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An Exploration of Digital Identity through Self-Promotion Strategies on Social Media: Using Partial Least Square Method

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Abstract

Digital identity plays a crucial role in how individuals present themselves to the world. With the rise of social media platforms and other digital tools, self-promotion strategy has become an essential aspect of digital identity management. Social media marketing has changed how marketers communicate. Nowadays, professionals like medical professionals, lawyers, and educators promote oneself and their services online. This article analyses various professionals who use social media marketing for self-promotion. This research combines technology acceptance with self-promotion through social media. The research also will offer a conceptual model on technology acceptability and self-promotion linkage and will test it with Smart-PLS analysis. The study's findings explain professional's self-promotion presumptions. The survey would also reveal what motivates professionals to use digital marketing to promote themselves on social media. The literature was surveyed using a structured questionnaire and structural equation modelling using partial least squares analysis demonstrated a link between self-promotion and TAM.

Keywords: Healthcare Professionals, Educators, Social Media, TAM, Self-Promotion Strategies, PLS-SEM

Introduction

With online marketplaces and social media giving people access to the thoughts of millions of people just like them, consumers have never felt freer to look for real, honest opinions before making a purchase. Digital promotion increased sales, brand awareness, engagement, and lead generation (Lamberton & Stephan, 2016). It is the best platform for promoting goods and services, but digital or social media promotion is still in its infancy for self-promotion. Because of recent developments and ongoing advancements in digital technology, the field of digital business offers a broad range of career opportunities for anyone interested in working in this sector (Gupta et al, 2022). Small and large businesses differ greatly in technology adoption. Small businesses adapt to technology even slower than the large business majority (Harrigan et al, 2011).

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Social Networking Services (SNS) enable users to easily share information, ideas, and opinions. Businesses use SNS for collaboration, productivity, and multi-channel retailing. Perceived risks and benefits of self-disclosure on SNS also affect user behaviour. Facebook provides users with elaborate mechanisms to control privacy risks. Instagram, provides users with fewer self-disclosure mechanisms, as it relates to FoMO and the intention to self-disclose. Thus, when developing digital identity, SNS self-disclosure must be considered (Chan et al.,2017).

One form of Social Media Marketing is how consumers are attracted to social media influencer endorsements, which creates a new caveat where the impact of influencers is understood and used as a tool to promote products. These influencers use Social Media Marketing tools and techniques to generate revenue and boost outreach, by creating trendy content and establishing relationships. Social media's revenue-generating potential is shown by the rise of Live Video and Live Shopping. According to a study, consumers who interacted with social media celebrities felt a stronger bond with the brand and its products than those who interacted with traditional celebrities (Jin et al.,2019).

This study examines the strategy of self-promotion used by professional on social media. The study would investigate why professionals use social media to promote themselves. Increasing visibility and viral nature of digital marketing promotion tools, social media marketing and the consumer indulgence in using technology to promote themselves has motivated the researcher to link Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis,1989) with self-promotion concept. The study would also propose a conceptual model to explain how Technology Acceptance Model leading affects self-promotion on social media. Thus, we propose:

H1: There is positive correlation between Self Promotion with perceived usefulness.

H2: There is positive correlation between Self Promotion with perceived ease of use.

H3: There is positive correlation between Perceived usefulness with perceived ease of use.

H4: There is positive correlation between Perceived usefulness with Intention to use.

H5: There is positive correlation between Perceived ease of use with Intention to use.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-Promotion Concept and Strategy

Social media success requires self-promotion in today's digital age. Self-promotion strategy is marketing oneself or a brand to build a good reputation and attract customers. With the rise of social media and digital platforms, professionals can easily share their skills, experiences, views, and information on the digital platform to help others learn. Self-promoters, especially professionals, can build profiles on social media to show off their work, experience, and viral nature. Self-promoter professionals are freelancers who aggressively market themselves by sharing their writeups, videos, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, and more on digital platforms to build a

brand or influencer marketing. Self-promotion includes content marketing, influencer marketing, and paid advertising. Content marketing uses blog posts and videos to attract and retain a target audience. Paid social media advertising promotes content or ads on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and others. Digital marketing has greatly increased self-promotion on online platforms, helping individuals and professionals build brands without hiring promotional or marketing services. Self-promoters build their audience and brand by showing their skills and USP on the right social media or digital platform rather than boasting about their product or service.

