

Optimizing Social Media as a Global Marketing Tool: Qualitative Analysis of Different Approaches in Enhancing the Image and Sales of Exported Products

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Abstract

Research Aims: This research aims to explore the role of social media in global marketing, particularly in shaping brand image and increasing sales of exported products. It seeks to analyze how social media platforms are utilized to capture global market shares, foster sustained relationships with consumers, and develop positive brand perceptions. Additionally, it aims to investigate the intrinsic relationship between brand image and sales volume, focusing on the impact of a positive image on consumer interest and exported product sales.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach, this study delves into consumers' preferences, behaviors, and perspectives regarding exported products while analyzing factors influencing brand image and sales through social media platforms. The methodology involves a thorough literature review, drawing insights from academic sources and scholarly works related to social media's role in global marketing, exporting products, and brand image enhancement.

Research Findings: The research findings emphasize prevalent social media approaches in global marketing, including targeting specific markets, leveraging appropriate platforms, content-centric strategies, and engagement-oriented approaches. Despite notable benefits, around 30% of companies appeared to underutilize these strategies. Furthermore, a clear correlation between effective social media strategies and the positive image of exported products was identified. Successful social media applications, illustrated through case studies, highlighted the significance of internal understanding of target markets, crafting tailored content, and awareness of external factors like social media trends and cultural nuances. **conclusion:** This study underscores the pivotal role of social media in global marketing strategies, emphasizing the need for companies to adapt and align their approaches with internal and external market dynamics. The findings suggest that harnessing the potential of social media involves a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior, market trends, and effective content strategies.

Keywords: Brand image, Consumer behavior, Exported products, Global marketing, Social media

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1. Introduction

The process of globalization signifies an era where the interconnection between nations and communities evolves through trade, investment, cultural exchanges, and technological advancements (Mokhtari Moughari & Daim, 2023). The surge in the mobility of goods, services, individuals, and information stands as the primary characteristic of this global dynamism (Feldstein, 2021; Mokhtari Moughari & Daim, 2023). Concurrently, social media, as an internet-based means of interaction and communication, has emerged as a pivotal platform facilitating global connectivity. Within the framework of globalization, Borchers (2021) the role of social media holds significant importance, offering various benefits that contribute to linking individuals across the world. Through social media, access to information becomes more open, facilitating smoother communication across geographical boundaries. This not only enhances cross-cultural understanding but also expedites the dissemination of crucial global issues. Furthermore, social media plays a role in expanding professional networks, creating job opportunities, and fostering cross-border business collaborations. However, akin to a coin having two sides, Azzaakiyyah (2023) the positive impact brought by social media in the context of globalization is also accompanied by potential negative effects. The spread of fake news, hate speech, and cyberbullying are concrete examples of the negative aspects associated with the use of social media. Therefore, it is crucial to utilize social media responsibly and wisely.

The role of social media in the context of globalization manifests across various sectors. Activists leverage this platform to raise awareness about global issues such as the environment, human rights, and social justice. Similarly, Melović et al., (2020) companies utilize it as a means to promote their products and services in the global market. Conversely, governments employ social media as a tool to disseminate information and services to the public. Furthermore, Shah & Murthi (2021) the digital era has brought about fundamental changes in marketing paradigms. These changes involve a shift from merely focusing on products and transactions towards a deeper understanding of customer needs and the experiences they desire. Moreover, the digital age enables companies to reach a broad market with relatively low costs while significantly altering consumer behavior patterns. The shift from product and transaction-centered approaches to understanding customers and their desired experiences has become a cornerstone in marketing strategies in the digital age. This paves the way for implementing more targeted marketing strategies based on data, content, social media, and influencers to interact and build relationships with consumers. This paradigm shift is not only an opportunity but also a challenge for companies to adapt and compete in the ever-evolving digital realm (Vaz, 2021). The dynamics of



globalization propelled by social media and the paradigm shift in marketing in the digital era create a complex landscape, demanding adaptive capabilities and profound understanding from businesses and the global community as a whole (Hazzam, 2020; Vaz, 2021).

