of the collected data.

Confirmability and Transferability

Yin (2018) suggested researchers maintain a clear, logical, and organized audit trail during the research to ensure confirmability. Member checking through transcript review is an aspect of member checking to ensure that the truth exists (Anney, 2014). Establishing truth will help to develop confirmability and increase the quality of the study results. I gathered the participants' responses through interviews, validated the responses through member checking, and triangulated it.

Transferability

Unlike generalizability, transferability does not involve broad claims, but invites readers to make connections between elements of a study and their own experience (Yin, 2018). Transferability will be enhanced by my describing the research context, and the assumptions central to the study. The person who wishes to "transfer" the results to a different context is responsible for making the judgment of how applicable the transfer might be.

Confirmability

Marshall and Rossman (2016) explained that confirmability occurs during the process of record-keeping of data. Researchers must maintain a logical audit trail during research to confirm it the research findings (Yin, 2018). I kept an organized audit trail during the investigation to ensure confirmability. Fusch and Ness (2015) explain that researchers should achieve data saturation to ensure that research findings are confirmed.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I provided detailed information on my role as the researcher, participant selection, confidentiality of the participants, discussed the research question, method, and design that will shape this study. I reviewed the relevant literature, ethical considerations, data collection instruments, techniques, data organization techniques, data analysis, reliability, and validity related to the study. This qualitative multiple case study explores strategies that small business leaders need to implement social media marketing to help increase revenue and business presence. The data collection and analysis steps will be suitable for exploring effective social media marketing strategies used by small fashion retail business leaders. Section 3 contains the presentation of the findings, recommendations for action and research, and my overall reflection of the study. Moreover, section 3 includes an explanation of the data collection process, the results of my study, application to professional practice, the implications for social change, and recommendations for further actions of the research study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the social media marketing strategies that some small business owners use in the fashion retail industry to increase revenue. I collected data from semistructured interviews and reviewed archival documents and physical artifacts of the participants' social media marketing strategic plans along with websites to conduct methodological triangulation. The TAM theory was the conceptual framework. The three themes that developed from the data analysis were (a) use of a variety of social media platforms, (b) evolving social media marketing, and (c) customer relationship management. I interviewed five small business owners in Atlanta, Georgia; who were successful implementing social media marketing strategies to meet or exceed revenue goals for five years. The participant's experiences could benefit other social media marketing strategies that some small business owners in the fashion industry to meet or exceed revenue goals. All participants agreed that social media platforms was beneficial to their business success. The use of social media tools could increase customer retention.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question was; what strategies do owners in the fashion industry use to implement social media marketing plans to increase revenue? The data sources were semistructured interviews and a review of archival documents. I conducted semistructured interviews with five fashion retail business owners from Georgia. Prior to scheduling interviews, study participants consented to participate in the study via email.

Participants' interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom to adhere to Walden University's directive due to the COVID 19 pandemic. I also reviewed relevant company documentation including financial logs which showed how much money was earned during sales events and spent on social media marketing. I also reviewed company websites and social media pages across various social media platforms to better understand how the social media marketing strategies were carried out. Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes. To ensure each study participant's confidentiality, I identified them as P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5.

I used Yin's (2018) five steps for thematic analysis: (a) collecting the data, (b) separating the data into groups, (c) regrouping the data into themes, (d) assessing the information, and (e) developing conclusions. Semistructured interviews collected data with open-ended questions. I analyzed data collected from participants' answers to interview questions and company archival documentation. Data interpretation was based on participants' responses to the interview questions and shared my interpretations with the participants to validate their responses and mitigate bias. The NVivo 12 software was used to code data via word frequency searches. I identified recurring themes which allowed me to concentrate on items related to the overarching research question and the TAM theory. Data saturation was achieved with the original number of participants because there was no new information inconsistent with previous answers and document review by the end of the interviews. I recorded, transcribed, coded, and reviewed transcripts via member checking for all participants. Using NVivo 12 helped me identify three significant themes that morphed from the data analysis, which were (a) use of social

media platforms, (b) the impact of social media marketing, and (c) customer relationship management. All three themes correspond with the social media strategies the participants used to generate growth in sales.

The findings of this study substantiated the claim that, small business retail owners in the fashion industry use social media marketing to generate sales growth. TAM theory was the conceptual framework for this study, it increased my understanding of the social media strategies SMM use in Atlanta Georgia successfully to generate sales growth. A prior study found a positive relationship between social media marketing and the buying behavior of consumers (Lamberton & Stephenson, 2016). All five participants commented that social media helped them to engage with existing customers and promote their business.

In 2021, the number of active social media users reached 7.7 billion worldwide (Dean, 2021). Due to the rise in time people spend on social media consumers who are influenced by social media are more likely to make online purchases. All five participants stated that social media aided with building their business at little to no cost.

The participants responded to 10 open-ended interview questions, which varied in scope and allowed me to gain insights into how small business owners use social media marketing strategies to generate growth in sales. All five participants attested to posting content across different social media platforms consistently as part of their business strategy to engage new customers. I used member checking to ensure the validity of the research data. At the end of each interview, member checking was conducted by summarizing the data and asking participants to correct any error in my interpretation of

the data. In the following sections, I discussed the three emergent themes and their

relationship to the literature and the conceptual framework used in this study.

Theme 1: Use of a Variety of Social Media Platforms

The first theme that emerged from the data analysis was the use of a variety of

social media platforms. Detailed information was provided by participants to help gain a

clear understanding of participant's social media usage and to allow comparisons of the

participants' usage. The participants used social media to engage with their existing and

potential customers promptly and direct communication at a low cost than traditional

communication tools. The first theme identified revealed participants' responses to small

business owners' social media platforms to generate sales growth. All the participants

used Facebook and other platforms as a source to communicate with customers. Fan and

Gordon (2014) claimed business owners use social media platforms as marketing tools to

reach potential customers. However, 92% of the participants found Instagram useful for

their social media marketing (SMM) strategy.

The study participants used a variety of social media platforms to communicate

new product launches, product information to their customers. The three platforms of

social media are the basis of this theme: (a) Facebook, (b) Instagram, and (c) Twitter.

Thematic analysis was based on collected data from the participants' websites, social

media pages, responses to interview questions, and a review of their organizational

documentation.

I reviewed businesses' website content, it revealed marketing tools P1, P2, P3,

and P4 used. For example, my analysis of the participant's social media presence

revealed that P1, P2 used Instagram as a tool to post pictures of products, tag products for sale to the main website, and Instagram advertisements. P1 revealed, "we use Instagram and of course our physical store, umm you know we run ads, and we, of course, have the in-store foot traffic, and then look through the referrals." P1 used Instagram live to promote new fashion collections, new products, gain customer's feedback, and boost sales and revenue. On the P1s Instagram page, a saved live with over 231k views of the live video session. P1 postulated, "I can communicate with my customer base best using Instagram." P1 used the live video with a model to showcase new product launches. Similarly, P3 used Instagram live to show new products to customers and had over 1K views on a video showcasing Spring dresses.

P1 allowed me to review the store's 60-page business plan and financial documents. One component of the business plan was the marketing plan. The marketing plan revealed the use of several SMM platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram. An analysis of the businesses' social media channels revealed that the participants used social media to post videos showcasing products, advertise new and sale inventory, and promote sales and discounts. The financial documents substantiated an increase in-store and online sales following the implementation of the use of these platforms.

P4 explained, "in the marketing plan that Instagram and Facebook were placed on my website homepage to pop-up with a deal for customers to like and follow their business pages." P2 and P3 used Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. P4 explained that this pop-up feature on the website homepage, provides a discount code for savings on any

purchases or free shipping which boost sales. In addition, customers who liked their social media platforms such an Instagram would receive a discount code. According to Agung and Darma (2019), numerous businesses have chosen Instagram to focus on photo and video content to support their marketing activities. P3 revealed that after posting a flyer for a free item which any purchase for customers on her Instagram page, her online traffic increased significantly and yielded an increase in sales. Bandyopadhyay (2016) highlighted that customer engagement through an interactive platform such as social media is a necessity to the success, and sometimes survival, of small businesses.

Oliveira and Martins (2011) used the TAM better understand new technology adoption. P1 explained that the business recently created a TikTok page, but they have difficulty posting consistently due to making videos. Users need to believe that the system is valuable and easy to use and navigate to accept the system (Davis, 1989). P1 stated, "We are trying to get the hang of TikTok because our customers use it." This barrier to constantly adapt to new technology can somewhat be stressful. P1 stated, "staying on top of these new platforms is like a job in itself." P1 revealed that, "hiring someone who could master TikTok and the constant changes of the other platforms would be ideal." This statement shows that not being able to manage SMM effectively can be a barrier for small businesses.

Facebook

All participants used Facebook daily to post products, post-sales and videos of their clothing (new and on sale) to increase sales. P5 postulated, "I can reach a more extensive customer base using Facebook." P5 used Facebook live to promote different

products. P5 specifically used Facebook live feature every Friday to showcase new inventory on a model.

P1, P2, and P5 stated that they use Facebook to generate growth in sales. P1 said, "We run targeted ads through Facebook that also run on Instagram." All participants mentioned that Facebook is a social media marketing platform that aids with communicating with customers and reach potential customers. P1 has been in business for 11 years and has grown through the use of Facebook advertising. P2 noted that the Facebook chat feature helped with providing real-time feedback to customers. P5 uses Facebook to tag products directly linked to their website for purchases or purchases through the Facebook shop. 93.7% of businesses use and are active on Facebook. P2 uses Facebook since its 14 years in existence. Most recently, P2 uses the Facebook "Like" feature on its posts to determine inventory control. P2 stated, "When we post a new product, based on the likes and comments, we can forecast if we need to buy more inventory." Using varying words, P1, P2, and P5 confirmed Facebook as a marketing tool that helps to increase sales growth.

Instagram

All participants used Instagram regularly to post pictures and videos of their clothing items to increase sales. P1 mainly used Instagram to run ads promoting new and ongoing sales. P3 and P5 started using Instagram after mastering the use of Facebook as a marketing platform. P2 reported that the use of visual content and hashtags on their posts help their business page become discovered by potential customers online and the physical store.

All participants mentioned having customer following them online and making a purchase online or at their physical store through using Instagram as a marketing tool. I asked participants the following question: "How do you track progress, success, and engagement of your social media marketing strategy to sell fashion brands and products?" P4 shared, "Instagram offers like an insights feature, I can track the number of accounts that we have reached, the interactions and so I can compare the data." Consumers frequently turn to several social media platforms to conduct searches and obtain information before purchasing (Vollmer & Precourt, 2008). Lee and Carlson (2015) reported that Instagram is a visual platform that business owners use to reach current and potential customers as a way of communicating, collaborating, and creating value through picture content.

Twitter

Twitter is a microblogging social media platform for messaging instantly "tweets" and texting (Liu et al., 2017). Four participants stated that they have Twitter accounts. However, only two use the platform. P3 used Twitter as a social media marketing tool to announce sales events to reach customers. P5 mentioned that they created a Twitter account when they established their online store. P5 mentioned that their competitors use Twitter to follow suit, and post at least three times per week. P1 and P2 have Twitter accounts but do not consistently use them for marketing purposes. P4 did not have a presence on Twitter.

Through the semistructured interview process, participants had the opportunity to share their views and experiences using social media platforms. All participants revealed

that although Twitter enabled them to listen to consumer opinion, it was not greatly

viewed as a useful marketing tool. However, P4 stated that Twitter was not a good fit for

her business to connect with customers. P4 said, "friends had told me about having a

Twitter page because we did everything on Facebook, but Facebook is a user-friendly

site." Twitter did not help to increase sales for P4, but Facebook did. All participants

revealed that the other social media platforms that allow website links and inclusion of

media were beneficial.

YouTube

YouTube is a content community that became available for individuals to use in

2005 (Smith et al., 2018). Only P2 has a YouTube channel that is used for social media

marketing. P2 used YouTube to showcase past fashion shows for the business. P2 stated

that YouTube is only used to post fashion shows and hauls from fashion influencers that

they collaborate with monthly. YouTube is mainly used as an online video platform but is

integrated with the company website to showcase past fashion events and celebrations.

TikTok

TikTok is a relatively new social media platform, it has grown rapidly and is an

important source of brand awareness for Gen Z social media users. There are actively

over 800 million users worldwide between 16-24 years old. TikTok, if used correctly, can

assist small business advertising through word-of-mouth marketing. Through the online

Zoom interview process, participants had the opportunity to share their experiences using

social media platforms to market their products. P3 stated, "TikTok videos are a fun and

creative way for us to show off new clothes to our customers." Creating engaging content

through TikTok creates a fun environment for engaging customers. P2 explained, "using interactive posts through TikTok in the store with employees has brought in customers. They see these videos in clothing with the music and then they want to come in and see for themselves."

P1 confirmed challenges using TikTok as a social media marketing tool. The TAM model posits that perceived usefulness is essential in determining an individual's acceptance and use of information technology (Yoon & Kim, 2007). P1 said, "making videos and matching it with music is hard - I like to just play a song or none at all and post to FB or IG." All five participants' responses were positive about using social media platforms to develop marketing strategies to increase revenue. Adopting a social media tool was in line with TAM theory, there was a perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of the platforms.

