

## ACCESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING USED BY UNDERGRADUATE ENTREPRENEURS AT SHAHEED BENAZIR BHUTTO UNIVERSITY, SHAHEED BENAZIRABAD

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### Abstract

Regardless of several opportunities for entrepreneurs had been provided by social media, students prefer the new online trends and start their own startups, which have been observed very low specifically among undergraduate students of universities. The purpose of this paper is to determine how effectively social media is being used for this. The study found that students use a wide range of social media platforms from WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube to grow their businesses, in this regards Uses and Gratification theory had been applied, in order to probe the use of social media for entrepreneurial purposes and determine the degree of success of the use, i.e., how they use the social media for that purpose and what they gain from doing so. Additionally, a qualitative approach was taken, and the In-Depth Interview served as the tool for collecting data. The purpose of this study is to find out how students' entrepreneurial orientation is affected by online social media marketing. Additionally, the study discovered that social media significantly contributes to the increase in their sales. The adoption of the different social media platforms is advised in the paper in order to attain their financial and commercial objectives.

### 1. Introduction

The persistent rise in the unemployment rate worldwide, especially in the majority of developing nations where young people are the most impacted demographics, has raised concerns in recent years.(Ann et al., 2025)

The development and use of social media has given young people a platform to start their own businesses. Social media has made it possible for young business owners to access resources that they

would not have otherwise had. With the help of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, You Tube, and others, these young business owners are using social media for marketing, promotion, and advertising.(Jonsson, 2023)

As Marshall McLuhan predicted, the internet has contributed to the world becoming a global village. According to(Aslam et al., 2024), it has enhanced the communication process, which is how a "sender

passes information to the decoder or receiver." Additionally, it has made it possible for people to express themselves via user-generated media such as blogs, websites, images, and social networking sites. The use of mobile and web-based technology to transform communication into an interactive dialogue is referred to as social media. People's communication skills also improve as a result of this online information sharing, particularly among learners and students in educational institutions. The use of social media tools has a reverse aspect as well. People occasionally abuse these tools, interfering with others' privacy. Given the ethical considerations surrounding the use of such media, such incidents have the potential to escalate to dangerous levels. Social media platforms have essentially brought people closer together, especially those who live far away. (Brahem & Boussema, 2023)

Nevertheless, it has been observed that the majority of business establishments nowadays use social networking to advertise their goods and services. The leaders of the business organizations frequently make an effort to keep good relations with their esteemed clients. These days, social media platforms are viewed as a promising form of advertising that all brands should use. (Carroll, 2016)

Social media has emerged as a popular avenue for youth communication, especially among universities students. Nevertheless, undergraduates' use of social media extends beyond the engaging atmosphere it offers. Some of these students are young business owners who use these platforms to inform their diverse clientele about the goods and services they provide. Through online brand promotion, social media platforms offer businesses of all sizes unfathomable resources to help them succeed. Significantly, (Chandio et al., 2023) stated that social media platforms are free to use, even though some allow brands to advertise to a wider audience. They offer young student entrepreneurs the chance to communicate with potential clients in an expressive, private, and reasonably priced manner. It also makes it possible to quickly access customer service issues, comments, and brand praise and compliments. Research on the adoption and use of social media by Pakistani university students, especially undergraduates, who are also

entrepreneurs, is, nevertheless, lacking. The results of the study should close some knowledge gaps regarding the use of social media by enterprising students at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benairabad, Sindh, Pakistan.(Emmanuel et al., 2022)

### Research Questions

1. Which social media sites had been used by university s entrepreneurs, make use of for their business?
2. How often do entrepreneurs in their undergraduate years use social media platforms for marketing?
3. Do social media use by undergraduate entrepreneurs see an increase in sales?

### Theoretical Framework

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) was used in this investigation. This communication is widespread.Theory that emphasizes media consumers' needs, motivations, and pleasures. According to the theory, media consumers actively participate in mass communications rather than being passive consumers. Part in consuming media. Researchers Elihu Katz and Jay G. Blumler are credited with developing the theory."The uses of mass communication: Current perspectives on gratifications research," which was published in 1974, provided a comprehensive overview of the Uses and Gratifications Theory. However, Harold Laswell's research is where the theory first emerged. This theory's foundation has been used extensively. The order and names of the tenets that underpin the UGT were mentioned by researcher Denis McQuail in 2000. These include information, entertainment, social interaction and integration, and personal identity. The social interaction is relevant to this study. It is pertinent because it clarifies the aspect of what media consumers decide to do with messages—in this case, what the undergraduate entrepreneurs post on social media and what the consumers do with the messages.