This research aims to explore the potential of social media as a strategic tool in the realm of global marketing, leading to an in-depth analysis of how social media platforms are used to capture global market shares, foster sustained relationships with consumers, and develop a positive perception of brand image. The approach also seeks to investigate the intrinsic relationship between brand image and sales volume, particularly in the context of exported products, identifying how a positive image can enhance consumer interest and drive increased sales of exported products. Through a comprehensive understanding of the implications and role of social media in building a strong brand image that impacts the sales of exported products, this research aims to provide practical guidance beneficial to companies in optimizing social media usage, leading to success in an increasingly interconnected and integrated global market.

The focus of this research lies in utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the role of social media in the context of brand image and sales of exported products. The research aims to delve into the preferences, behaviors, and perspectives of consumers regarding exported products, while conducting a detailed analysis of the factors impacting brand image and sales through social media platforms. This study will involve evaluating the contribution of social media in shaping a positive image for exported products and how this influences an increase in global sales volume.

This research demonstrates significant relevance to the development of global marketing theory by emphasizing the role of social media in strengthening brand image and export product sales. In this context, social media represents an area that has not been deeply explored in the realm of global marketing. This study will provide deeper insights into how these platforms can be relied upon to build a robust brand image and increase the sales volume of exported products. The importance of this study also lies in its relevance to business practitioners, offering practical perspectives on utilizing social media to achieve export success. Additionally, this research provides a significant contribution to the development of global marketing theory by presenting an in-depth analysis of the role of social media in the framework of marketing exported products.

The selection of a descriptive qualitative method as the foundation for literature review is highly relevant to the nature of research aiming to understand social phenomena more profoundly. In this context, the qualitative method enables researchers to achieve a holistic and in-depth understanding of the role of social media in marketing exported products. By employing this approach in the literature review, researchers can conduct thorough analyses of academic literature, journals, and other relevant sources. This approach facilitates the identification of crucial factors influencing the role of social media in global marketing, enabling the continuous development of findings in line with global marketing theory and business practices.

2. Empirical Literature Review

The Concept of Social Media Optimization in Global Marketing

Dwivedi et al., (2021) Social media optimization has become a primary foundation in global marketing. It enables companies to penetrate wider markets, build strong relationships with consumers, and establish a positive brand image. To optimize social media, the initial step involves defining a clear target market, understanding the audience to be reached, and aligning marketing strategies with their needs (Drummond et al., 2020). Selecting the appropriate social media platforms is crucial, each platform has distinct characteristics, and choosing the one that suits the target market plays a pivotal role in marketing effectiveness. Compelling and relevant content is paramount; content quality significantly influences consumer engagement. Through the use of social media analytics, companies can monitor their content performance and adapt strategies based on the obtained data.

Research conducted by Hootsuite and We Are Social (2023) highlights that social media optimization significantly impacts companies' marketing objectives. The study indicates that companies actively optimizing their social media tend to achieve various marketing goals, including increased brand awareness, improved sales, and enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty. This underscores that employing appropriate strategies in social media can strongly contribute to companies' marketing achievements on a global scale.

In the context of an increasingly interconnected global market, social media optimization becomes a crucial key. Rathore (2021) by understanding the needs and preferences of the target market and leveraging available analytics tools, companies can foster strong engagement with consumers, broaden brand awareness, and significantly enhance their sales performance. This strategy goes beyond just having an online presence, it's also about how companies craft content, interact with their audiences, and build a sustainable positive impression in a competitive global market.

The Role of Image in Export Product Marketing

Lopez & Balabanis (2020) the image which is the perception formed in the minds of consumers about a product, brand, or company, plays a pivotal role in exporting product marketing. Substantially, a positive image significantly influences competition in the global market. The presence of a positive image can attract consumer interest, stimulate sales, and strengthen consumer confidence in exported products (Handayani et al., 2023). Previous studies have revealed that the image holds a key role in the context of exporting product marketing (Handayani et al., 2023; Lopez & Balabanis, 2020). For instance, Aaker's research (1991) emphasizes that a brand's image significantly impacts consumer purchasing decisions, where consumers with a positive image tend to choose products from recognizable brands. Similarly, Knight's study (2002) highlights that a country's image also influences purchasing decisions, where a positive image associated with a country drives consumers' tendencies to purchase products from that country.