I reviewed documents from all five participants. I reviewed the social media platforms for the businesses. Findings revealed that the organizational documentation aligns with the conclusions of the semi structured interviews. All participants confirmed that the use of social media platforms is suitable for their business; it helped to connect with customers, boost sales and increase revenue.

Correlation to the Literature

Business owners use a variety of social media to communicate with customers and increase sales and review. Agung and Darma (2019) found that online marketers should be more active in learning about social media, boosting motivation, and improving communication with customers. Small business owners in the fashion retail industry

could use social media platforms to communicate with customers (Appleby, 2016). Social media allows consumers and small businesses to interact and change brand management dynamics, affecting brand performance positively or negatively (Gensler et al., 2013). Participants that were active on social media platforms gained real- time feedback on products from customers. According to Sajid (2016), participants facilitated communication with customers during live videos and converted them into positive or negative feedback. Participants in the study revealed that actively using social media as a marketing strategy has aided their business growth. Karimi and Nahibi (2015) revealed that customers were using social media platforms. As a result, small business owners are more involved in social media to reach potential and existing customers.

All participants confirmed that using social media platforms as a marketing strategy was a successful way to meet their customers globally, build customer relationships and increase sales and revenue. Cui et al. (2018) claimed that small businesses' successful adoption of social media depends on how well business owners use social media. All participants use their social media platforms to communicate with customers, share and reply to messages and boost engagement with existing and potential customers. Almost 20% of small businesses employ social media as an essential element of the online marketing technique (Sajid, 2016). All participants used Facebook and Instagram to communicate with customers. Instagram has been the most influential social media platform which aids business owners to share photo and video content both live and saved (Agung & Darma, 2019). Participants use Facebook to post reviews about products and customer service experiences.

Relevance to the Conceptual Framework

Theme 1, the use of a variety of social media platforms aligns with the TAM theory, which is the conceptual framework used in this study. Davis developed TAM to predict user acceptance of technologies (Venkatesh, 2014). There are two constructs within this model: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU); Ashraf et al., 2014). PU believes that technology will help to obtain a goal and increase overall job performance. PEOU believes that using technology would require little or no effort (Venkatesh, 2014). All participants used this new way of networking to reach current and potential customers through various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. All participants were asked, "How did your perception of the ease of use of social marketing compare with the actual use of social media marketing?" P3 responded, "I felt like it was going to be simple because personally, I use social media, IG, FB, Twitter are really easy to use." All participants use social media platforms to promote seasonal sales and special promotions on products online and in-store. P1 and P5 commented that using Instagram was due to the live feature that allows them to speak to a large audience in real-time. Word of Mouth (WOM) was a driving force for a boost in sales. P1 stated, "Customer loyalty is important to me, referrals are important to me- I actually give 10% off for customers who refer." Moreover, as their businesses gain popularity, their brand circulated through customers connected to social media sites.

The five study participants' responses aligned with the constructs of the TAM theory. Perceived usefulness is the most potent construct of TAM (Davis, 1989). Users need to believe that the system is valuable and easy to use and navigate to accept the

system (Davis, 1989). All participants stated that Facebook and Instagram were the primary social media platforms to create a marketing strategy due to their ease of use. In this study, all participants described their use of social media platforms to market to their customers because of their cost-effectiveness and efficiency in reaching a large population.

According to He et al. (2017), social media provides online platforms for small businesses to market and brand their products or services and manage customer relationships. Most organizational leaders know that social media is effective, but leaders remain uncertain regarding the appropriate time to replace or supplement other forms of communication with evolving technologies (Lamberton & Stephenson, 2016).

Theme 2: Evolving Social Media Marketing (SMM)

Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube are present in customers daily lives for interaction amongst friends and as a source of information. SMM allows small businesses to become Omni-present. All participants, in various ways, stated that continuously customizing SMM, strategies led to an increase in sales. Participants described benefits from the adoption of social media, including customer engagement, real-time feedback, and business exposure.

Online Advertising

Schlinke and Crain (2013) found that small business owners must have a strategy to inform, educate, and engage their customers. Small business owners in the fashion industry implement SMM strategies to reach potential customers and communicate with existing customers. P2 found that traditional marketing strategies were outdated and did

not meet her clients where they are; however, implementing paid targeted Facebook and Instagram ads as an SMM strategy work better. P2, in the past, would print digital catalogs and hand them out to customers in the area to later only find these flyers on the street as the liter. Traditional printing was no longer effective due to the digital age in which we live. P2 revealed that targeted advertisements aligned with her customer base and their friend's network led to an organic increase in Facebook and Instagram followers. P3 stated, "customers see our ads in their Instagram and Facebook feed and click it to get more information about a product and sometimes get coupons." Fashion is a highly competitive industry. As a result, Instagram advertising can cost up to $3.50 per click. Small businesses who set up Instagram and Facebook promotions can customize the promotion with a budget and duration to reach a target audience once the advertisement is approved. The Instagram application provides a "Promote" icon that allows businesses to promote a post and track how many people are seeing the promoted post. P1 stated, "Instagram offers an insights feature, so I am able to compare the data." In varying ways, P1 and P3 found online advertising through social media beneficial for their business needs.

Word-of-Mouth (WOM) Marketing

All five participants revealed that using WOM marketing was beneficial. It serves as an essential way to promote their small business and a great way for customers to share feedback and ideas on a brand. P1 attributed their customer growth to WOM marketing. P3 revealed that word-of-mouth plays a role in the business as customers modeled the brands during special events, which brought other customers into the store.

P4 revealed that when customers post photos, their friends looked at the photos, liked the photos, and many visited the store and website to make similar purchases. P5 commented that through the use of social media influencers with a larger Instagram following, customers followed their social media page and make online purchases.

All participants discussed that positive marketing was a suitable strategy for their business. P2 argued that several customers would say similar things, such as, "I saw this shirt X influencer was wearing on Instagram, and I wanted to purchase it." P3 posited that WOM marketing had been the principal aspect of success for the business. All participants' use of WOM marketing correlates with Berger and Iyengar (2013) who found WOM marketing as an effective way for exchanging marketing information.

WOM and SMM are connected because a customer's opinion or experience with a retail store whether negatively or positively has the potential of being spread through social media. Customers communicate with their followers their experience with a brand through posts, tags in photographs and comments (Kang, 2019). The conversation about brands on social media further contributes to WOM. One social media post has the potential to engage several thousand social media users at once (Kang, 2019). It is important for businesses to manage customer posts as there is potential benefits from positive WOM and SMM.

Posts

All participants mentioned that they posted pictures of their clothing items on Facebook and Instagram, which helped increase sales. All claimed that posting clear photos of the products with models was the most effective way to show products. P5

stated that consistent posts generate customer comments on the posts, walk-ins to the store to fit clothes, and direct messages to Facebook and Instagram. P1 and P3 post new products weekly with models and a professional photographer. All participants use hashtags in a comment on all photograph posts. Hashtags help posts on Instagram become more visible. P3 stated, "we love hashtags too; it helps our boutique become discoverable." Agung and Derma (2019) found that posting Instagram hashtags can help increase sales for business owners.

In this study, the participants' practices align with Lee and Carlson's (2015) findings in that social media is one method for business sustainability. All participants agreed that when their customers posted photos on Instagram, sales increased. The strategy of posting photographs and videos to generate customer engagement and sales supports the TAM theory.

During the interview process, I reviewed company archival documentation, such as business ledgers, photographs, and participants' websites in this study. P1 had archival documents that I checked; this included a business ledger and photos. The business has been at its physical location for over 15 years. The business owner shared logs since its existence to its current integration of an online store through Shopify. On P1s Facebook, the company shared old photos collaborating with a local women's shelter giving back and other community events. P2 provided a business plan and emails. P2s business plan supported another small retail business location out of state. Emails provided by P2 endorsed the need to have a set marketing budget for Instagram ads and the ROI on these ads, which include monthly expenses of ($3,000.00), profit forecasts. P2s Twitter

contained old tweets celebrating its 5th anniversary and in-store photos from its
remodeling.

The interviews with all participants revealed that, consistently engaging with
customers is an essential factor in SMM strategies. All participant website pages linked to
their social media platforms, and two out of five participants had their Instagram feed on
the homepage. Integrating social media platforms with business websites is beneficial.
P1: noted that adding social sharing links, creating social login options, and reminding
website visitors to subscribe to their social platform all helped increase sales.

Theme 3: Customer Relationship Management

According to Rahimi and Kozak (2017), marketers have shifted from
transactional to customer relationship marketing. Customer relationship management
(CRM) is more about people, providing customer service, ensuring that the customers are
first, and using social media platforms to connect with customers. Social media has
shifted how small business leaders implement their CRM practices (Felix et al., 2016).
Social media platforms allow customers to give praise or negative feedback on their
customer experience. This feedback can positively or adversely affect the brand image of
a small business (Schaupp & Bélanger, 2014). Whether an online user praises or
negatively critiques a post, this feedback can be quickly spread through reposts, retweets
and can have a negative or positive impact on a brand.

CRM strategies to help improve the relationships with customers and the delivery
of services. All participants took pride in promoting customer relationships. P1, P2, and
P3 discussed the importance of loyalty and placing the customers first. P1 claimed that

P1's business had been operational for a long time because of the love and loyalty from people and the delivery of good customer service.

Social media platforms provide an avenue for small business owners to build relationships with existing and potential customers; this is evident in the findings of this study. P3 stated, "I monitor our Instagram account daily and look out for notifications because I can reply to a customer immediately about anything - whether its sizing questions or questions about the material of a dress." P1, P3, and P4 revealed the high value that customers have on their businesses. All five participants understood the importance of establishing excellent customer relationships and pride themselves in ensuring customer satisfaction. I found participants' emphasis on the importance of excellent customer relationships by examining feedback customers provided through the participants' websites.

P2 noted, "I have connected with so many customers over the years. I've styled them for baby showers, bridal showers- you name it." The responses from the participants confirmed the importance of customer relationship management. Customer relationship management is critical to marketing as it helps build relationships with existing customers and develops long-term commitment (Armstrong & Kotler, 2015). There are two main categories related to CRM: (a) brand and customer loyalty and (b) the influence on consumer behavior. All participants noted the necessity to treat customers well, and keep customers engaged through social media platforms. All five participants confirmed in their various responses that ensuring customer loyalty was key to a successful and thriving business. All participants in this study used social media to create

and maintain high-quality interactions. P4 noted that the staff at her boutique try to establish meaningful relationships to build long-last customers. P5 found that building trust amongst customers has a significant role in retaining customers, thus increasing revenue.

Secret discount codes for repeat customers were also used to build interaction with customers. During different seasons and for customer's birthdays, P1 gives discount codes to show appreciation. P1 revealed, "when a customer is shopping for her birthday, and she gets like 15% off- she's more than likely going to buy more things and will shop with us everything year for her birthday." Customers who have a positive shopping experience, whether online or in-store, tend to make repeat purchases. P4 stated, "everyone wants to look good and feel good; it's my goal to ensure my customers feel good, it builds customer loyalty."

Engaging with customers face-to-face or through email campaigns, is an effective social media marketing strategy to help boost sales. P3 revealed that engaging with customers consistently will help with relationship building and is an essential strategy. Schaupp and Bélanger (2014) explained small business owners, through engagement in an SMM strategy, could increase sales through relationship building with customers.

Brand and Customer Loyalty

Brand loyalty refers to the level of commitment from a consumer to making repeat purchases from the same brand. P5 claimed that "customers who you make feel special typically always return." Incentives and rewards are one way to leverage the benefits to customers. P2 confirmed that "most of my customer's lookout for my seasonal

sales, especially my end of year one." All participants understood the importance of treating customers with respect and fairly.

The impact of social media on customer purchase decisions can be explained by factors such as: social proof and social media penetration. User social proof occurs when users recommend products and services based on their experiences with a brand. P1 correlated this with the following statement, "All my sales last winter came from referrals from Instagram posts." P1 further added, "Instagram is such an amazing platform because it gives you so many opportunities to show off your products with photos, videos, and reposts of your customers in my stories, posts, and my IGTV videos."

In my analysis of data collected, I found that P1, P2, and P3 posted pictures of customers from in-store purchases, reposts of the customer's events on their social media platforms wearing their brands. I also found personalized remarks from P2, posting the following statement: "Everyone loved my dress tonight" I also found that P1, P2, and P3 regularly reached out to their customers to get feedback through social media in the hope that customers would come into their store to attend events and purchase merchandise. P2's and P3's websites consisted of photographs of different events, providing evidence of the business owners' support to community activities.

Correlation to the Literature

Men and Muralidharan (2017) found that social media affects a business's image, reputation, and customer relationship. Social media has become a communication toolbox for external stakeholders, including customers and potential customers. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube are tools used to engage customers. P1, P2,

and P3 found that their social media, such as website presence and customer interactions, helped them gain insight into customers. All participants agreed that long-term customer relationships are an essential part of their business strategy.