Smart innovative and creative technologies help self-promoters share the right content with the right audience. The reputation of the brand self-promoters want to carry should reflect in the values and vision of their online content and posts. Social media strategies and strategic content sharing increases brand value and keep audiences engaged. Another self-promotion strategy is collaborating with other content creators and online entrepreneurs. Self-promoter entrepreneurs and professionals succeed by mastering influence and networking. One of the most effective digital tools for self-promotion is social media platforms. These platforms provide a space for individuals to showcase their skills, share their ideas, and connect with others in their field. According to a study by Pew Research Centre, 69% of US adults use social media platforms, making them an excellent channel for self-promotion (Perrin, 2019). Promotion, advertising, marketing, even customer relationship is efficient in terms of costs and assisted in the acquisition of a number of consumers who are located far away from the area. The use of technologies related to social media contributed to an improvement in the business's brand management. A significant portion of our clientele is now active on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and others (Kumar & Ayedee, 2018). Professionals should determine the media type that consumers value most and develop content accordingly; choose the social media site that best fits their content; and develop a buyer persona to narrow their target audience to specify what tends to attract that type of consumer to your products/services (Lehnert et al., 2021).

Motivational Factors to engage in self-promotion using social media platforms

In today's digital age, businesses are increasingly relying on social media to promote their brand, products, and services. However, not all businesses are equally active on social media, and the motivational factors driving businesses to engage in self-promotion on these platforms vary (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). One of the main motivational factors for businesses to engage in self-promotion on social media is the desire to increase brand awareness and reach a wider audience (Rauschnabel et al., 2015). By leveraging the large user base of social media platforms, businesses can expand their reach and connect with potential customers they might not have otherwise reached. In comparison to more conventional forms of advertising, using social media to sell a company's goods and services may be a highly efficient and economical use of a company's marketing budget. An individual professional might engage themselves in Do-it-

yourself behavior using technology for self-promotion can be because of the motive like the need for recognition and the factors associated with using viral marketing tools that is social media marketing is because of the benefits, lack of quality goods and services and availability of desired services and goods (Wolf and McQuitty , 2011).

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The internet, smartphones, and online advertising have changed business communication. Organizations have invested billions in emerging technologies after realising the benefits of social media channels and platforms and their expected growth with digital technology innovations. Information systems and marketing research have extensive archives on how and why businesses and consumers use cutting-edge technology (Moore & Benbasat, 1991; Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Davis (1986) developed the Technology Acceptance Model to predict user acceptance of an information system to improve user acceptance. The model (Figure 1) defines acceptability based on two factors: perceived usefulness (the degree to which the information system is believed to be able to improve performance for the user) & perceived ease of use (the degree believed by the users for information system's effortlessness). However, the model does not take into consideration factors such as innovation levels, components of technological innovation, or the social systems (Ward, 2013). Several investigations using factorial designs have reached the conclusion that usability and usefulness are two separate factors (Larcker et al.,1980; Swanson, 1987).

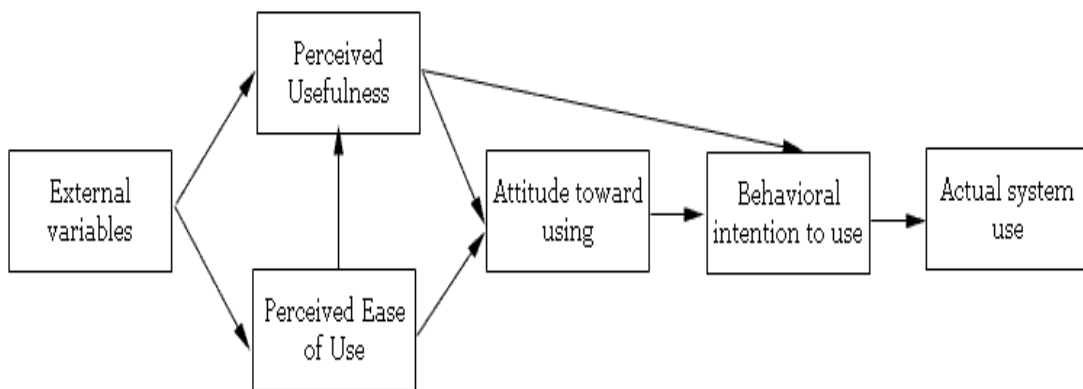


Figure1: Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw's Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) (1989).