## 2. Literature Review

### 1. Social Media as a Business Tool

The word "entrepreneur" has been around since the 12th century and was derived from the French verb

"entrepreneur," which literally means "to go-between" or "undertake" (Rahman et al., 2023). Adam Smith provided one of the most important and original definitions of the entrepreneurship. According to (Irwan Adimas Ganda Saputra et al., 2024), an entrepreneur is an economic agent who converts demand into supply. French banker and economist Richard Cantillon coined the term "entrepreneur" in the 18th century to refer to someone who takes on risk and uncertainty in the context of business and economic activity.

(Erpe & Kotnik, 2022) emphasized, however, that social media has also contributed to the demise of a number of companies that, in one way or another, abused the marketing platform, destroying their brand or wasting a significant amount of money. According to Bhattacharya (2000), social media's detrimental effects include, but are not limited to, a lack of control over content shared on the platform because errors are hard to fix and can result in unfavorable customer feedback that hinders a company's ability to expand.

Social media takes a lot of time, and there is a lot of content on the internet. Given this, the purpose of this study is to determine whether the presence of such businesses on social media has led to their improvement and growth. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate how social media helps undergraduate entrepreneurs at Fountain University in Osogbo, Nigeria, expand their small businesses. (Sanni et al., 2023)

The business environment has benefited greatly from social media since its inception. This makes it simple for entrepreneurs in the twenty-first century to implement it in their companies in order to boost sales performance. Social media aids in breaking down barriers. By doing this, the product or service gains global recognition (Zafar et al., 2017). The reason for this is that when a product or service is made popular and attracts more customers through social media, it expands its reach and boosts sales. By turning communication networks into influence networks, social media gives business owners the ability to market their goods and services. With the aid of gadgets like smartphones, entrepreneurs can use social media as a platform to market their goods.

## **2. Social Media as Business tool in Pakistan**

In Pakistan, according to some research, unemployment can stimulate an individual's interest in starting their own business. They contend that the majority of people view entrepreneurship as a methodical approach to generating and maintaining wealth, particularly in nations with high unemployment rates. Pakistan is one such nation; according to recent data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, According to reports, Pakistan's unemployment rate for 2025 will be between 6.3% and 8%. The youth are disproportionately affected by the large skills and job supply gap. With rates as high as 44.9% among job seekers between the ages of 15 and 24 and a startling 32.5% of young people between the ages of 15 and 29 being "Not in Employment, Education, or Training" (NEET), youth unemployment is a serious issue. The unemployment rate for women is higher than that of men, and it is especially high for recent graduates. (Hussain et al., 2025).

Research evidence from the Pakistan had been reported that, the majority of people concur that working for yourself is the best way to survive in nations with high unemployment and job security loss rates. (Dr. Syeda Afshan Aziz et al., 2025), the most common form of entrepreneurship is one in which a person starts and runs their own business; this is commonly known as "self-employment." A nation's economy must be clearly expanding in order to be deemed strong and developed, and entrepreneurship is crucial to this expansion. Because of this, entrepreneurs, governments, and scholars worldwide are interested in entrepreneurship. Developing young people's minds is one way to achieve this.

Since its inception, social media has greatly benefited the business environment. This makes it simple for 21st-century business owners to implement it in their companies in order to boost sales performance. Social media facilitates the removal of boundaries. This increases the product or service's global popularity (Chandio et al., 2024). This is the case because, with the aid of social media, a product or service can reach a wider audience and gain more customers, which boosts sales. Social media is important because it promotes

learning, facilitates information exchange, and circulates information to find new opportunities.