When small business leaders use social media to build communities online, existing and potential consumers can view products, services, and all posted reviews that could lead to brand trust and loyalty (Laroche et al., 2012). P1 revealed that her business has a Fashion community group on Facebook, where she encourages her customers to join and post fashion inspiration posts and celebrities in outfits. P1 stated, "my followers love Jennifer Lopez, so every other week, I like to post her outfits as inspiration for styling."

Relevance to the Conceptual Framework

The findings of this study align with Davis' (1989) technology acceptance model (TAM) theory's key constructs, which are perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). The participants PU led them to seek out a variety of platforms to market their businesses. PEOU allows people to modify the content on their chosen platforms often (Venkatesh, 2014). This was the case with participants in this study. All five participants took pride in being able to modify their online messages and promote customer relationships constantly. P1, P2, and P5 discussed the importance of loyalty and placing the customers first when changing their online presence to benefit their customers: P1 stated, "we have been in business for as long as we have because of our customer service- we make all customers feel like celebrities."

According to Elena (2016), an organization that adopts CRM as a present and future strategy will build better relationships with customers, grow its business, and gain customer trust and loyalty. P2 claimed, "word of mouth marketing and referrals is how I get my sales- especially through Instagram." P5 shared that most of their sales came through Instagram shares, as customers and potential customers shared posts of their products and communicated with one another. Social media technologies can successfully improve how small businesses manage relationships with existing and potential customers (Cesaroni & Consoli, 2015). The study's findings align with the TAM theory.

Applications to Professional Practice

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore social media marketing strategies business owners use to increase revenue in the fashion industry. Small business owners could use the information presented in this study to create a marketing strategy to help their small businesses effectively use social media platforms to increase revenue. Small business owners in the retail industry can develop social media marketing strategies using social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube.

The three themes that developed from the data analysis were (a) Use of a variety of Social Media Platforms, (b) Evolving Social Media Marketing, and (c) Customer Relationship Management. Aligning with the first theme, the participants described various social media platforms that small business owners could use to increase revenue. In this study, the participants found Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter easy to use and

communicate with customers quickly. Similarly, supporting the second theme, the participants noted the impact of SMM and the evolving of social media marketing as a cost-effective marketing tool.

Finally, in theme 3, customer relationship management, discussed the importance of customer service and referrals. Brand loyalty and customer loyalty increase trust and relationship building between small business owners and customers, thus resulting in customer retention and an increase in revenue. Small business owners could use the results of the finding from this study to increase their knowledge on the strategies social media marketing used to increase revenue.

Implications for Social Change

The findings from the study may provide small business owners with helpful marketing strategies with various social media platforms to increase revenue. Alharbi and Drew (2014) believed that TAM accepts social technology that predicts behavioral intention and attitude toward use. All small business owners should learn how to use social media platforms because it allows business owners to communicate with, listen to, and learn from existing and potential customers through real-time communication. Social media posts can be used to drive traffic to a business website. Sharing content from a website to social channels enables readers to be aware of new posts as soon as they are available. Throughout this study, I confirmed that a small business owner could use SMM strategies to engage with customers, help potential customers make informed purchase decisions, respond to negative feedback, and provide real-time customer

service. Using various social media platforms to market is cost-effective and still an effective way to engage your target audience.

SMM strategies can positively improve how small businesses perform. Small business owners could use the results of this study to create marketing and business plans to improve the business longevity and resilience in the community. They were also increasing community relations by allowing customers to communicate on businesses' social media pages. Business owners could implement SMM strategies to improve communication between the community and businesses.

Recommendations for Action

In this qualitative multiple case study, I explored social media marketing strategies small businesses use to increase revenue. The findings can benefit small business leaders in the fashion retail industry who would like to use social media platforms as a marketing tool to increase revenue. I have three recommendations for small business owners to consider. First, small business owners should determine in their marketing plan which social media platforms are easier to use based on user experience, and which are most beneficial for their business and target customers. Second, I would recommend that small business owners create a marketing plan. All participants had a social media marketing plan of some sort. However, not all participants actively followed their plans and had complete consistency. A further recommendation is that a quantitative study be conducted to determine the relationship between the use of social media and the amount of revenue generated from different social media platforms. Finally, I would recommend that small business owners share the outcome of their social media marketing

plans with their team and or the person responsible for managing the social media platforms. This would be useful to analyze the outcomes, evaluate the return on any investment made, and strategize.

Participants in this study will be provided with a one- or two-page summary of the study's findings via e-mail if they are interested. Plans also include publishing this study in the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database. I have also identified opportunities to present the research findings in business meetings and other relevant forums.

Recommendations for Further Study

I conducted a multiple-case qualitative study to explore social media marketing strategies some business owners use to increase revenue in the fashion industry. The findings of this study may serve as a foundation for research on social media marketing strategies. To further increase the understanding of social media marketing strategies in small businesses, I recommend future research to address the critical limitation of this study: geographic location and sample size. Social media offers an easy and low-cost way for potential customers to express interest in a small business.

The study only focused on successful small business owners in the fashion retail industry in Atlanta, Georgia. Small business owners in other geographical locations may have different social media marketing strategies or other strategies to increase revenue. Social media generates a large amount of data about customers in real-time. This information can be used to make business decisions and to further research. Future researchers could use a larger sample size; this may reveal more insights.

The study included only business owners, and this may have excluded others who may have implemented successful social media marketing strategies but were not included because they are not business owners. Future researchers might consider conducting a quantitative study to test the themes that emerged from this study.

Reflections

The Walden University's Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program has been a challenging yet gratifying experience. I began the program in search of pursuing my long-time dream of obtaining a doctoral degree in business. Overcoming challenges such as identifying a research topic, developing a problem statement, crafting the research question and interview questions, securing participants, collecting data, studying, understanding the data analysis software, and analyzing the data required thorough planning and determination. Reflecting on the journey, I appreciate the meticulous details required to conduct credible research. I chose to research SMM strategies based on my interest to know more about social media and how small business owners use it to increase revenue for their business. At some point in my career, I plan to become a small business consultant. This study would allow me to learn about the immense benefits of social media marketing and strategies. Overall, I wanted to know how social media marketing could be a driving factor in increasing revenue.

All researchers have personal biases, preconceived ideas, and standards that could impact their data collection and analysis. I did my best to eliminate my own biases, conduct my research without using environments where I work or have worked and excluded relatives and friends as participants. All interviews were conducted virtually. In

addition, I used an interview protocol (see Appendix B) to ensure the consistency of interview questions during my conversation with study participants. I also conducted member-checking via emails with participants to corroborate my interpretations of the data I collected.

The study enhanced my knowledge of research. Also, I learned the challenges that small business owners face using social media platforms and the competition they face with larger firms. I will take the lessons learned at Walden University with me on my journey and pay it forward to assist others on their doctoral journey and small businesses.

Summary and Study Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore social media marketing strategies some business owners use to increase revenue in the fashion industry. I conducted semistructured interviews with five small business owners who successfully used social media strategies to increase revenue. The participants provided information through interviews and archival document review. The participants in the study are located in Atlanta, Georgia. All participants openly shared data on their social media marketing strategies to increase revenue.

Archival organizational documentation from the participants' websites also allowed me to review photographs, business plans, marketing plans, and financial reports. Participants shared numerous pictures of customers and events to engage customers and increase sales. Using the websites, I was able to gain invaluable knowledge from the financial reports, testimonials, and social media marketing plans. Participants found social media platforms s an ideal way to market their products and to communicate with

potential and existing customers. I collected data using methodological triangulation of two data sources: interviews and archival organizational documentation. I used archival document review and interview data from the study participants to ensure the consistency of meaning I found during the interview process.

The results of this study aligned with the evidence that I found in the current research that business owners using social media marketing strategies could increase revenue. The data collected from the participants' interviews and document review, I found that business owners who use social media marketing platforms can develop cost-effective strategies. All participants confirmed that using some SMM helped increase revenue.

Rogers (2003) provided strategies to analyze and assess organizational growth through innovations of SMM tools to sustain business activity. Small business owners could look at their business practices and develop procedures to ensure appropriate SMM strategies and methods to support themselves long term. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube were the mentioned social media marketing platforms used by the five participants in the study. All participants enjoyed using these platforms because they are free. They can reach a broad number of customers worldwide can provide real-time feedback to existing and potential customers. Moreover, the participants revealed that developing relationships with their customers fostered personal and professional growth contributed to small business profitability.

The findings from this study may provide small business owners with data to sustain their success in business using social media platforms. All participants of the

study have successful social media marketing strategies as their primary marketing strategy. Participants' responses confirmed the importance of using social media marketing to increase revenue and that business owners' use of social media to communicate with customers foster long-lasting relationships and increase sales through WOM. Also, WOM could create positive social outcomes and improve the sustainability of small businesses. All participants agreed that repeat business creates stability and success. Based on the findings from the study, I conclude that implementing social media marketing strategies aids small business owners in increasing revenue. Whether a small business is just getting started or has been active on social media platforms for years, there is always room for improvement. It is essential to be mindful that each platform has different uses.

References

Agnihotri, R., Gabler, C. B., Itani, O. S., Jaramillo, F., & Krush, M. T. (2017).

Salesperson ambidexterity and customer satisfaction: Examining the role of

customer demandingness, adaptive selling, and role conflict. *Journal of Personal*

Selling & Sales Management, 37, 27-41. doi:10.1080/08853134.2016.1272053

Agung, N. F. A., & Darma, G. S. (2019). Opportunities and challenges of instagram

algorithm in improving competitive advantage. *International Journal of*

Innovative Science and Research Technology, 4, 743-747. https://www.ijisrt.com

Ainin, S., Parveen, F., Moghavvemi, S., Jaafar, N. I., & Mohd Shuib, N. L. (2015).

Factors influencing the use of social media by SMEs and its performance

outcomes. *Industrial Management & Data Systems, 115*, 570-588. doi:10.1108/

IMDS-07-2014-0205

Alameddine, A. (2013). *Perceptions of executives from seven selected companies of the*

use of social media in marketing practices (UMI No. 3592694) [Doctoral

dissertation, Pepperdine University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Al-Hakim, L., & Lu, W. (2017). The role of collaboration and technology diffusion on

business performance. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance*

Management, 66, 22-50. doi:10.1108/IJPPM-08-2014-0122

Alharbi, S., & Drew, S. (2014). Using the technology acceptance model in understanding

academics' behavioral intention to use learning management systems.

International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications, 5, 143-

155. doi:10.14569/IJACSA.2014.050120

Alimo, M. (2015). The experiences of successful small business owners in Ghana

    (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University). https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/

    dissertations/876

Allan, M., & Ali, N. N. (2017). Employing social media websites and its role in

    determining the target audience for marketing within cloth manufacturing in

    Jordan. *Innovative Marketing*, 13(2), 47-55. doi:10.21511/m.13(2).2017.05

Alloway, T. P., & Alloway, R. G. (2012). The impact of engagement with social

    networking sites on cognitive skills. *Computers in Human Behavior, 28*, 1748-

    1754. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2012.04.015

Almalki, S. (2016). Integrating quantitative and qualitative data in mixed methods

    research—challenges and benefits. *Journal of Education and Learning, 5*(3), 288–

    296. doi:10.5539/jel.v5n3p288

Alnaim, F. (2015). The case study method: Critical reflection. *Global Journal of Human-*

    Social Science: A Arts & Humanities – Psychology, 15(7), 1–5. https://global

    journals.org/

Alshenqeeti, H. (2014). Interviewing as a data collection method: A critical review.

    English Linguistics Research, 3(1), 39-45. doi:10.5430/elr.v3n1p39

Amankwah-Amoah, J. (2017). Global consolidation of industries and business failures:

    Insights from brick-and-mortar and online outlets. *International Journal of*

    Comparative Management, 1, 185-196. doi:10.1504/ijcm.2018.10014359

Ananda, A. S., Hernández-García, A., & Lamberti, L. (2016). A comprehensive

    framework of social media marketing strategic actions for marketing

    organizations. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge, 1*, 170-180. http://www.

    journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-innovation-and-knowledge/

Ang, L., & Buttle, F. (2012). Complaints-handling processes and organisational

    benefits: An ISO 10002-based investigation. *Journal of Marketing Management*,

    28, 1021–1042. doi:10.1080/0267257X.2011.615335

Anney, V. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: Looking at

    trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and*

    Policy Studies, *5,* 272-281. http://jeteraps.scholarlinkresearch.org

Appleby, M. (2016). Nonprofit organizations and the utilization of social media:

    Maximizing and measu++ring return on investment. *SPNHA Review*, *12*(1), 5-26.

    http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/spnhareview

Archer-Brown, C., Kampani, J., Mardaer, B., Bal, A. S., & Kietzmann, J. (2017).

    Conditions in pre-release movie trailers for stimulating positive word of mouth: A

    conceptual model demonstrates the importance of understanding as a factor for

    engagement. *Journal of Advertising Research, 57*, 159-172. doi:10.2501/JAR/

    2017-023

Armstrong, G., & Kotler, P. (2015). *Marketing: An introduction* (12th ed.). Pearson.