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) measures consumer willingness to adopt new technology (Featherman and Pavlou, 2003). These new multifaceted technological innovations combined with new and existing processes, services, technologies, and applications are complicated and hard to understand and learn (Tung et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2007). Thus, risk perception, acceptance, and adoption must be considered when dealing with technological innovations that may affect an individual's decision-making (Featherman and Pavlou, 2003).

Perceived risk and vulnerability affect women less than men, but trialability and compatibility affect women more than men on perceived ease of use (Karahoca et al.,2017). According to the study, perceived risk is a major barrier to usage, and perceived usefulness mediates the two. The findings show that app compatibility and usability are the most important factors in intent to use (Hubert et al.,2019). Social influence with perceived usefulness drives behavioural intention to use FinTech services. Elderly individuals also value security. A study examined digital attributes, demographic factors, technology adoption, and their relationship to understand customer beliefs and perceptions about service use (Singh et al.,2020). In the past twenty years, TAM research has focused on the psychological aspects of innovation acceptance (Hoong et al.,2017).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Purposive homogeneous sampling was done to select survey respondents. It was ensured that the responder had appropriate knowledge and experience in utilising digital marketing tools utilised on social media platforms to upload their videos, blogs, and Vlogs relating to their expertise and career. English-language questionnaires were created and disseminated. Demographic and socioeconomic data was gathered from this.

Data gathering began with 50 academic, legal, and medical experts. Although interviewees provided repeated information. In-depth interviews acquire data using the standard interview method. The Gioia approach was used to portray the in-depth interview data for qualitative rigour in inductive research (Gioia et al, 2012). To evaluate the in-depth interview question, R was used to construct a word cloud to discover the most common terms for self-promotion on social media.

This paper also used the PLS-SEM method in Smart PLS 4.0. This tool is important not only because the data are distributed under relaxed conditions and may be applied to a very small sample size, but also because it reduces the risk of omitting out factors and helps provide predictions and explanations. This approach has been used to study reflective models in marketing (Ali & Omar, 2014), hence it is justified.

ANALYSIS

Respondent Characteristics

Structured interviews have a 50-person sample. The total valid responses were 47, 3 of 47 valid replies did not use Social Media or digital technologies for self-promotion. Physicians, dentists, academics, and advocates are the respondent's profession. As this was a purposive sample, all respondents self-promoted on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, E-mail marketing, and WhatsApp. It was also observed that professionals were not tech-savvy in handling their marketing operations, such as social media posts. This study takes cognizance of the fact that there is a difference between the usage of the digital marketing tools and their expected results.

Convergent Validity

Measures of convergent validity, or the reliability of the measurement scales, show how often different variables measure the same thing. Examining the Cronbach's alpha, the factor loadings, the composite reliability (CR), and the average variance extracted (AVE) are all ways to figure out convergent validity.

An initial analysis showed in table IV that the factor loadings were higher than the recommended cut-off value of 0.5, that all composite reliabilities and Cronbach's alpha values were higher than 0.7 expect for Intension to use(I) which is 0.678 which is even considered acceptable in exploratory research (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) and that all AVE values were higher than 0.5 (Chin, 1998; Henseler et al., 2016).

Table IV: Analysis of Measurement model

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Intension to Use (I)	0.678	0.751	0.811	0.591
Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)	0.836	0.866	0.901	0.753
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	0.767	0.792	0.861	0.674
Self-promotion (SP)	0.857	0.866	0.896	0.634

Discriminant Validity

The next thing that was done was to test the discriminant validity using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio criterion, also known as HTMT. The HTMT ratio of correlations was used so that evidence of discriminant validity could be found.