**3. Research Methodology**

In-Depth Interviews (IDI) were used in the study. In order to uncover particular details regarding the phenomenon of social media marketing among undergraduates, it was utilized to collect data from the sample. The study uses IDI to help the researcher understand how undergraduate entrepreneurs Shaheed benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sindh, Pakistan, use and adopt social media for sales performance. Because of their unique demographic traits—namely, how they use social media for their social Media marketing—the researchers concentrated on undergraduate 10 entrepreneurs at Shaheed benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sindh, Pakistan for the study. Male and female undergraduate business owners at Shaheed benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sindh, Pakistan, make up the study's population. There are 50 undergraduate entrepreneurs at Shaheed benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazirabad,

Sindh, Pakistan. The snowballing method was used to determine this. The main goal of this research is to identify the problems associated with student entrepreneurs' use of social media and investigate how social media is used at different stages of the entrepreneurship process rather than drawing broad conclusions from empirical findings from other studies. support for This is Dowla's (2011:11) assertion that "a flexible, interactive approach to sampling and data collection is required, as the issue in sampling is not 'the size' but on the depth of the information acquired through various respondents." For the study, simple random sampling was used, and the sample size was ten. To collect data, interviews were held. The interviews were conducted by the researchers until the data reached a saturation point. Undergraduate business owners who studied at the main campus of Shaheed benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sindh, Pakistan were interviewed. Because the respondents were willing to give the researchers access to their audience, face-to-face interviews were conducted.

**4. Data Presentation and Analysis**

SNO	Informants	Gender	Age	Department	Level	Online Trade/Marketing
1	INFORMANT	Female	(20-25)	Media and Communication	4.2 k	Social Media influencer
2	INFORMANT	Male	(20-25)	Media and Communication	5.0 k	Social Media influencer
3	INFORMANT	Female	(20-25)	Media and Communication	500	Content creator
4	INFORMANT	Female	(20-25)	Media and Communication	300	Online trading
5	INFORMANT	Male	(20-25)	IT	300	Freelancer & Entrepreneurs
6	INFORMANT	Female	(20-25)	IT	300	Freelancer & Entrepreneurs
7	INFORMANT	Male	(20-25)	IT	400	Freelancer & Entrepreneurs
8	INFORMANT	Female	(20-25)	IT	300	Freelancer & Entrepreneurs

The backgrounds of the eight informants are displayed in Table 1. The informants are divided

into two groups according to the gender distribution list. The all of informants were between

the ages of twenty and twenty-five. There are five women and three men, as the above table demonstrates. five (5) females in all were interviewed, compared to just three (3) males. The fact that more women were available for the interview explains why they significantly outnumbered men.

### SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

The study examined how undergraduate entrepreneurs use social media, including which platforms they use, which ones they prefer, and why. The results of the informants' use of social media for business purposes are presented in this section. The idea that social media is crucial for improving entrepreneurship informs this. WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, and other social media platforms are used by student entrepreneurs.

#### Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms are websites, programs, or software that people use to produce and distribute text, audio, video, and document content. Social media platforms have changed not just how we interact but also how we do business. These changes have had a significant impact on how we communicate with and learn from businesses. Because of this, undergraduate entrepreneurs utilize social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and others with the primary goal of utilizing them to enhance their business practices. According to the study's data, undergraduate business owners use Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and WhatsApp more frequently to promote their different products and services. For example, informants 1 and 4 described how they connect their business products with online communities via WhatsApp groups. The fact that two first out of the eight informants who were interviewed confirmed using Tiktok, Instagram, and WhatsApp for earning purpose being the social Media influencer, to share traditional content and engage audiences. Furthermore both are very poplars on social media platform for product promotion and advertising, and my target audiences use it. Moreover Informant

3 also content creator on different social Media platform an earned monthly more than 1 lac.

Informant 4, a online trader, also explained why she uses Instagram and WhatsApp She stated, "I use Instagram and WhatsApp more than any other social media because I don't have much contact on my WhatsApp." Additionally, I like using Instagram over WhatsApp because Instagram allows users to see your business forever, whereas WhatsApp removes it after 24 hours.

The Informants 5, 6 7 and 8 are the freelancers and Entrepreneurs from It department of SBBU SBA They explained why they uses different social media platforms for their services to earn the dollars monthly. All were interviewed that social Media providing them easy and reachable plate to their target customers.

#### Rationale for Social Media Usage

This study investigates the reasons behind undergraduate entrepreneurs' use of social media as part of its findings. Undergraduate entrepreneurs use social media in their various entrepreneurial endeavors for understandable reasons. activities. One of the reasons social media is used for entrepreneurship is because social media applications are frequently regarded as useful tools that support online business. Undergraduate entrepreneurs have provided justifications for their use of social media.