Ashraf, A. R., Narongsak (Tek), T., & Seigyoung, A. (2014). The application of the technology acceptance model under different cultural contexts: The case of online shopping adoption. *Journal of International Marketing*, *22*(3), 68-93. doi:10. 1509/jim.14.0065

Atwong, C. T. (2015). A social media practicum: An action-learning approach to social media marketing and analytics. *Marketing Education Review, 25*(1), 27-31. doi:10.1080/10528008.2015.999578

Augenti, N. (2007). *How to start a home-based online retail business*. Morris Publishing.

Austin, R. D., & Upton, D. M. *(*2016*).* Leading in the age of super-transparency. *MIT Sloan Management Review, 58*(2), 25-32.

Bakeman, M., & Hanson, L. (2012). Bringing social media to small business: A role for employees and students in technology diffusion. *Business Education Innovation Journal*, *4*, 106-111. http://busedinnovation.com

Balakrishnan, B. K., Dahnil, M. I., & Yi, W. J. (2014). The impact of social media marketing medium toward purchase intention and brand loyalty among generation Y. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 148*, 177-185. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro. 2014.07.032

Ball, J., Ogletree, R., Asunda, P., Miller, K., & Jurkowski, E. (2014). Diffusion of innovation elements that influence the adoption and diffusion of distance education in health. *American Journal of Health Studies, 29*, 253-264. www.va-ajhs.com

Barger, V. A., & Labrecque, L. I. (2013). An integrated marketing communications perspective on social media metrics. *International Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications*, *5*, 64–76. http://www.ijimc.com/

Barker, V. (2012). A generational comparison of social networking site use: The influence of age and social identity. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, *74*, 163-187. doi:10.2190/AG.74.2.d

Barnham, C. (2015). Quantitative and qualitative research. *International Journal of Market Research, 57*, 837-854. doi:10.2501/IJMR-2015-070

Baškarada, S. (2014). Qualitative case studies guidelines. *Qualitative Report*, *19*, 1-25. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/

Batabyal, S., & Chowdhury, A. (2015)., S., & Chowdhury, A. (2015). Curbing corruption, financial development and income inequality. *Sage Journals, 15*(1), 49-72. doi: 10.1177/1464993414546980

Bauer, H., & Grether, M. (2005). Virtual community: Its contribution to customer relationships by providing social capital. *Journal of Relationship Marketing,* 4(1-2), 91-109. doi:10.1300/J366v04n01_07

Berger, J., & Iyengar, R. (2013). Communication channels and word of mouth: How the medium shapes the message. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *40*, 567-579. doi:10.1086/671345

Berry, L. (2002). Relationship marketing of services perspectives from 1983 and 2000. *Journal of Relationship Marketing, 1*(1), 59-77. doi:10.1300/j366v01n01_05

Billington, M. G. &Billington, P. J. (2012). Social media tools for leaders and managers. *Journal of Leadership, Accountability & Ethics, 9*(6), 11-19.

Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative Health Research, 26*(13), 1802-1811. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870

Boo, S., & Kim, J. (2013). Comparison of negative eWom intention: An exploratory study. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism, 14*, 24–48. doi:10.1080/1528008X.2013.749381

Bradley, P. (2009, May). Whither twitter. *Community College Week*, *21*(19), 6–8.

Braojos, J., Benitez, J., & Llorens-Montes, F. J. (2017). Contemporary micro-IT capabilities and organizational performance: The role of online customer engagement. *IT Capabilities, Customer Engagement, and Performance: Twenty-Third Americas Conference on Information Systems.* http://aisel.aisnet.org/

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp 063oa

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015) *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Brod, M., Tesler, L. E., & Christensen, T. L. (2009). Qualitative research and content validity: Developing best practices based on science and experience. *Quality Life Research, 18*, 1263-1278. doi:10.1007/s11136-009-9540-9

Broekemeir, G., Chau, N., & Seshadri, S. (2015). Social media practices among small business-to-business enterprises. *Small Business Institute Journal*, *11*(1), 37-48. http://www.sbij.org/index.php/SBIJ

Bromley, E., Mikesell, L., Jones, F., & Khodyakov, D. (2015). From subject to participant: Ethics and the evolving role of community in health research. *American Journal of Public Health*, *105*, 900-908. doi:10.1016/j.ajhg.2016. 01.010

Bruce, M., & Solomon, M. R. (2013). Managing for media anarchy: A corporate marketing perspective. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, *21*, 307-318. doi:10.2753/MTP1069-6679210305

Bruhn, M., Schoenmueller, V., & Schäfer, D. B. (2012). Are social media replacing traditional media in terms of brand equity creation? *Management Research Review, 35*, 770-790. doi:10.1108/01409171211255948

Bufquin, D., DiPietro, R., Park, J., & Partlow, C. (2017). Effects of social perceptions and organizational commitment on restaurant performance. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 26*, 752-769. doi:10.1080/19368623.2017.1293580

Campbell-Kelly, M., & Garcia-Swartz, D. (2013). The history of the internet: The missing narratives. *Journal of Information Technology, 28*, 18-33. doi:10.1057/ jit.2013.4

Caniëls, M. J., Lenaerts, H. L., & Gelderman, C. J. (2015). Explaining the internet usage of SMEs. *Internet Research*, *25*, 358-377. doi:10.1108/IntR-12-2013-0266

Cao, J., Jiang, Z., & Wang, K. (2016). Customer demand prediction of service-oriented manufacturing incorporating customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Production Research, 54*(5), 1303-1321. doi:10.1080/00207543.2015.1067377

Carlos Martins Rodrigues Pinho, J., & Soares, A. M. (2011). Examining the technology acceptance model in the adoption of social networks. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 5(2/3), 116-129. doi:10.1108/17505931111187767

Cartwright, A., & Blignaut, J. (2013). Economics of climate change adaptation at the local scale under conditions of uncertainty and resource constraints: the case of Durban, South Africa. *Sage Journals,* 25(1), 139-156. doi:10.1177/09562478 13477814

Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview research: The interview protocol refinement framework. *Qualitative Report*, *21*, 811-831. http://nsuworks.nova. edu/tqr

Castleberry, A., & Nolen, A. (2018). Thematic analysis of qualitative research data: Is it as easy as it sounds? *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching & Learning*, *10*(6), 807–815. doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2018.03.019

Castronovo, C., & Huang, L. (2012). Social media in an alternative marketing communication model. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness*, *6*, 117-131. http://www.na-businesspress.com

Ceric, A., D'Alessandro, S., Soutar, G., & Johnson, L. (2016). Using blueprinting and benchmarking to identify marketing resources that help co-create customer value. *Journal of Business Research*, 69, 5653-5661. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.03.073

Cesaroni, F. M., & Consoli, D. (2015). Are small businesses really able to take advantage of social media? *Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management*, *13*(4), 257-268. http://www.ejkm.com/main.html

Chaffey, D. (2018). 10 Marketing Trends to act on in 2018. *Smart Insights.* https:// www.smartinsights.com/digital-marketing-strategy/10-marketing-trends

Chang, K., & Hsu, C. (2012). Flow experience and internet shopping behavior: Investigating the moderating effect of consumer characteristics. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 29*(3), 317-332. doi:10.1002/sres.1101

Chang, Y. T., Yu, H., & Lu, H. P. (2015). Persuasive messages, popularity cohesion, and message diffusion in social media marketing. *Journal of Business Research*, *68*, 777-782. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2014.11.027

Charalabidis, Y., Loukis, E., & Androutsopoulou, A. (2014). Fostering social innovation through multiple social media combinations. *Information Systems Management, 31*, 225-239. doi:10.1080/10580530.2014.923267

Chen, H., De, P., & Hu, Y. J. (2015). IT-enabled broadcasting in social media: An empirical study of artists' activities and music sales. *Information Systems Research*, *26*, 513-531. doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2201430

Chen, R., & Sharma, S. (2012). Understanding user behavior at social networking sites: A relational capital perspective. *Journal of Global Information Technology Management15*, 25-, 45. http://www.uncg.edu/bae/people/palvia/jgitm/

Chen, S., Yen, D. C., & Hwang, M. I. (2012). Factors influencing the continuance intention to the usage of web 2.0: An empirical study. *Computers in Human Behavior, 28*, 933–941. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2011.12.014

Cheng, J., & Liu, S. (2017). A study of innovative product marketing strategies for technological SMEs. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Mathematics, 20*, 319-337. doi:10.1080/09720502.2016.1258837

Chiou, J. S., & Pan, L. Y. (2009) Antecedents of internet retailing loyalty: Differences between heavy versus light shoppers. *Journal of Business Psychology, 24*, 327. doi:1007/s1086900991117

Chotekorakul, W., & Nelson, J. (2013). Customer orientation, merchandising competencies, and financial performance of small retailers in Bangkok. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, 17*(2), 406-409. doi: 10.1108/JFMM-02-2011-0007

Coleman, L. J., Chandler, K., & Gu, J. (2013). Social media: A moving target. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness, 7*, 73-77. http://www.na-business press.com/JMDC/jmdcscholar.html

Colleoni, E. (2013). CSR communication strategies for organizational legitimacy in social media. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, *18*, 228–248. doi:10.1108/13563281311319508

Colvin, D. A. (2013). *Effect of social media as measured by the dispersion of electronic word-of-mouth on the sales success of experience goods: An empirical study of Kindle book sales* (UMI No.3569900) [Doctoral dissertation, Anderson University, Indiana]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Connelly, L. M. (2016). Trustworthiness in qualitative research. *MedSurg Nursing*, *25*(6), 435+. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A476729520/AONE?u=anon~67b5fd3b&sid=googleScholar&xid=2790214c

Cropanzano, R., Anthony, E. L., Daniels, S. R., & Hall, A. V. (2017). Social exchange theory: A critical review with theoretical remedies. *Academy of Management Annals*, *11*, 479-516. doi:10.5465/annals.2015.0099

Crumpton, M. (2014). Accounting for the cost of social media. *The Bottom Line, 27*(3), 96-100. doi:10.1108/BL-06-2014-0017

Cui, R., Gallino, S., Moreno, A., & Zhang, D. J. (2018). The operational value of social media information. *Production and Operations Management*, *27*(10), 1749-1769. doi:10.1111/poms.12707

Curran, J. M., McCabe, D. B., & Meuter, M. L., (2013). Electronic word-of-mouth versus interpersonal word-of-mouth: Are all forms of word-of-mouth equally influential? *Services Marketing Quarterly*, *34*, 240–256. doi:10.1080/15332969.2013.798201

Dadzie, K. Q., Amponsah, D. K., Dadzie, C. A., & Winston, E. M. (2017). How firms implement marketing strategies in emerging markets: An empirical assessment of the 4A marketing mix framework. *Journal of Marketing Theory & Practice, 25*(3), 234-256. doi:10.1080/10696679.2017.1311220

Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of

information technology. *MIS Quarterly*, *13*(3), 319-340.

Dean, B. (2021, August 10). Social Network Usage & Growth Statistics: How Many

People Use Social Media in 2021? BackLinkO. https://backlinko.com/social-
media-users

Dearing, J. W. (2009). Applying diffusion of innovation theory to intervention

development. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *19*, 503–518. doi:10.1177/

1049731509335569

Degerli, A., Aytekin, C., & Degerli, B. (2015). Analyzing information technology status

and networked readiness index in context of diffusion of innovations theory.

Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, *19*, 1553-1562. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.

2015.06.190

Dekay, S. H. (2012). How large companies react to negative Facebook comments.

Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 17, 289–299.

doi:10.1108/13563281211253539

Del Río-Lanza, A. B., Suárez-Álvarez, L., & Vázquez-Casielles, R., (2013). The word of

mouth dynamic: How positive (and negative) wom drives purchase probability:

An analysis of interpersonal and non-interpersonal factors. *Journal of Advertising

Research*, *53*, 43–60. doi:10.2501/JAR-53-1-043-060

DeMassis, A., & Kotlar, J. (2014). The case study method in family business research:

Guidelines for qualitative scholarship. *Journal of Family Business Strategy, 5*, 15-

29. doi:10.1016.j.jfbs.2014.01.007

De Mooy, M., & Yuen, S. (2017). Towards privacy-aware research and development in wearable health. In *Proceedings of the 50th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*. https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/41600/1/paper0451

Derham, R., Cragg, P., & Morrish, S. (2011). Creating value: An SME and social Media. PACIS 2011 Proceedings, Paper 53. http://aisel.aisnet. org/pacis2011/53

Diesburg, S. M., & Wang, A. A. (2010). A survey of confidential data storage and deletion methods. *ACM Computing Surveys, 43*, 2-37. doi:10.1145/1824795.1824797

Diffley, S., Kearns, J., Bennett, W., & Kawalek, P. (2011). Consumer behavior in social networking sites: Implications for marketers. *Irish Journal of Management, 30*(2), 47-65. http://www.iamireland.ie/journal

Doumpos, M., Andriosopoulos, K., Galariotis, E., Makridou, G., & Zopounidis, C. (2017). Corporate failure prediction in the European energy sector: A multicriteria approach and the effect of country characteristics. *European Journal of Operational Research*, *262*(1), 347-360. doi:10.1016/j.ejor.2017.04.024

Drucker, P. F. (1954). *The practice of management.* Harper & Row.

