



The Impact of Digital Marketing Strategies on Startup Success

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Abstract

With an emphasis on SEO, social media marketing, and content marketing, this study seeks to understand how digital marketing tactics affect the success of startups. Although the impact on direct sales is indirect, it emphasises how social media marketing increases brand awareness and interaction. Implementation issues, especially for entrepreneurs with technical training, prevent content marketing from being fully exploited despite the fact that it increases customer trust and interest. Search engine optimisation (SEO) is a cheap way to compete with well-established businesses online and boost the exposure. To succeed in today's cutthroat digital market, startups must master these methods, according to the report.

Introduction

Background

Startup entrepreneurs often find themselves in a digital environment that serves as both a leveller and the most competitive arena for exposure (Goldman *et al.* 2021). Startups can compete with more established firms, build their brand, and attract consumers with the correct digital marketing plan. Clear goals fuel a high-impact digital marketing plan. Startups need to rank for real and feasible long-tail and speciality keywords in the competitive internet marketplace. With the help of content marketing, the company may become known as an industry leader (Rachmad, 2022). Blog entries, videos, infographics, and podcasts are all viable formats for this. These days, it's impossible to succeed without a robust social media presence.

Aim

The aim of this research is to evaluate the impact of digital marketing strategies on startup success.

Objectives

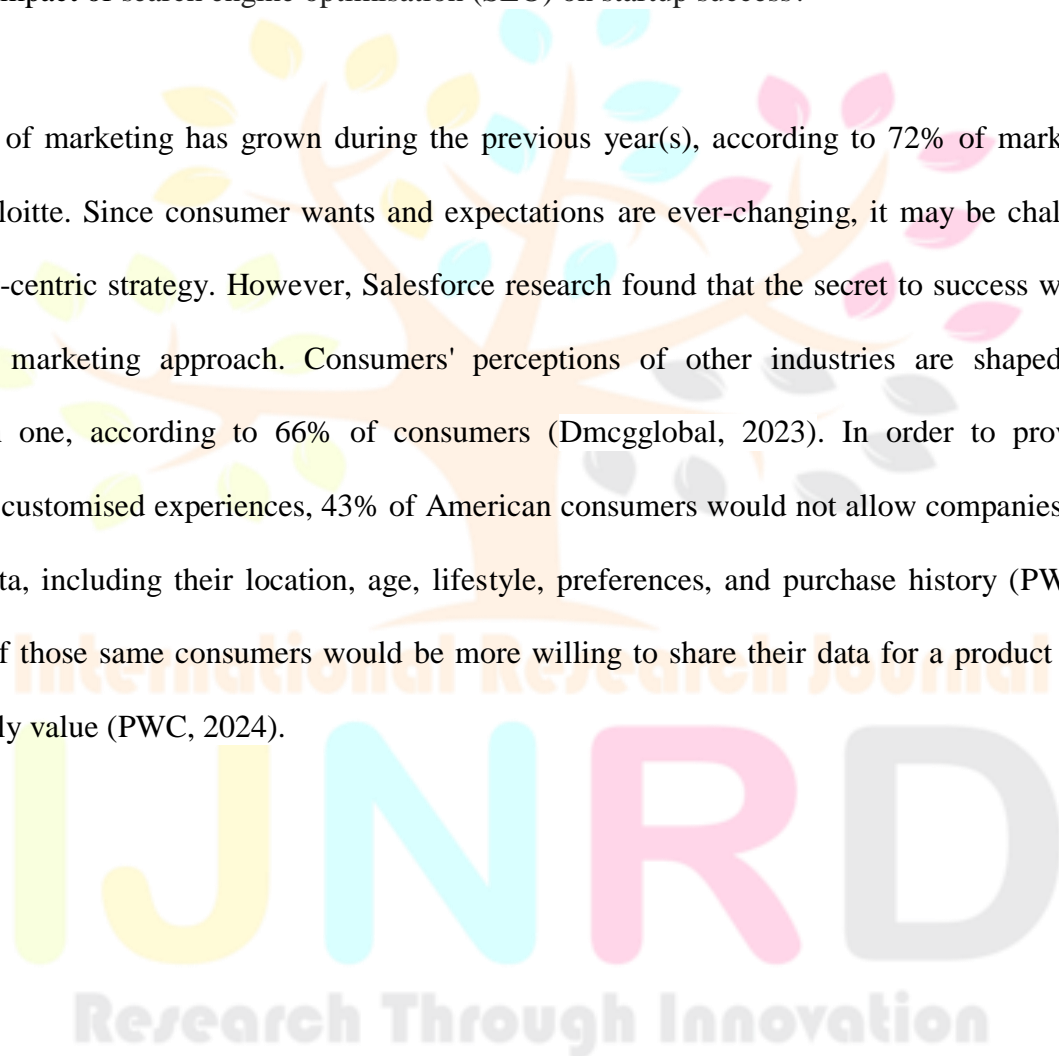
- To analyse the impact of social media marketing on startup success.
- To examine the impact of content marketing on startup success.
- To investigate the impact of search engine optimisation (SEO) on startup success.