In achieving a positive image for exported products, several strategies can be applied. Ensuring products have superior quality, providing superior customer service, and building a solid corporate reputation form the main basis for establishing a good image. Moreover, clear and effective communication regarding a positive brand image to consumers also plays a crucial role in building the desired image. By implementing these strategies, companies can strengthen a positive image for their exported products, opening up greater opportunities for success in the global market.

Different Approaches in Utilizing Social Media for Global Marketing

Social media had become an indispensable foundation in the context of global marketing, enabling companies to reach a broad market share, build strong relationships with consumers, and shape a positive perception of their brands. In optimizing the use of social media, Alzoubi et al., (2022) several approaches could be employed by companies to maximize their influence in the realm of global marketing.

One significant approach was emphasizing a deep understanding of the target market segments, allowing the adaptation of social media strategies to align with the relevant characteristics and needs of consumers. A comprehensive understanding of demographics, psychographics, and market behavior served as a crucial foundation in tailoring content, communication styles, and language to remain relevant and appealing to the target audience (Braca & Dondio, 2023). Another approach focused on selecting social media platforms in line with the preferences and habits of the target consumers. Both of these approaches allowed companies to optimize the delivery of effective messages aligned with marketing objectives.

Another strategy involved focusing on high-quality content that appealed to the market's needs. Quality content became a pivotal element in capturing consumer attention on social media, with various content types such as photos, videos, articles, and quizzes aiding in establishing strong engagement with consumers. Lastly, an approach centered on active interaction with consumers on social media platforms through responding to comments, addressing inquiries, and organizing contests proved to be an effective way to build robust relationships.

A study by Hootsuite and We Are Social (2023) indicated that employing diverse approaches in social media tended to yield more positive outcomes in achieving marketing goals. Companies that implemented these approaches were more inclined to enhance brand awareness, boost sales, increase customer satisfaction, and foster customer loyalty. Overall, there was no single approach that could be deemed the best in the context of global marketing through social media. Instead, companies needed to select and align approaches that best suited their needs and objectives in this increasingly interconnected market environment.

3. Method, Data, and Analysis

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive methodology characterized by several key aspects (Kyngäs, 2020). Firstly, it provides a brief and clear explanation of the qualitative descriptive approach, emphasizing the reliance on existing literature as the primary data source. This methodological choice serves as a foundation, acknowledging the rich insights and diverse perspectives available in scholarly works. The rationale behind choosing the qualitative descriptive approach is carefully articulated, emphasizing its suitability in amalgamating and synthesizing existing literature. This methodology proves to be an essential instrument in providing a comprehensive overview of the subject matter by drawing upon numerous scholarly sources, enabling a holistic understanding and nuanced analysis. The precision in research and sample design is evident through the systematic review process of relevant literature. This involves setting stringent selection criteria for sources, ensuring their alignment with the research objectives. The research design is structured to encompass broad yet focused coverage, setting boundaries within which the study aims to derive insights.

Data collection procedures adhere to stringent standards, emphasizing meticulous gathering and critical evaluation of the literature's relevance. This process involves extracting pertinent information from various sources, ensuring that the synthesized information significantly contributes to the research objectives. The adopted data analysis method focuses on qualitative synthesis, utilizing thematic analysis and critical evaluation techniques to extract meaningful insights from the reviewed literature. This analytical approach aligns with

contemporary qualitative research practices, enabling the extraction of valuable insights relevant to the research objectives and enriching the scholarly discourse in this field.

4. Result and Discussion

The social media landscape had become a crucial platform for global marketing. It provided companies with the means to reach wider target audiences, foster connections with consumers, and cultivate a positive brand image. Various approaches were available to companies seeking to leverage social media for global marketing. Here are several different approaches:

1. **Approach Focused on Target Markets**
This approach centered on understanding the target market and tailoring social media strategies to meet their needs. Companies needed to grasp the demographics, psychographics, and consumer behaviors within their target markets. Once these were understood, companies could adapt their content, language, and communication style to align with their target audience.
2. **Approach Centered on Social Media Platforms**
This approach emphasized the selection of suitable social media platforms to reach the intended audience. Not all social media platforms were suitable for every business. Companies had to choose platforms that resonated with their target market. For instance, if a company's target market was the youth demographic, platforms like TikTok or Instagram could be suitable.
3. **Content-Focused Approach**
This strategy revolved around creating engaging and relevant content for the target audience. Content was key to capturing consumers' attention on social media. Engaging and pertinent content could encourage consumers to follow a company's account. Companies could create various content types, including photos, videos, articles, and quizzes.
4. **Engagement-Oriented Approach**
This approach emphasized building strong relationships with consumers on social media. Companies needed to engage with consumers by responding to comments, addressing queries, and organizing contests.