Drummond, C., McGrath, H., & O'Toole, T. (2018). The impact of social media on resource mobilization in entrepreneurial firms. *Industrial Marketing Management, 70*, 68-89. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2017.05.009

Durkin, M., McGowan, P., & McKeown, N. (2013). Exploring social media adoption in small to medium-sized enterprises in Ireland. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, *20*, 716-734. doi:10.1108/JSBED-08-2012-0094

Edmiston, D. (2014). Creating a personal competitive advantage by developing a professional online presence. *Marketing Education Review, 24*(1), 21-24. doi:10.2753/mer1052-8008240103

Eisenberg, E. M., Johnson, Z., & Pieterson, W. (2015). Leveraging social networks for strategic success. *International Journal of Business Communication, 52*, 143-154. doi:10.1177/2329488414560283

Elena, C. A. (2016). Social media–a strategy in developing customer relationship management. *Procedia Economics and Finance, 39*, 785-790. doi:10.1016/S2212-5671(16)30266-0

Emmel, N. (2015). Themes, variables, and the limits to calculating sample size in qualitative research: A response to Fugard and Potts. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *6*, 1–2. doi:10.1080/13645579.2015.1005457

Emrich, E (2015). A Note on the International Coordination of Antidoping Policies. *Journal of Sports Economics*, *16*(3), 312-321. doi:10.1177/1527002513479802

Erdur, I. S. (2016). Changing trends in advertising and online strategies: A systematic review of online advertising. *Journal of Marketing and Market Research, 8*, 57–85. doi:10.17369/uhpad.2016821931

Eryigit, C. (2017). Marketing models: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Market Research, 59*, 355-381. doi:10.2501/IJMR-2017-028

Facebook. (2018). Facebook key facts. http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts

Fan, W., & Gordon, M. D. (2014). The power of social media analytics. *Communication of the ACM*, *57*, 74-81. doi:10.1145/260257

Felix, R., Rauschnabel, P.A., & Hinsch, C. (2016). Elements of strategic social media marketing: A holistic framework. *Journal of Business Research, 70*, 118-126. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.05.001

Feng, J., & Papatla, P. (2011). Advertising: Stimulant or suppressant of online word of mouth? *Journal of Interactive Marketing 25*(2): 75-84. doi:10.1016/j.intmar. 2010.11.002

Fischer, E., & Reuber, A. (2010). Social interaction via social media: (How) can interactions on Twitter affect effectual thinking and behavior? *Journal of Business Venturing*, *26*(1), 1-18. doi:10.1016/j.jbusvent.2010.09.002

Francis, J. J., Johnston, M. C., Glidewell, L., Entwistle, V. Eccles, M. P., & Grimshaw, J. M. (2010). What is an adequate sample size? Operationalizing data saturation for theory-based interview studies. *Psychology and Health*, *25*, 1229-1245. doi:10.1080/08870440903194015

Frels, R. K., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2013). Administering quantitative instruments with qualitative interviews: A mixed research approach. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 91*, 184-194. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6676.2013.00085.x

Fulgoni, G. M. (2015). How brands using social media ignite marketing and drive growth. *Journal of Advertising Research, 55*, 232-236. doi:10.2501/JAR-2015-004.

Fuller, K. (2017). What next for qualitative research? *International Journal of Market Research, 59*(3), 283-284. doi:10.2501/IJMR-2017-024

Furlow, N. E. (2011). Find us on Facebook: How cause marketing has embraced social media. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness, 5*, 61-64. http://www.na-businesspress.com/jmdcopen.html

Fusch, P. I., & Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 20*(9), 1408–1416. https://nsuworks.nova. edu/tqr/vol20/iss9/3

Galati, A., Tinervia, S., Crescimanno, M., & Spezia, F. (2017). Social media as a strategic marketing tool in the Sicilian wine industry: Evidence from Facebook. *International Journal of Globalisation and Small Business*, *6*(1), 40-47. doi:10.1016/j.wep.2017.03.003

Gallivan, M. J., & Keil, M. (2003). The user–developer communication process: a critical case study. *Information Systems Journal*, *13*, 37–68. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2575.2003.00138.x

Gareth, T., Hayfield, N., Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. In W. Stainton Rogers, & C. Willig (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 17-37). London: SAGE Publications. doi:10.4135/ 9781526405555. ISBN 9781473925212

Gautam, V., & Sharma, V. (2017). The mediating role of customer relationship on the social media marketing and purchase intention relationship with special reference to luxury fashion brands. *Journal of Promotion Management, 23*, 872-888. doi:10.1080/10496491.2017.1323262

Gensler, S., Völckner, F., Wiertz, C., & Yuping L. (2013). Managing brands in the social media environment. *Journal of Interactive Marketing (Mergent, Inc.), 27*, 242–256. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2013.09.004

Gismondi, A. (2021, January 5). Top 27 Social Media Apps for your 2021 Strategy. *Kubbco*. https://www.kubbco.com/top-27-social-media-apps-for-your-2021-strategy/

Go, E., & You, K. H. (2016). But not all social media are the same: Analyzing organizations' social media usage patterns. *Telematics and Informatics, 33*, 176-186. doi:10.1016/j.tele.2015.06.016

Goi, C. L. (2014). The impacts of social media on the local commercial banks in Malaysia. *Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce, 19*(1), 1-10. http://www.arraydev.com

Grady, C. (2015). Enduring and emerging challenges of informed consent. *The New England Journal of Medicine, 372*(9), 865-862. doi: 10.1056/NEjMra1411250

Gronroos, C. (1994). From marketing mix to relationship marketing: Towards a paradigm shift in marketing. *Management Decision, 32*, 4-20. doi:10.1108/002517494 10054774

Guo, X., & Zheng, X. (2017). Examination of restaurants online pricing strategies: A game analytical approach. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 26*(6), 659-673. doi:10.1080/19368623.2017.1272085

Guta, M. (2018, March 3). How small businesses use social media in 2018. *Small Business Trends*. https://smallbiztrends.com/2018/03/how-small-businesses-use-social-media-in-2018.html

Hajli, N. (2014). A study of the impact of social media on consumers. *International Journal of Market Research*, *56*, 387-404. doi:10.2501/IJMR-2014-025

Harris, L., Rae, A., & Misner, I. (2012). Punching above their weight: The changing role of networking in SMEs. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, *19*, 335-351. doi:10.1108/14626001211223937

Hassan, S., Nadzim, S. Z. A., & Shiratuddin, N. (2015). Strategic use of social media for small business based on the AIDA model. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *172*, 262-269. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.363

Hayes, T. P. (2012). Predicting information technology adoption in small businesses: An extension of the technology acceptance model. *Journal of Management Information and Decision Sciences, 15*, 37. http://www.alliedacademies.org/aimsj_public.php

He, W., Wang, F.-K., Chen, Y., & Zha, S. (2017). An exploratory investigation of social media adoption by small businesses. *Information Technology and Management*, *18*(2), 149-160. doi:10.1007/s10799-015-0243-3

Henderson, M., Selwyn, N., & Aston, R., (2015). What works and why? Student perceptions of "useful" digital technology in university teaching and learning. *Studies in Higher Education, 42*(8), 1567-1579. doi:10.1080/03075079.2015. 1007946

Herhold, K. (2018, October 17). How people use social media in 2018. *The Manifest*. https://themanifest.com/social-media/how-people-use-social-media-2018

Heriyati, P., & Siek, T. P. (2011). Effects of word-of-mouth communication and perceived quality on decision making moderated by gender: Jakarta Blackberry Smart-phone consumer's perspective. *Contemporary Management Research, 7*, 329-336. http://www.cmr-journal.org/

Hesse-Biber, S., & Johnson, R. B. (2013). Coming at things differently: Future directions of possible engagement with mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *7*, 103-109. doi:10.1177/1558689813483987

Hoff, K., & Bashir, M. (2014). Trust automation: Integrating empirical evidence on factors that influence trust. *Sage Journals,* 57(3), 407-434. doi:10.1177/00187208 14547570

Hutter, K., Hautz, J., Dennhardt, S., & Füller, J. (2013). The impact of user interactions in social media on brand awareness and purchase intention: The case of MINI on Facebook. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, *22*, 342-351. doi:10.1108/ JPBM05-2013-0299

Indrupati, J., & Henari, T. (2012). Entrepreneurial success, using online social

    networking: Evaluation. *Education, Business, and Society: Contemporary Middle*

    Eastern Issues, *5*, 47-62. doi:10.1108/17537981211225853

Instagram. (2018). Instagram statistics. https://about.instagram.com

Ismagilova, E., Dwivedi, Y. K., Slade, E., & Williams, M. D. (2017). Impact of eWOM.

    Springer Briefs in Business, 1, 73–96. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-52459-7_6

Ismail, A. R. (2017). The influence of perceived social media marketing activities on

    brand loyalty: The mediation effect of brand and value consciousness. *Asia*

    Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, 29(1), 129-144. doi.10.1108/

    APJML10-2015-0154

Ismail, H. (2016). Preferences in business and corporate strategies: The role of personal

    values. *Contemporary Management Research, 12*(1), 25-45. doi:10.7903/cmr.

    14600

Janicic, R., & Jankovic, M. (2014, April 24-25). Strategic marketing planning of

    Montenegro tourism and hospitality. In J. Bendekovic, M. K. Calopa, & D.

    Filipovic (Eds.), *Economic and social development* (pp. 262-267). Paper

    presented at the 6th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social

    Development and 3rd Eastern European ESD Conference: Business Continuity,

    Vienna, Austria.

Jap, W. (2010). Confucius face culture on Chinese consumer consumption values toward

    global brands. *Journal of International Management Studies, 5*, 183-192. http://

    www.jimsjournal.org/

Joslin, R., & Müller, R. (2016). Relationships between a project management

methodology and project success in different project governance contexts.

International Journal of Project Management, 34, 613–626. doi:

10.1016/j.ijproman.2015.03.005

Julkunen, S. (2016). Meanings of shared resources in interorganizational relationships: A narrative study in retailing. *Journal of Relationship Marketing, 15*, 17-34. doi:10.1080/15332667.2016.1142307

Kacker, M., & Perrigot, R. (2016). Retailer use of a professional social media network: Insights from franchising. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 30*, 222-233. doi:10.1016/j.jretconser.2016.01.020

Kähr, A., Nyffenegger, B., Krohmer, H., & Hoyer, W. D. (2016). When hostile consumers wreak havoc on your brand: The phenomenon of consumer brand sabotage. *Journal of Marketing, 80*(3), 25-41. doi:10.1509/jm.15.0006

Kang, J. (2019, February 19). How Effectively Does Social Media Drive Word of Mouth (WOM). *Business 2 Community*. https://www.business2community.com/social-media/how-effectively-does-social-media-drive-word-of-mouth-wom-02170563

Karadag, H. (2015). The role and challenges of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in emerging economies: An analysis from Turkey. *Business and Management Studies, 1*(2), 180-188. doi:10.11114/bms.v1i2.1049

Karimi, S., & Naghibi, H. S. (2015). Social media marketing (SMM) strategies for small to medium enterprises (SMEs). *International Journal of Information, Business and Management*, *74*, 86-98. http://ijibm.elitehall.com/index4.htm

Kasim, A., & Al-Gahuri, H. (2015). Overcoming challenges in qualitative inquiry within a conservative society. *Tourism Management, 50*, 124-129. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2015.01.004

Kaszynska, P. (2015). Capturing the vanishing point: Subjective experiences and cultural

value. *Cultural Trends, 24*, 256-266. doi:10.1080/09548963.2015.1066077

Katona, Z., & Sarvary, M. (2014). Maersk line: B2B social media-It's communication, not marketing. *California Management Review*, *56*, 142-156. http://aabri.com

Katz, E., Blumler, J., & Gurevitch, M. (1974). Uses and gratifications research. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 37*(4), 509-523. doi: 10.1086/268109

Kawakami, T., Kishiya, K., & Parry, M. E. (2013). Personal word of mouth, virtual word of mouth, and innovation use. *Journal of Product Development Management, 30*, 17-30. doi:10.111/j.1540-5885.2012.00983.x

Keeble, C., Law, G., Barber, S., & Baxter, P. (2015). Choosing a method to reduce selection bias: A tool for researchers. *Open Journal of Epidemiology, 5,* 155-162. doi:10.4236/0jepi.2015.53020

Keegan, B., & Rowley, J. (2017). Evaluation and decision-making in social media marketing. *Management Decision, 55*, 15-31. doi:10.1108/MD-10-2015-0450

Kelsey, G., Stegle, O., & Reik, W. (2017). Single-cell epigenomics: Recording the past and predicting the future. *Science, 358*(6359), 69–75. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aan6826

Kikooma, J. (2010). Using qualitative data analysis software in a social constructionist study of entrepreneurship. *Qualitative Research Journal, 10*(1), 40-51. doi:10.3316/QRJ10001040

Kohler, T., Smith, A., & Bhakoo, V. (2019). Feature topic for ORM: Templates in qualitative research methods. *Organizational Research Methods, 22*(1), 3–5. doi:10.1177/1094428118805165

Kohli, C., Suri, R., & Kapoor, A. (2015). Will social media kill branding? *Business Horizons*, *58*, 35-44. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2014.08.004

Koonrungsesomboon, N., Laothavorn, J., & Karbwang, J. (2015). Understanding of essential elements required in informed consent form among researchers and institutional review board members. *Tropical Medicine and Health, 43*, 117-122. doi:10.2149/tmh.2014-36

Kornbluh, M. (2015). Combatting challenges to establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 12(4), 397–414. doi:10.1080/ 14780887.2015.1021941

Kucuk, S. (2016). Exploring the legality of consumer anti-branding activities in the digital age. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *139*, 77-93. doi:10.1007/s10551-015 2585-5

Kugler, L. (2014). Keeping online reviews honest. *Communications of the ACM*, *57*, 20-23. doi:10.1145/2667111

Kurtin, K. S. (2016). Social media strategy: Marketing and advertising in the consumer revolution. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 93*, 694-695. doi:10.1177/1077699016659075i

Kwok, L., & Yu, B. (2013). Spreading social media messages on Facebook: An analysis of restaurant business-to-consumer communications. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, *54*, 84. 94. doi:10.1177/1938965512458360

Lee, Y.-K., Kim, Y., Lee, K. H., & Li, D.-X. (2012). The impact of CSR on relationship

    outcomes: A perspective of service employees. *International Journ+al of*

    Hospitality Management, 31(3), 745-756. doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2011.09.011

Lacoste, S. (2016). Perspectives on social media and its use by key account managers.