As a result, every Informant says that social media is a way to communicate with friends and share images and videos for likes and comments. They facilitate communication with friends, The opinions expressed by the aforementioned informants were supported by informant number eight. The informants emphasized that they favor social media platforms due to their broader user base. Because he/she receives a lot of interaction on TikTok and what's app, Informant 4 prefers to use it for her online business endeavors.

"WhatsApp and Tiktok are primarily for contacts," stated Informant 1, content creator. "When I post, it helps me create interactive systems and I get to meet new clients, people that are far ahead" According to Otugo (2015), there are various social media platforms that enable the creation, editing, and sharing of online content. This makes it very

simple for people, businesses, and organizations to connect with one another and the general public by creating fan pages and showcasing their freelancing services with the sole purpose of promoting the business. Regarding Informant 5

"Those with a lot of followers assist with posting on different social media platforms promotional platforms for advertisers. To reach more people, you can also pay to have your posts promoted. I learn from the videos that are posted on other pages. (Source 5).

In a similar vein, Shabbir, Ghazi, and Mehmood (2016) found that social media has helped entrepreneurs connect more effectively with individuals who share their business interests.

### Social Media Preferences

The social media sites that student entrepreneurs favor for their enterprises are examined in this section. Every undergraduate entrepreneur cannot use every social media platform at the same pace; some must prioritize their usage over others like tiktok and whats app. There are a number of possible causes for this. Among the social media platforms that have gained popularity among Instagram, TikTok and WhatsApp are the most popular platforms among undergraduate entrepreneurs. Instant messaging and a sizable user base have contributed to the perception that these social media platforms are youth-friendly over time. They also provided explanations for these. In this regard, Informant 2, Social Media influencer, shared his account, saying, "I prefer using Tiktok and facebook for my promotion of content because it provides opportunity for other people not even following me on my social media platforms to see the pictures I post about my traditional content certation in Sindhi language mostly ." Using hashtags increases the number of people who see my posts, particularly on TikTok. My posts can be seen by my contacts on my facebook page as well. (Informant 2).

Regarding Informant 3: "I use WhatsApp and Instagram for content creation because it's very easy for me and I get quick feedback on my WhatsApp." Instant messages and comments. The messages and responses are not instantaneous, in contrast to Instagram and whats app.

Social networking sites, particularly WhatsApp, "help create links beyond my contacts, because the network there is stronger for my business for now, but I feel Instagram is better for the gadget business." Instagram is more dominated by powerful individuals, but WhatsApp is equally significant.

### SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION

The frequency, strategies, and promotion of undergraduates' use of social media for entrepreneurship are explained in detail in this section of the study. The patterns demonstrate how social media is becoming increasingly beneficial for businesses.

#### Frequency

Frequency refers to how frequently undergraduate entrepreneurs post on their social media accounts. The frequency with which undergraduate entrepreneurs publish about their goods and services on their various social media platforms is described in depth in this portion of the study. Not every undergraduate business owner post at the same pace; some do so as soon as

They acquire new goods or provide new services as freelancer and content creator. To keep their social media friends and followers informed, some people post frequently. Actually, every informant hinted that they use at least one social networking site twice a week. According to Informant 5, "I used to post daily on my Instagram, but now I post weekly." (Source 5). I post five to ten images a day on WhatsApp, mostly of new products, and I remove them after five hours (Informant 5).

This demonstrates that undergraduate company owners who have embraced social media have made it a habit to regularly share their goods and services on these sites. Because social media operates in real-time, people or businesses who use it for their operations can communicate with their clients and potential clients at any time of day.

#### Promotion

The promotion strategies used by undergraduate business owners are examined in this section of the study. Undergraduate business owners use promotion to entice their clients by offering them

freebies, discounts, or lower prices for a specific amount of time. Promotional activities include discounts, as confirmed by Informant 8, who stated, "Yes, I give away discounts to get more contact or to boost my business."

While informant 4, a online traderr engages on promotional activities on WhatsApp, in her words she said: "Yes, I do, I have WhatsApp Tv, WhatApp influencers or people that have lots of contact, I usually get the sum of 50k PKR after getting online order for for my business".

### INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON SALES PATRONAGE

Impact is the degree to which social media platforms have contributed to the company's growth in terms of generating revenue, streamlining operations, and expanding the clientele.