This ratio takes into account both the ratio of inter-construct correlation and the square root of the correlation product. Table-V shows that there is discriminant validity across all dimensions for HTMT values that are lower than the proposed cut-off value of 0.90.

This is shown by the fact that there is discriminant validity between all dimensions. (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table V: Analysis of Discriminant Validity: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

Constructs	Intension to Use	Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)	Perceived Usefulness (PU)	Self-promotion (SP)
Intension to Use				
Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)	0.638			
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	0.437	0.343		
Self-promotion (SP)	0.718	0.670	0.443	

Structural Model

It was hypothesised by Sang et al. (2010) depicts that the structural model forms causal links that exist between the various components of the model. The phrase "structural model" was used by the authors of this research (path coefficients and R-sqaure value). By looking at the R-sqaure value in combination with the path coefficients, one may get an idea of how well a hypothesised model is supported by the data. (Sang et al. 2010).

Table VI: Structural model (R²)

Endogenous variable	R-square
Intension to Use (I)	0.315
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	0.150
Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)	0.361

Table VII: Structural model evaluation

Relationship	Hypothesis	Path coefficients (β)	Result
PEU -> I	H5	0.444	Accepted
PU -> I	H4	0.237	Accepted
PEU -> PU	H3	0.101	Accepted
SE -> PEU	H2	0.601	Accepted
SE -> PU	H1	0.318	Accepted

Statistics tests and confidence intervals may be used to draw conclusions about the population's parameters. When discussing confidence intervals, the percentile bootstrap confidence interval is recommended (Beran & Srivastava,1985). Table-VII displays estimates of route coefficients for the projected relationships used in the illustrative example; these coefficients range from 0.101 to 0.601 and are all statistically significant at the 5% level or above. Statistical significance at the 5% level is assumed when the difference between the estimated path coefficient and zero has a p-value of less than 0.05 or when the 95% bootstrap percentile confidence interval that was

formed around the estimate does not contain zero. The bootstrapping technique was used to examine the hypothesised relationships between the parts. The direct route link between PEU and I (beta = 0.444, p 0.05), PU and I (beta = 0.237, p 0.05), PEU and PU (beta = 0.1101, p 0.05), SE and PEU (beta = 0.601, p 0.05), and SE and PU (beta = 0.308, p 0.05) is illustrated in Table-VII.

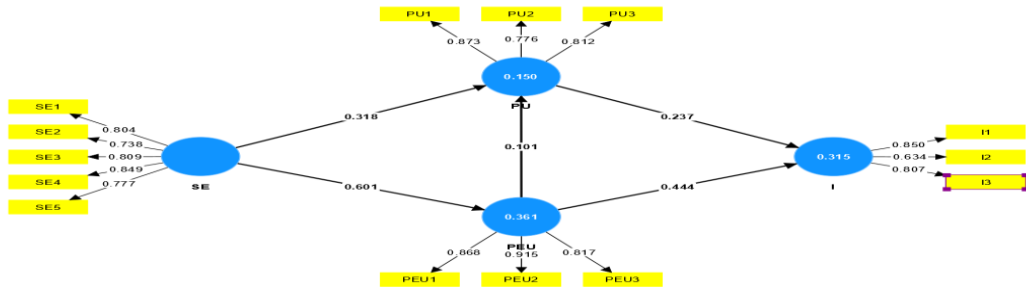


Figure 5: The Complete Structural Model

HYPOTHESIS RESULTS

H1: There is positive correlation between Self Promotion with perceived usefulness.

Self-promotion is described as an outreach approach that aids in increasing traction in terms of exposure and more clients; this kind of promotion is excellent for professionals such as doctors and lawyers. We focused on such professionals in this research to examine the potential motivators for using and implementing social media marketing tactics. Hypothesis 1 is based on professional reasons to employ social media marketing in order to get greater traction. This has been shown; for reference, figure 5 depicts the connection.

H2: There is positive correlation between Self Promotion with perceived ease of use.

This study has considered the fact that much of the use of social media is not entirely professional rather more of an outreach exercise, this form of promotion is not difficult and can be used along with the day-to-day activities. Professionals do perceive it to be easy to use. Hence the second hypothesis also holds true.