    Industrial Marketing Management, 54, 33-43. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2015.

    12.010

Lamberton, C., & Stephen, A. T. (2016). A thematic exploration of digital, social media,

    and mobile marketing research's evolution from 2000 to 2015 and an agenda for

    future research. *Journal of Marketing*, *80*, 146-172. doi:10.1509/fjm.15.0415

Laroche, M., Habibi, M. R., & Richard, M. O. (2012). To be or not be in social media:

    +How brand loyalty is affected by social media? *International Journal of*

    Information Management, *33*, 76-82. doi:10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2112.07.03

Lee, G. M., Qiu, L., & Whinston, A. B. (2016). A friend like me: Modeling network

    formation in a location-based social network. *Journal of Management Information*

    Systems, 33(4), 1008-1033. doi:10.1080/07421222.2016.1267523

Lee, J. (2017). Assessment of organizational climate in the restaurant industry. *Journal of*

    Foodservice Business Research, 20(4), 447-463. doi:10.1080/15378020.2016.121

    9168

Lee, W. S., & Carlson, S. M. (2015). Knowing when to be "rational:" Flexible economic

    decision making and executive function in preschool children. *Child*

    Development, *86*, 1434-1448. doi:10.1111/cdev.12401i

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2013). *Practical research planning and design* (10th ed.).
Pearson Education

Leedy, P. D., Ormrod, J. E., & Johnson, L. R. (2019). *Practical research: Planning and design*. Pearson.

Leeflang, P. S. H., Verhoef, P. C., Dahlstrom, P., & Freundt, T. (2014). Challenges and solutions for marketing in a digital era. *European Management Journal, 32*, 1-12. doi:10.1016/j.emj.2013.12.001

Lepkowska-White, E. (2017). Exploring the challenges of incorporating social media marketing strategies in the restaurant business. *Journal of Internet Commerce, 16*(3), 323-342. doi:10.1080/15332861.2017.1317148

Lillqvist, E., & Louhiala-Salminen, L. (2014). Facing Facebook impression management strategies in company–consumer interactions. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, *28*, 3-30. doi:10.1177/1050651913502359

Lim, H. (2018). Generating branding buzz on social media for a pop-up store: Focused on brand experience. https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/16396

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.

Lindgren, O., Folkesson, P., & Almqvist, K. (2010). On the importance of the therapist in psychotherapy: A summary of current research. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis, 19*(4), 224–229.doi:10.1080/08037060903536047

Liu, X., Burns, A. C., & Hou, Y. (2017). An investigation of brand-related user-generated content on Twitter. *Journal of Advertising*, *46*, 236-247. doi:10.1080/00913367. 2017.1297273

Lou, L., & Koh, J. (2017). Antecedents and outcomes of brand relationship quality in

brand communities: A cross-validation test of two social media samples.

Fundamentals of Marketing, 20(1), 1-13. http://aisel.aisnet.org/

Luke, T. (2013). Corporate social responsibility: An uneasy merger of sustainability and

development. *Wiley Online Library, 21*(2), 83-91. doi:10.1002/sd.1558

Madu, A. J., & Ughasoro, M. D. (2017). Anaemia of chronic disease: An in-depth

review. *Medical Principles and Practice: International Journal of the Kuwait

University, Health Science Centre*, *26*(1), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1159/000452104

Malik, F., Asif, M., & Wali, S. (2016). Role of social media on consumer preferences.

City University Research Journal, *6*, 256-268. http://www.cityuniversity edu.

pk/curj/

Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2015). Sample size in qualitative

interview studies: Guided by information power. *Qualitative Health Research, 26*,

1753–1760. doi:10.1177/1049732315617444

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2016). *Designing qualitative research* (6th ed.). Los

Angeles, CA: Sage.

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand

Oaks, CA: Sage.

McDermid, F., Peters, K., Jackson, D., & Daly, J. (2014). Conducting qualitative research

in the context of preexisting peer and collegial relationships. *Nurse Researcher,

21*(5), 28-33. doi:10.7748/nr.21.5.28.e1232

Mehra, A., Kumar, S., & Raju, J. S. (2017). Competitive strategies for brick-and-mortar stores to counter showrooming. *Management Science*, *64*, 3076-3090. doi.10.1287/ mnsc.2017.2764

Men, L. R., & Muralidharan, S. (2017). Understanding social media peer communication and organization–public relationships evidence from China and the United States. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 94*, 81-101. doi:10.1177/1077 699016674187

Mergel, I., & Bretschneider, S. I. (2013). A three-stage adoption process for social media use in government. *Public Administration Review, 73*, 390-400. doi:10.1111/ puar.12021

Micu, Anca et al. (2011). "The Shape Of Marketing Research In 2021." *Journal of Advertising Research.* 51.1 :213-221. doi: 10.2501/JAR-51-1-213-221

Mitchell, O., & Olsen, R. (2013). Green claims and message frames: How green new products change brand attitude. *Journal of Marketing, 78*(5), 119-137. doi:10. 1509/jm.13.0387

Mitchell, R., Hutchinson, K., Quinn, B., & Gilmore, A. (2015). A framework for SME retail branding. *Journal of Marketing Management, 31*, 1818. doi:10.1080/ 0267257X.2015.1063531

Mohabbattalab, E., von der Heidt, T., & Mohabbattalab, B. (2014). The perceived advantages of cloud computing for SMEs. *GSTF Journal on Computing*, *4*(1), 61-65. doi:10.5176/2251-3043_4.1.309

Moreno-Munoz, A., Bellido-Outeirino, F. J., Siano, P., & Gomez-Nieto, M. A. (2016).

    Mobile social media for smart grids customer engagement: Emerging trends and

    challenges. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews, 53*, 1611-1616.

    doi:10.1016/j.rser.2015.09.077

Morse, J. M. (2015). Critical analysis of strategies for determining rigor in qualitative

    inquiry. *Qualitative Health Research*, *25*, 1212-1222. doi:10.1177/10497323

    15588501

Munn, J. E., & Branch, R. (2018). Air Force and civilian leaders' experiences integrating

    civilian information technology certification training into the military information

    technology certification process. *Journal of Information Technology and*

    Economic Development, 9, 1-22. https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/9085882

Nadkarni, A., & Hofmann, S. (2012). Why do people use Facebook? *Personality and*

    Individual Differences, 52(3), 243-249. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2011.11.007

Nassaji, H. (2015). Qualitative and descriptive research: Data type versus data analysis.

    Language Teaching Research, 19, 129-132. doi:10.1177/1362168815572747

National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and

    Behavioral Research (NCPHSBBR). (1979). *The Belmont report: Ethical*

    principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research.

    Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://gov/

    ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/Belmont.html

National Retail Federation. (2018). NRF forecasts retail sales will increase between 3.8

    and 4.4 percent in 2018. https://www.nrf.com

Nayak, A. (2016). Wisdom and the tragic question: Moral learning and emotional

perception in leadership and organizations. *Journal of Business Ethics, 137*, 113.

doi:10.1007/s10551-015-2540-5

Nevin, F., & Torres, A. M. (2012). Club 2.0: Investigating the social media marketing

strategies of nightclubs in the Midlands and West of Ireland. *Irish Journal of

Management, 32*, 77. https://iamireland.ie/journal

Nyhan, B. (2015). The effect of fact-checking on elites: A field experiment on state

legislators. *American Journal of Political Science, 59*(3), 628-640. doi:10.

1111/ajps.12162

Obadia, C., Vida, I., & Pla-Barber, J. (2017). Differential effects of bilateral norms on

SMEs' export relationships: A dynamic perspective. *Journal of International

Marketing, 25*(3), 21-41. doi:10.1509/jim.16.0031

Oestreicher-Singer, G., & Zalmanson, L. (2013). Content or community? A digital

business strategy for content providers in the social age. *MIS Quarterly*, 37, 591-

616. doi:10.2139/ssrn.1536768

Oghuma, A. P., Libaque-Saenz, C. F., Wong, S. F., & Chang, Y. (2016). An expectation-

confirmation model of continuance intention to use mobile instant messaging.

Telematics and Informatics, *33*, 34-47.

Oliveira, T., & Martins, M. F. (2011). Literature review of information technology

adoption models at firm level. *The Electronic Journal Information Systems

Evaluation*, *14*, 110-121. http://www. ejise.com

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Byers, V. T. (2014). An exemplar for combining the collection, analysis, and interpretations of verbal and nonverbal data in qualitative research. *International Journal of Education*, *6*, 183-246. doi:10.5296/ije.v6i1.43996

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Weinbaum, R. K. (2017). A framework for using qualitative comparative analysis for the review of the literature. *Qualitative Report*, *22,* 359-372. https://nsuworks.nova.edu

Oyza, I., & Agwu, E. (2016). Effectiveness of social media networks as a strategic tool for organizational marketing management. *Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce, 21*(S2), 1-19. doi:10.4172/12045357S2-006

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health*, *42*(5), 533–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Paliouras, K., & Siakas., K. (2017). Social customer relationship management: A case study. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Knowledge, 1*(5), 20-34. doi:10.1515/ ijek-2017-0002

Parker, L. (2014). Qualitative perspectives: Through a methodological lens. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management, 11*, 1-17. doi:10.1108/QRAM-02-2014-0013

Pasila, K., Elo,S., & Kaariainen, M. (2017). Newly graduated nurses' orientation experiences: A systematic review of qualitative studies. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 71*, 17-27. doi:10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2017.02.021

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). Sage.

Paulsen, R. (2017). Slipping into functional stupidity: The bifocality of organizational compliance. *Human Relations*, *70*(2), 185-210. doi:10.1177/0018726716649246

Pentina, I., Koh, A. C., & Le, T. T. (2012). Adoption of social networks marketing by SMEs: Exploring the role of social influences and experience in technology acceptance. *International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising*, *7*(1), 65–82. doi:10.1504/IJIMA.2012.044959

Peticca-Harris, A., deGama, N., & Elias, S. R. S. T. A. (2016). A dynamic process model for finding informants and gaining access in qualitative research. *Organizational Research Methods, 19*, 376–401. doi:10.1177/1094428116629218

Petty, N. J., Thomson, O. P., & Stew, G. (2012). Ready for a paradigm shift? Part 2: Introducing qualitative research methodologies and methods. *Manual Therapy*, *17*, 378-384. doi:10.1016/j.math.2012.03.004

Pew Research Center. (2018). Social Media Use in 2018. http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/03/01/social-media-use-in-2018/

Phillips, M., & Knowles, D. (2012). Performance and performativity: Underdoing fictions of women business owners. *Gender Work and Organization 19*(4), 416-437. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0432.2010.00528.x

Pöyry, E., Parvinen, P., & McFarland, R. G. (2017). Generating leads with sequential persuasion: Should sales influence tactics be consistent or complementary?