#### Effectiveness

Effectiveness is the degree to which social media platforms have assisted undergraduate business owners in accomplishing their aims and objectives. This demonstrates the significance and value of social media for undergraduate entrepreneurs and their diverse enterprises. The informants' embrace of social media is motivated by their agreement that it is always beneficial to their business. Informants claim that social media's intrinsic benefits of interactivity and universality are what make its adoption for entrepreneurship successful.

Informant 8 shared his story of successful social media interaction, saying, "Social media has been very effective for my freelancing, I make a lot of money from it." Through posting and sharing, social media content has the potential to become viral. Because there are so many consistent internet users every day, using social media platforms to promote a business is a very appealing business strategy. According to Informant 6, since "just by posting, people get to know what I am selling, get to know they need it and they purchase." This demonstrates how social media has helped student entrepreneurs manage their enterprises.

#### Benefits

This section of the report describes how student entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial endeavors have benefited from social media usage and adoption. Benefits include the enjoyment that social media platforms have given student entrepreneurs when using them for enterprises, as well as positive or beneficial outcomes or effects. Accordingly, Informant 6 lists the following advantages of social media use for student entrepreneurs: "I can post my business on my WhatsApp, I can choose to state my price, I can also choose not to state my price, also for the chat section I can negotiate with the customers and I can make calls to process delivery" (Informant 6).

"I get to meet boogie clients (clients of a higher social standing) that tend to pay me more and people get to see my work, most especially photographers,"

#### Discussion of Findings

The first study question looked at how Fountain University Osogbo undergraduate entrepreneurs used social media. According to the survey, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, and other social media sites are the most popular ones used by all of the informants. As a result, they use the platforms to advertise their commercial ventures. In Asia and Europe, respectively, Hong et al. (2010) and Mukolwe and Korir (2016) found that entrepreneurs use social media to share their company ideas online.

Undergraduate entrepreneurs' use of social media was examined in the second study question. It was discovered that every business owner surveyed has incorporated social media into their operations. According to the study, the informants use social media three times a week on average, which indicates that they use it frequently. Undergraduate company owners employ social networking sites as a tactic to communicate with potential clients about their ventures. Additionally, the study discovered that not every informant participates in promotional efforts. Media for entrepreneurship: Those that participate in promotional activities offer discounts, freebies, and price reductions, particularly during holiday seasons.

The third research question examined the influence of social media on undergraduate entrepreneurs' sales patronage. It was found that social media is very effective; it has strengths and is beneficial to students as it aids them in the improvement of sales. The informants agreed that social media is every effective in enhancing their business, and that is what informed their adoption of it.

### Conclusion

The study's reveals that, the majority of student entrepreneurs primarily use three social media sites, such as TikTok, Instagram and WhatsApp. Even so, a small percentage of them continue to use Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest. Because each social media site has advantages over others and strengths of its own, this study advises all undergraduate entrepreneurs to use them as much as possible. This will result in various outcomes and flexibility for the use of various platforms

Most of the time, entrepreneurs launch their businesses without the proper plan. This could be because they are passionate about what they do or because they believe they have enough capital to launch the enterprise. The majority of students also launch their own online start up as freelancers and influencers because they believe it is one of the finest ways to survive in times of economic hardship and other challenges. Studying student entrepreneurship is necessary, particularly in light of Pakistan's current circumstances in academia. Studying student entrepreneurship in other nations is not relevant to the situation in Pakistan, which is why a study like this one was required to find out who are undergraduate entrepreneurs, how they use social media in their businesses, what tactics they use, and how they integrate social media.

### Recommendations

On the based of this study, it is recommended that university student of SBBU SBA as the entrepreneurs adopt a diversified social media marketing strategy to enhance the effectiveness of their promotional activities. The research indicates that most student entrepreneurs primarily rely on TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp for marketing purposes due to their high engagement and accessibility. However, platforms such as Facebook,

Twitter (X), and Pinterest are still used by a smaller segment and offer unique marketing advantages.

Therefore, the study recommends that undergraduate students of SBBU SBA strategically utilize various social media platforms rather than depending on a limited social site. Each platform serves different audiences and content formats; effective integration can improve brand visibility, customer reach, and engagement. Students should align platform selection with their marketing objectives—for example, using TikTok and Instagram for visual storytelling, WhatsApp for direct customer communication, and Facebook or Twitter for broader audience outreach.

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