Table 1. Data and Percentage on Different Approaches in Social Media for Global Marketing

Approach in global marketing	Percentage of Companies
Target market-focused	83%
Social media platform-focused	78%
Content-focused	75%
Engagement-focused	68%

Source: the Hootsuite and We Are Social Study (2023)

Based on data and percentages from the Hootsuite and We Are Social study (2023) above, it could be inferred that the most commonly used approach in global marketing utilizing social media was the target market-focused approach. This indicated companies' awareness of the significance of understanding their target markets before devising social media strategies. The platform-focused social media approach was also prevalent, signifying companies' recognition of the importance of selecting the right social media platforms to reach their target audience. Content-focused and engagement-oriented approaches were also widely utilized, indicating companies' awareness of the importance of generating compelling and relevant content, as well as establishing relationships with consumers on social media. Nonetheless, around 30% of companies did not adopt one of these approaches, suggesting that many companies still did not grasp the importance of social media in global marketing.

Further analysis was provided on the different approaches in social media for global marketing:

1. **Target Market-Focused Approach**
This approach was vital as it assisted companies in tailoring their social media strategies to meet the needs of their target markets. By understanding the demographics, psychographics, and consumer behaviors within their target markets, companies could create more relevant and engaging content and messages for consumers.
2. **Platform-Focused Social Media Approach**
This approach was crucial as not all social media platforms were suitable for all businesses. Companies needed to select platforms that resonated with their target markets. For instance, if a company's target market was young adults, platforms like TikTok or Instagram might be suitable.
3. **Content-Focused Approach**
This approach was significant as content was pivotal in capturing consumers' attention on social media. Engaging and relevant content could encourage consumers to follow a company's account. Companies could create various content types, such as photos, videos, articles, and quizzes.

4. Engagement-Oriented Approach

This approach was vital as companies needed to build strong relationships with consumers on social media. Engagement through responding to comments, addressing queries, and organizing contests played a crucial role in this.

There was no single best approach to global marketing through social media. Companies needed to select the most appropriate approach based on their needs and objectives. However, it was crucial for companies to understand the importance of all these approaches and to effectively implement them. Social media played a significant role in bolstering the export product's image, primarily by enhancing brand awareness. One of the strengths of social media was its ability to reach a broader target market, effectively introducing products to new consumers, consequently enhancing brand awareness. Through interactive platforms, companies capitalized on various engaging and relevant content and provided positive responses to consumer comments, consistently building a positive brand image. This created a deeper connection between consumers and products, enhancing preferences and confidence in the represented brand and its products.

In addition to boosting brand awareness, social media played a crucial role in driving export product sales. By increasing website visitors and the social media follower base, companies expanded their market reach and effectively promoted their products. This had a direct impact on increased sales, either through targeted marketing campaigns or available online shopping features. The Hootsuite and We Are Social study (2023) supported this, finding that 75% of companies using social media reported increased brand awareness, while 70% reported increased sales. From this, it's evident that social media not only contributed to building the product's image but also had a direct impact on export product sales. Continuous interaction, relevant content, and positive responses to consumers formed a strong foundation for effectively leveraging social media to increase brand awareness and product sales.

The Correlation between Social Media Approach and Exported Product Image

There is a close relationship between social media strategy and the image of exported products, indicating that companies effectively employing social media strategies tend to build a more positive product image.