132

Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 37(2), 89-99. doi:10.1080/
08853134.2016.1275973

Quan-Haase, A., & Young, A. (2010). Uses and gratifications of social media: A
comparison of Facebook and instant messaging. *Bulletin of Science Technology &
Society, 30*(5), 350-361. doi1:10.1177/0270467610380009

Rahi, S. (2017). Research design and methods: A systematic review of research
paradigms, sampling issues and instruments development. *International Journal
of Economic Management Science, 6*, 403. doi:10.4172/2162-6359.1000403

Rahimi, R., & Kozak, M. (2017). Impact of customer relationship management on
customer satisfaction: The case of a budget hotel chain. *Journal of Travel &
Tourism Marketing*, *34*, 40-51. doi:10.1080/10548408.2015.1130108

Rauniar, R., Rawski, G., Yang, J., & Johnson, B. (2014). Technology acceptance model
(TAM) and social media usage: An empirical study on Facebook. *Journal of
Enterprise Information Management, 27*(1), 6-30. doi:10.1108/JEIM-04-2012-
0011

Raynard, M. (2017). Understanding academic e-books through the diffusion of
innovations theory as a basis for developing effective marketing and educational
strategies. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *43*, 82-86. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.
2016.08.011

Richardson, P. S., Choong, P., & Parker, M. (2016). Social media marketing strategy:
Theory and research propositions. *Journal of Marketing Development and*

Competitiveness, 10(2), 24-34. http://www.nabusinesspress.com/JMDC/

jmdcscholar.html

Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative Research: A theoretical

and practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *11,* 25-41. doi:10.1080.

14780887.2013.801543

Roblek, V., Mirjana, P. B., Mesko, M., & Bertoncelj, A. (2013). The impact of social

media to value added in knowledge-based industries. *Kybernetes, 42*, 554-568.

doi:10.1108/K-01-2013-0014

Rodriguez, M., Peterson, R., & Krishnan, V. (2012). Social media's influence on

business-to-business sales performance. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales

Management, 32*(3), 365-378. doi:10.2753/PSS0885-3134320306

Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th ed.). The Free Press.

Rosman, R., & Stuhura, K. (2013). The implications of social media on customer

relationship management and the hospitality industry. *Journal of Management

Policy and Practice, 14*, 18-26. http://www.na-businesspress.com/JMPP/rosman_

abstract.html

Saeed, M., & Meisam, M. (2018). Exploring the effect of self-reflection through

awareness raising on novice and experienced Iranian EFL teachers' pedagogical

beliefs enactment. *The Journal of Asia TEFL,15*(3), 630–648. doi:10.18823/

asiatefl.2018.15.3.5.630

Sajid, S. I. (2016). Social media and its role in marketing. *Business and Economics

Journal, 7*(1), 1-5. doi:10.4172/2151-6219.1000203

Sangasubana, N. (2011). How to conduct ethnographic research. *The Qualitative Report, 16*, 567-573. http://www.nova.edu

Sanjari, M., Bahramnezhad, F., Fomani, F., Shoghi, M., & Cheraghi, M. (2014). Ethical challenges of researchers in qualitative studies: The necessity to develop a specific guideline. *Journal of Medical Ethics and History of Medicine*, 7(14), 1-9. www.jmehm.turns.ac.ir

Sargent, A. (2013). Back to the corner dairy? *NZ Business*, *27*(2), 13-13.

Sarma,S. (2015). Data Collection in Organizational Research: Experiences from Field. *International Journal of Rural Management, 11*(1), 75-81. doi:10.1177/0973005 215569384

Saunders, B., Kitzinger, J., & Kitzinger, C. (2014). Participant anonymity in the Internet age: From theory to practice. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *12*, 125-137. doi:10.1080/14780887.2014.94869

Schaupp, L., & Bélanger, F. (2014). The value of social media for small businesses. *Journal of Information Systems, 28*(1), 187-207. doi:10.2308/isys-50674

Schlinke, J., & Crain, S. (2013). Social media from an integrated marketing and compliance perspective. *Journal of Financial Service Professionals, 67*(2) 85-92. https://www.financialpro.org/pubs/index.cfm

Schultz, D. E., & Peltier, J. (2013). Social media's slippery slope: challenges, opportunities and future research directions. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, 7*(2), 86-99. doi:10.1108/JRIM-12-2012-0054

Schwarzl, S., & Grabowska, M. (2015). Online marketing strategies: The future is here.

Sheikh, A., Shahzad, A., & Ishak, A. (2016). The mediating impact of e-marketing adoption on export performance of firms: A conceptual study. *Journal of Technology and Operations Management*, *11*(1), 48-58. http://www.acascipub. com

Shenton, A. K. (2004, June 8). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information, 22,* 63–75. http://www.academia. edu/4895803

Sherbaniuk, P. (2014). Gale business insights handbook of social media marketing by Miranda Herbert Ferrara (Ed.). *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship*, *19*, 354-356. doi:10.1080/08963568.2014.914506

Shinkevich, M. V., Shinkevich, A. I., Chudnovskiy, A. D., Lushchik, I. V., Kaigorodova, G. N., Ishmuradova, I., & Zhuravleva, T. (2016). Formalization of sustainable innovative development process in the model of innovations diffusion. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues, 6*, 179-184. http:// www.econjournals.com

Singh, R., Kothandaraman, P., Kashyap, R., & Agnihotri, R., (2012). Bringing "social" into sales: The impact of salespeople's social media use on service behaviors and value creation. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management,* 32(3), 333-348. doi: 10.2307/23483285

Smith, A. (2017). *The evolution of technology adoption and usage*. Pew Research Center.

Smith, H., Pippin, G., Pettigrew, T., & Bialosiewicz, S. (2012). Relative deprivation: A theoretical and meta-analytic review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 16*(3), 203-232. doi:10.177/1088868311430825

Smith, J., & Noble, H. (2014) Bias in research. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, *17*, 100-101. doi:10.1136/eb-2014-101946

Smith, R., Kim, Y., Zhu, X., Doudou, T., Sternberg, E., & Thomas, M. (2018). Integrating models of diffusion and behavior to predict innovation adoption, maintenance, and social diffusion. *Journal of Health Communication*, *23*, 264271. doi:10.1080/10810730.2018.1434259

Spillane, A., Larkin, C., Corcoran, P., Matvienko-Sikar, K., & Arensman, E. (2017). What are the physical and psychological health effects of suicide bereavement on family members? Protocol for an observational and interview mixed-methods study in Ireland. *BMJ Open*, *71*, 1-8. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2016-014707

Srivastava, J., Nakazawa, M., & Chen, Y. (2016). Online, mixed, and offline media multitasking: Role of cultural, socio-demographic, and media factors. *Computers in Human Behavior, 62*, 720-729. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2016.04.040

Stephen, A. T., & Galak, J. (2012). The effects of traditional and social earned media on sales: A study of a microlending marketplace. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *49, * 624-639. doi:10.1509/jmr.09.0401

Story, V. M., Boso, N., & Cadogan, W. (2015). The form of relationship between firm level product innovativeness and new product performance in developed and emerging market. *Journal of Production Innovation, 32*, 45-64. doi:10.1111/ Z jpim.12180

Suri, H. (2011). Purposeful sampling in qualitative research synthesis. *Qualitative Research Journal, 11*(2), 63-75. doi:10.3316/QRJ1102063

Surma, J. (2016). Social exchange in online social networks: The reciprocity phenomenon on Facebook. *Computer Communications, 73*, 342-346. doi:10.1016/ comcom.215.06.017

Svendsen, G. B., Johnsen, J. K., Almås-Sørensen, L., & Vittersø, J. (2013). Personality and technology acceptance: The influence of personality factors on the core constructs of the technology acceptance model. *Behaviour & Information Technology, 32*(4), 323-334. https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2011.55374

Taalbi, J. (2017). What drives innovation? Evidence from economic history. *Research Policy, 46*(8), 1437-1453. doi: 10.1016/j.respol.2017.06.007

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 7-24). Hall Publishers.

Taleghani, M. (2011). The role of customer complaints management in consumers satisfaction of new industrial enterprises of Iran. *International Journal of Business Administration 2*(3), 140-147. doi:10.5430/ijba.v2n3p140

Taneja, S., & Toombs, L. (2014). Putting a face on small businesses: Visibility, viability, and sustainability the impact of social media on small business marketing. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal, 18,* 249. http://alliedacademies.org

Thomas, D. R. (2017). Feedback from research participants: Are member checks useful in qualitative research? *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 14*(1), 23-41. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2016.1219435

Thomas, C., & Avenier, M. (2015). Finding one's way around various methodological guidelines for doing rigorous case studies: A comparison of four epistemological frameworks. *Systemes d'Information et Management, 20*(1), 61-98. doi:10.9876/sim.v20i1.632

Tiago, M. T. P. M. B., & Veríssimo, J. M. C. (2014). Digital marketing and social media: Why bother? *Business Horizons*, *57*, 703-708. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2014.07.002

Todor, R. D. (2016). Blending traditional and digital marketing. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov. Economic Sciences. Series VII, 9*, 51-67. https://www.webbut.unitbv.ro

Toombs, L. A., & Harlow, R. M. (2014). More than just like: An entrepreneurial approach to creating a social media ethos in small firms. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal, 18*, 275-286. http://www.abacademies.org

Top Rank Marketing. (2013). Marketing statistics for 2013. https://www.toprank marketing.com

Trace, C. B., & Karadkar, U. P. (2017). Information management in the humanities: Scholarly processes, tools, and the construction of personal collections. *Journal of the Association for Information Science & Technology, 68*, 491-507. doi:10.1002/asi.23678

Trott, L. (2014). Social media in the workplace. *Credit Control*, *35,* 23-30.

Trotter, R. T. (2012). Qualitative research sample design and sample size: Resolving and unresolved issues and inferential imperatives. *Preventive Medicine*, *55*, 398-400. doi:10.1016/j.ypmed.2012.07.003

Tsikerdekis, M., & Zeadally, S. (2014). Online deception in social media. *Communications of the ACM, 57*(9), 72-80. doi: 10.1145/2629612

Tuten, T., & Angermeirer, W. (2013). Before and beyond the social moment of engagement: Perspectives on the negative utilities of social media marketing. *Gestion 2000, 30*, 69-76. doi:10.3917/g2000.303.0069

Tuzovic, S. (2010). Frequent flier frustration and the dark side of word-of-web: Exploring online dysfunctional behavior in online feedback forums. *Journal of Services Marketing, 24*, 446-457. doi:10.1108/08876041011072564

Twitter. (2018). Twitter statistics. https:about.twitter.com

Unluer, S. (2012). Being an Insider Researcher While Conducting Case Study Research. *Qualitative Report, 17*(29), 1-14. doi:10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1752.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). Geography area series: County business patterns by employment size class: 2014 business patterns. http://factfinder.census. gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/BP/2014/00A3/0100000US

U. S. Department of Health & Human Services. (1979). Belmont report. https://www.

hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html

U. S. Small Business Administration. (2016). 2016 Small business profile. https://www.

sba.gov

Valos, M., Polonsky, M. J., Mavondo, F., & Lipscomb, J. (2015). Senior marketers'

insights into the challenges of social media implementation in large organizations:

Assessing generic and electronic orientation models as potential solutions.

Journal of Marketing Management, *31*, 713-746. doi:10.1080/0267257x.2014.

977931

Vass, C., Rigby, D., & Payne, K. (2017). Th*e role of qualitative research methods in

discrete choice experiments: A systematic review and survey of authors. *Medical

Decision Making*, 37, 298-313. doi:10.1177/0272989X16683934

Venkatesan, R. (2017). Executing on a customer engagement strategy. *Journal of the

Academy of Marketing Science, 45*, 289-293. doi:10.1007/s11747-016-0513-6

Venkatesh, V. (2014). Technology acceptance model and the unified theory of

acceptance and use of technology. In C. L. Cooper (Ed.), *Wiley encyclopedia of

management* (Vol. 7, pp. 1-9). John Wiley and Sons.

Venkatesh, V., & Goyal, S. (2010). Expectation disconfirmation and technology

adoption: polynomial modeling and response surface analysis. *MIS Quarterly*,

34(2), 281-303. https://www.misq.org

Vollmer, C., & Precourt, G. (2008). *Always on: Advertising, marketing and media in an

era of consumer control*. McGraw-Hill.

Wakefield, A. (2015). Synthesising the literature as part of a literature review. *Nursing Standard, 29*(29), 44-51. doi:10.7748/ns.29.29.44.e8957

Wang, C., Lee, M. K., & Hua, Z. (2015). A theory of social media dependence: Evidence from microblog users. *Decision Support Systems, 69*, 40-49. doi:10.1016/j.dss.2014.11.002

Wang, K. Y., Ting, I., & Wu, H. (2012). Discovering interest groups for marketing in virtual communities: An integrated approach. *Journal of Business Research, 66*, 1360-1366. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2012.02.037

Wang, T., & Lien, Y. B. (2013). The power of using video data. *Quality and Quantity, 47*, 2933-2941. doi:10.1007/s11135-012-9717-0

Wang, Z., & Kim, H. G. (2017). Can social media marketing improve customer relationship capabilities and firm performance? Dynamic capability perspective. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *39*, 15-26. doi:10.1016/j3intmar.207.02.004

Whiting, A., & Williams, D. (2013). Why people use social media: A uses and gratifications approach. *Qualitative Market Research*, *16*, 362-369. doi:10.1108/QMR-06-2013-0041

Whittler, K. A., & Farris, P. W. (2017). The impact of cyber-attacks on brand image. *Journal of Advertising Research, 57*, 3-9. doi:10.2501/JAR-2017-005

Witkemper, C., Lim, C. H., & Waldburger, A. (2012). Social media and sports marketing: Examining the motivations and constraints of Twitter users. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 21*(3), 170-183. https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2013/ZUR589b/um/SM_W8_Twitter_Sports_ Marketing

Wolny, J., & Mueller, C. (2013). Analysis of fashion consumers' motives to engage in electronic word-of-mouth communication through social media platforms. *Journal of Marketing Management, 29*, 562-583. doi:10.1080/0267257X.2013. 778324

Wonsun, S. (2015). Parental socialization of children's Internet use: A qualitative approach. *New Media & Society, 17,* 649-665. doi:10.1177/1461444813516833.