H3: There is positive correlation between Perceived usefulness with perceived ease of use.

This paper has also been able to positively associate the ease of use with perceived usefulness, this highlights the fact that the two are important motivators for the professionals to use the same, not only social media is an important exercise but also that it is also easy.

H4: There is positive correlation between Perceived usefulness with Intention to use.

This paper has established a positive relationship between the intention to use and perceived usefulness, this comes as the final straw that further motivates the professional to use social media for Self-Promotions. This will explain motivation of the final decision.

H5: There is positive correlation between Perceived ease of use with Intention to use.

Perceived ease of use is positively associated with the intention to use and since we have already discussed the relationships in H3 and H4. Ease of Use is perceived to be the final motivation before the intention to use.

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

In today's digital age, professionals in various fields must establish a strong digital identity to maintain their reputation and attract new clients. For doctors, lawyers, and educationalists, establishing a strong digital identity can be particularly crucial in the competitive market. Social media platforms and other digital tools offer numerous opportunities for professionals to promote their digital identity and connect with potential clients. In this article, we explore how doctors, lawyers, and educationalists can navigate their digital identity through self-promotion on global social media platforms. It appears that professionals who want to reap the full advantages of social media develop a strategy that places a premium on the coevolution of creativity and resources, whereby they communicate their goals and objectives and provide an architecture for innovation. Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter provide doctors with a space to share their thoughts on the latest medical research, discuss best practices, and connect with other professionals in their field. Doctors, lawyer and educationalist can also use social media platforms to share professional success stories, which can help build trust with potential clients and peer group and can establish their expertise and building their network. By regularly creating and sharing high-quality content, engaging with others in their field, and leveraging the power of these digital tools, professionals in these fields can effectively promote their digital identity and establish a strong online presence.

This paper highlighted the importance of Self-Promotions; this comes as a benchmark for creating more insightful analysis. When we look at the word cloud there are two words that are common in them, people and online, in the post pandemic and lockdown period, the world has become accustomed to using the social media even more and the technical interfaces are prominent modes of providing services. Professionals like Doctors and Lawyers extensively use social media for promoting the services which they think can get them more traction globally rather than using the traditional advertisement outlets. If we take back our focus on the word 'people' we will grasp that almost all of the people are on internet worldwide and best way to reach out is online. Academicians and teachers are also at the providing end of the spectrum this has created an opportunity for students and researchers to have a better access. Digital tools play a crucial role in promoting digital identity through self-promotion in today's globalized world. Social media platforms, personal websites, email marketing, podcasting, and video marketing are

just a few of the many tools available to individuals looking to establish themselves as experts or thought leaders in their fields. By regularly creating and sharing high-quality content, engaging with others in their field, and leveraging the power of these digital tools, individuals can effectively promote their digital identity and establish a strong online presence.

Social media marketing has altered the marketing industry's approach to communication would be an understatement. Because of social media, the whole nature of human communication has changed. In this day and age of instantaneous global communication, internet marketing is crucial. Offering services on social networking sites has been shown to increase both exposure and revenue. There is a chasm between the general public's acceptance of technology and people's personal feelings about it. This paper has successfully accounted for decision making motivators. Empirical research has shed light on the reasons for the widespread use of social media for advertising one's own business. This research adds to our understanding of what drives people to use social media for commercial and self-promotion strategies. This study has not taken into consideration the use of social media for self-promotion as an essential business exercise further more it does not consider the seriousness by which the social media is used, further research is required as to what constitutes a decision to promote themselves to get better traction and usage of social media analytics for the same. Another area of research could be understanding the consumer behaviour and decision-making patterns of the consumer.

This research has used the Smart PLS to be able to analyse the different responders, this technique is useful as discussed above in providing results which are not bound by any boundary, this tool is most useful for the small sample size. To understand the statistical importance of the same, Instagram is used by the most number of professionals, this helps us understand the nature of outreach which is now focused on the generation z, and as the most number of people are on instagram. The technical limitations are however apparent of this study which are further discussed in the limitations.

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