1. Impact of Social Media Approach on Exported Product Image

- Targeted market focus enables companies to convey more relevant messages to consumers within their intended market. Building strong relationships with consumers has the potential to enhance the overall positive perception of the product image.
- Platform-based social media approach allows companies to reach a wider audience. By choosing suitable platforms aligned with the target demographic, companies can effectively reach consumers.
- Relevant content assists companies in sharing engaging and informative information with consumers, significantly contributing to building brand understanding and trust.
- Focused interaction with consumers fosters solid relationships. Positive responses to comments and consumer interactions demonstrate genuine attention, elevating the positive perception of the brand and its products.

2. Case Illustrations of Social Media Approaches in Exported Product Image

- Eiger, an Indonesian footwear company, directed its marketing efforts towards young consumers in the global market through platforms like TikTok and Instagram. Their engaging content consistently reinforced the brand and product image.
- Twinings, a Sri Lankan tea producer, utilized platforms such as YouTube and Instagram to share in-depth information about their products. Their educational content served as a tool to strengthen their brand image.
- Lays, a Thai snack manufacturer, actively engaged with consumers through channels like Facebook and Twitter. Their direct involvement strengthened consumer relations, creating a robust brand image.

The factors influencing the success of approaches in global marketing through social media

The factors influencing the success of global marketing approaches through social media were comprised of two primary aspects: internal and external factors that formed the foundation of the employed strategies. Internal factors played a pivotal role in determining the course and success of the marketing strategy. Having an in-depth understanding of the target market was an essential cornerstone. The ability to comprehensively grasp the demographics, psychographics, and consumer behavior allowed the company to adapt its language, content, and communication approach to be more relevant and appealing to the intended market. Additionally, the selection of appropriate social media platforms was crucial since each platform had varying preferences associated with the culture and demographics of the target audience. Developing engaging, relevant, and diverse content strategies was a prerequisite for capturing and retaining consumer interest. Equally important was active engagement with consumers, which could foster strong relationships and solidify trust. Diligent analysis of performance for evaluation and adjustment also played a critical role.

Meanwhile, external factors highlighted the changing external dynamics impacting the success of these strategies. Fluctuations in social media trends demanded swift responses to remain relevant in the eyes of

consumers. Changes in social media algorithms were also a vital consideration because the content produced needed to consider these alterations to remain accessible to the target market. Intensifying competition in the global market necessitated continuous innovation to keep the company ahead of competitors. Furthermore, awareness of the culture and social norms in the target market underscored the importance of adapting content and campaigns to align with the local context. Through this analysis, it became apparent that various approaches in global marketing through social media faced diverse challenges, contingent upon a profound and responsive understanding of the internal and external factors shaping market dynamics. The success of the strategy relied on the company's ability to align and adapt to these factors to maximize the potential of social media in achieving global marketing objectives.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The evolution of social media into a pivotal tool for global marketing has offered companies unparalleled access to wider audiences, enabling robust consumer connections and fostering a positive brand image. Varied approaches to leveraging social media for global marketing were evident, showcasing strategies tailored to meet diverse objectives. The research findings from the Hootsuite and We Are Social study (2023) outlined prevalent approaches: targeting specific markets, focusing on appropriate social media platforms, content-centric strategies, and engagement-oriented approaches. These findings underscored the prominence of understanding target markets, the significance of platform selection, the pivotal role of compelling content, and the necessity of active engagement. Despite this, around 30% of companies seemed yet to embrace these approaches, signifying a persistent gap in grasping social media's paramount role in global marketing.

Moreover, the correlation between social media strategies and the image of exported products highlighted a clear link between effective social media practices and the cultivation of a positive product image. The impact of these strategies on exported product image was evident through targeted market approaches fostering stronger consumer connections, platform-based strategies broadening audience reach, compelling content contributing to brand understanding, and focused interaction enhancing brand perception. Illustrated cases including Eiger, Twinings, and Lays showcased successful applications of these social media approaches in enhancing product image. However, the success of these global marketing approaches through social media relied on a comprehensive understanding of both internal and external factors shaping market dynamics. Internal aspects, such as understanding the target market and crafting tailored content, were vital, complemented by an awareness of external factors like social media trends, algorithms, cultural nuances, and competitive landscapes. This analysis underscores the multifaceted challenges and the imperative need for companies to adapt and align their strategies to fully harness the potential of social media in accomplishing global marketing goals.

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