Woods, M., Paulus, T., Atkins, D. P., & Macklin, R. (2015). Advancing qualitative research using qualitative data analysis software (QDAS)? Reviewing potential versus practice in published studies using ATLAS.ti and NVivo, 1994 2013. *Social Science Computer Review, 34*, 597–617. doi:10.1177/0894439315596311

Wu, C. H., Kao, S. C., & Lin, H. H. (2013). Acceptance of enterprise blog for service industry. *Internet Research*, *23*, 260-297. doi:10.1108/10662241311331736

Xie, K., & Lee, Y. (2015). Social media and brand purchase: Quantifying the effects of exposures to earned and owned social media activities in a two-stage decision making model. *Journal of Management Information Systems, 32*(2), 204-238. doi:10.1080/07421222.2015.1063297

Yadav, M., Joshi, Y., & Rahman, Z. (2015). Mobile social media: The new hybrid element of digital marketing communications. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *189*, 335.343. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.03.229

Yazan, B. (2015). Three approaches to case study methods in education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake. *Qualitative Report*, *20*, 134-152. http://nsuworks.nova.edu

Yazdanparast, A., Joseph, M., & Muniz, F. (2016). Consumer based brand equity in the 21st century: An examination of the role of social media marketing. *Young Consumers, 17*, 243-255. doi:10.1108/YC-03-2016-00590

Yıldırım, A., Üsküdarlı, S., & Özgür, A. (2016). Identifying topics in microblogs using Wikipedia. *PloS One, 11*(3), e0151885. doi:10.6084/m9.figshare.2068665

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.

Yoon, C., & Kim, S. (2007). Convenience and TAM in a ubiquitous computing environment: The case of wireless LAN. *Electronic Commerce Research and +Applications 6*(1), 102-112. doi:10.1016/j.e;erap.2006.06.009

Zamawe, F. C. (2015). The implication of using NVivo software in qualitative data analysis: Evidence-based reflections. *Malawi Medical Journal*, *27*, 13-15. doi:10.4314/mmj.v27il.4

Zheng, Y. (2017). Discussion on marketing strategies for medical facilities under the new environment. *Journal of Commercial Biotechnology*, *23*(3), 15-19. doi:10.5912/ jcb793

Zyphur, M., & Pierides, D. (2017). Is quantitative research ethical? Tools for ethically practicing, evaluating, and using quantitative research. *Journal of Business Ethics, 143*(1), 1-16. doi:10.1007/s10551

Appendix A: Informed Consent for Participants

You are invited to participate in a research study about the strategies that small business leaders in the fashion industry use to implement social media marketing plans to increase reveiew. I am inviting you to participate in the research study because you serve as: (a) CEO, (b) managing director, (c) vice president, and (d) marketing manager. This form is part of a process known as informed consent, which will help you understand the basis of the study before you decide to participate.

A researcher known as Kimberley Chambers, who is a doctoral student at Walden University, is conducting this study.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to explore strategies that small business leaders in the fashion industry use to implement social media marketing plans to increase revenue.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be requested to do the following:

- Take part in a tape-recorded interview with the researcher, about strategies small business leaders use to implement social media marketing to increase revenue. The interview will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes and you will be asked 10 questions. The interview will be conducted via Zoom online based on your schedule.

- Member check the data from the interview to ensure interpretations are accurate and your opinions were well documented. Member checking will last approximately 30 minutes.

- Provide a copy of company documentation such as annual report or any documents related to research topic.

The following are some sample questions the researcher will ask you during the interview:

1. What expectations did you have when you created your strategy to use social media marketing?

2. How did your perception of the ease of use of social marketing compare with the actual purpose of social media marketing?

3. How do you track progress, success, and engagement of your social media marketing strategy to sell fashion brands and products?

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can decline to answer any question. You also have the right to discontinue participation at any time during the process.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

There are no known risks associated with this study. Please keep or print a copy of the consent form for your information. Your participation in this study may assist leaders of manufacturing business to implement or improve upon innovation strategies as an avenue to increase the organization's profit margins. Your participation in this research study may also contribute to positive social change by adding to a reservoir of working knowledge from which hospital leaders may gain a more profound understanding of consideration for maintaining business office productivity during a merger.
The implications for positive social change include the ability to provide productivity stability guidelines during a merger of two hospital systems. The implications for positive social change also include as a byproduct of proven strategies for successful merger that will maintain hospital productivity, a lower risk of hospital closures as a result of failed mergers cause by declining financial health due to diminishing productivity, thereby ensuring the affected community has proximate access to healthcare.

Compensation

There will be no form of compensation, which includes thank you gifts for participating in the study.

Confidentiality

The information you provide for this research will be kept in strict confidence. All electronic information will be stored in a password protected external hard disc or pen drive and will be secured in a safety deposit box for five years as mandated by the university. All paper documents will be scanned to convert into digital files and digital files will be stored in a password protected electronic folders. The paper documents will be shredded after converting them into digital files.

Contacts and Questions

You may contact the researcher, Kimberley Chambers, via email at kchambers@ waldenu.edu or via phone at 678-266-0823. You may also contact the researcher's faculty mentor and doctoral study chair, Dr. Marilyn Simon, at Marilyn.simon@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Walden University representative who can discuss in-depth information about your rights

with you. The phone number is xxxxxxxxxxxxx. The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent

I confirm I have read and understand the study well enough to make an informed decision about participating in this study. By replying to this email with the words, "I consent," you understand that you are agreeing to the terms outlined in the statements above.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

The guiding research question for the study is as follows: What strategies do owners in the fashion industry use to implement social media marketing plans to increase revenue?

The following interview protocol contains the questions used to explore the central research question.

Interview Protocol	
What I will do	**What I will say—script**
Introduce the interview and set the stage—often over a meal or coffee or at a private location.	Good morning or afternoon
	I want to first thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study. The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study is to explore social media marketing strategies some business owners use to increase revenue in the fashion industry.
	The outcome may produce an understanding of how small business leaders use social media marketing to increase revenue. As the researcher, I wanted to assure you that the information provided will be kept confidential as indicated in your signed consent form.
	The qualitative research data are collected using interviews to understand the experiences and processes from the perception of the participant. These questions are presented in an open manner to encourage you to answer as openly as possible.
	The interview will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes with an additional 20 minutes at an established date to review the synthesized data captured during the initial interview.
	Before we proceed are there any questions concerning the intent of this study or anything that I have stated?

What I will do	**What I will say—script**
• Watch for non-verbal queues • Paraphrase as needed • Ask follow-up probing questions to get more in-depth	1. What business strategies do you use to implement social media marketing plans to increase revenue? 2. What expectations did you have when you created your strategy to use social media marketing to increase revenue? 3. How was your perception of the ease of use of social media marketing strategy compare with the outcome? 4. How did your perception of the ease of use of social marketing compare with the actual use of social media marketing? 5. How do you track progress, success, and engagement of your social media marketing strategy to sell fashion brands and products? 6. What strategies do you use to establish and maintain relationships with your target customers in-store and online? 7. What motivated you to start using an online marketing strategy? 8. How do you assess the efficacy of the social media marketing strategies you used in the marketing plan? 9. How has your social media marketing changed since you began implementing these social media marketing strategies? 10. What else can you tell me about the strategies you use in your social media marketing to increase revenue?
Wrap up interview thanking participant	This concludes the interview and I wanted to thank you again for your participation.

Schedule follow-up member checking interview	The follow-up meeting to discuss the synthesis of the information interpreted from each question, should last approximately 20 to 30 minutes. What date and time frame would you like to be scheduled?

What I will do	**What I will say—script**
Follow–up Member Checking Interview Member checking involves the process of checking with research participants whether the identified concepts and codes fit one's personal experience (Carson, 2010).	
Introduce follow-up interview and set the stage	Thank you for this follow-up member checking meeting to review for validity that the synthesized data represent the correct answers. If I missed anything or you like to add anything, please feel free to add that information as we review.
Share a copy of the succinct synthesis for each individual question Bring in probing questions related to other information that you may have found—note the information must be related so that you are probing and adhering to the IRB approval. Walk through each question, read the interpretation and ask: Did I miss anything? Or, is there anything you would like to add?	Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation 1. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed 2. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed 3. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation—perhaps one paragraph or as needed If there is no additional information that you would like to add, this concludes the follow-up meeting. Thank you for your contribution of time and knowledge to this study.

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. What strategies business do you use to implement social media marketing plans to increase revenue?

2. What expectations did you have when you created your strategy to use social media marketing to increase revenue?

3. How was your perception of the ease of use of social marketing strategy compare with the outcome?

4. How did your perception of the ease of use of social marketing compare with the actual use of social media marketing?

5. How do you track progress, success, and engagement of your social media marketing strategy to sell fashion brands and products?

6. What strategies do you use to establish and maintain relationships with your target customers in-store and online?

7. What motivated you to start using an online marketing strategy?

8. How do you assess the efficacy of the social media marketing strategies you used in the marketing plan?

9. How has your social media marketing changed since you began implementing these social media marketing strategies?

10. What else can you tell me about the strategies you use in your social media marketing to increase revenue?

Appendix D: Invitation Letter

Zoom interview seeks small business owners in the fashion industry with social media marketing experience.

There is a new study called *"Social Marketing Strategies Used by Small Business Leaders in the Fashion Retail Industry"* that could help small businesses increase sales and meet or exceed their revenue goals. For this study, you are invited to describe your experiences using social media marketing to help meet your retail business revenue goals.

This survey is part of the doctoral study for Kimberley Chambers, a D.B.A student at Walden University.

<u>About the study</u>:
- One 30-45minute Zoom interview

<u>Volunteers must meet these requirements</u>:
- 18 years old or older
- Small business owners in the fashion retail industry
- Currently use social media marketing to increase sales and revenue goals.
- Three years of using social media marketing strategies to meet or exceed revenue goals
- Business must have fewer than 500 employees
- The business must be located in Fulton County

If you are interested in participating in this study, please email me at: Kimberley.chambers@waldenu.edu

Appendix E: CITI Certification

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2 COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS
NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.
- Name: Kimberley Chambers (ID: 8949494)
- Institution Affiliation: Walden University (ID: 2906)
- Institution Email: kimberley.chambers@waldenu.edu
- Phone: 6782660823
- Curriculum Group: Student's
- Course Learner Group: Student Researchers
- Stage: Stage 1 - Basic Course
- Record ID: 35494931
- Completion Date: 10-Mar-2020
- Expiration Date: N/A
- Minimum Passing: 60
- Reported Score*: 97

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY DATE COMPLETED SCORE
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490): 10-Mar-2020
5/5 (100%) Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503): 10-Mar-2020
5/5 (100%) Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504): 10-Mar-2020
5/5 (100%) Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505): 10-Mar-2020
4/5 (80%) Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928): 10-Mar-2020
5/5 (100%) Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127): 10-Mar-2020
3/3 (100%) Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506): 10-Mar-2020
5/5 (100%) For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?kb01a4413-1f4e-4510-8c73-8588200c9f88-35494931

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)
Email: support@citiprogram.org Phone: 888-529-5929
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM) COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2 COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT**

**NOTE: Scores on this transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- Name: Kimberley Chambers (ID: 8949494)
- Institution Affiliation: Walden University (ID: 2906)
- Institution Email: kimberley.chambers@waldenu.edu
- Phone: 6782660823
- Curriculum Group: Student's
- Course Learner Group: Student Researchers
- Stage: Stage 1 - Basic Course
- Record ID: 35494931
- Report Date: 10-Mar-2020
- Current Score**: 97

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES MOST RECENT SCORE Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127): 10-Mar-2020

3/3 (100%)	Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503): 10-Mar-2020
5/5 (100%)	Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504): 10-Mar-2020
5/5 (100%)	Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505): 10-Mar-2020
4/5 (80%)	Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506) 10-Mar-2020
5/5 (100%)	Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928): 10-Mar-2020
5/5 (100%)	History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490): 10-Mar-2020
5/5 (100%)	For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?kb01a4413-1f4e-4510-8c73-8588200c9f88-35494931

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)
Email: support@citiprogram.org Phone: 888-529-5929
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org