Questions

- What is the impact of social media marketing on startup success?
- What is the impact of content marketing on startup success?
- What is the impact of search engine optimisation (SEO) on startup success?

Rationale

The significance of marketing has grown during the previous year(s), according to 72% of marketers who reported it to Deloitte. Since consumer wants and expectations are ever-changing, it may be challenging to adopt a customer-centric strategy. However, Salesforce research found that the secret to success was using a customer-centric marketing approach. Consumers' perceptions of other industries are shaped by their experiences with one, according to 66% of consumers (Dmccglobal, 2023). In order to provide more personalised and customised experiences, 43% of American consumers would not allow companies to collect their personal data, including their location, age, lifestyle, preferences, and purchase history (PWC, 2024). However, 63% of those same consumers would be more willing to share their data for a product or service that they genuinely value (PWC, 2024).



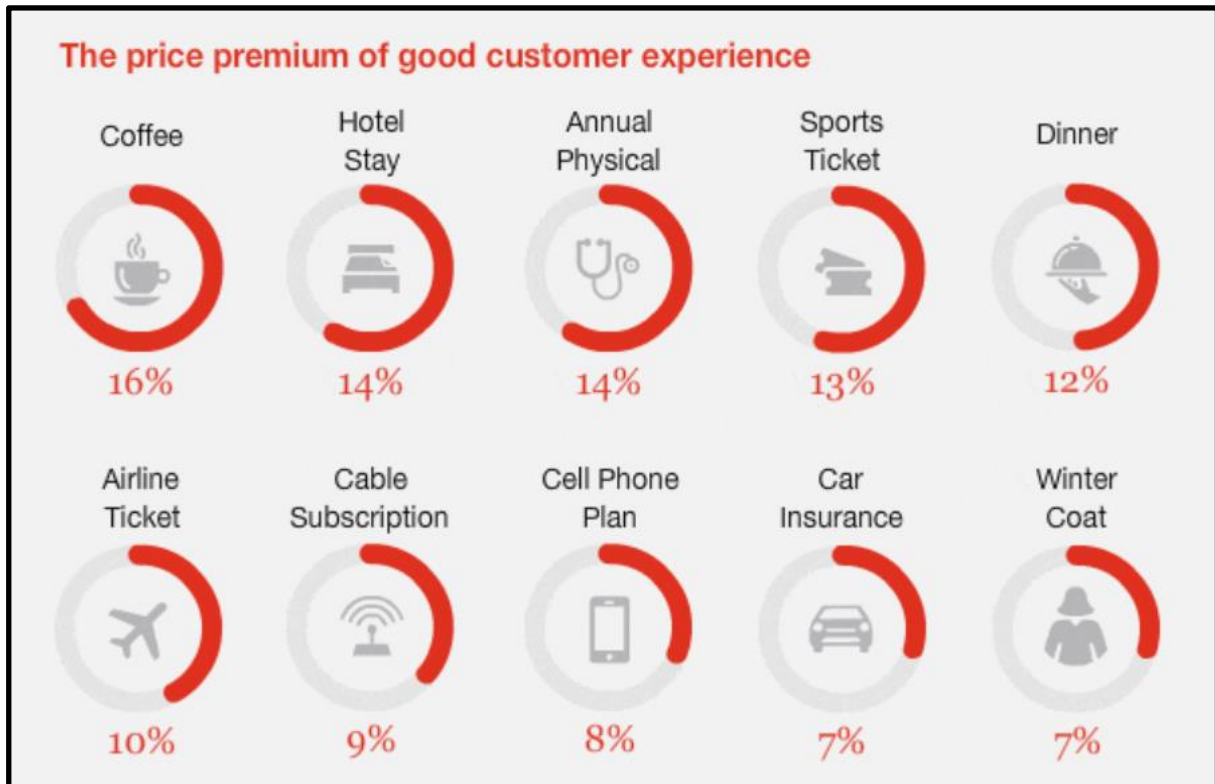


Figure 1: Price Premium

(Source: PWC, 2024)

Significance

The significance of this research rests in its potential to provide startup entrepreneurs insights into successful digital marketing methods, consequently improving their competitiveness, brand recognition, and client acquisition efforts. Startup success in today's cutthroat digital market is possible with an understanding of these tactics.



Literature Review

Social Media Marketing

The term "social media" is used in a marketing context to refer to websites where users may connect with one another, exchange content, and establish communities (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2020). As "dynamic, interconnected, egalitarian, and interactive organisms" (Peters *et al.* 2013), social media have caused three major changes in the business world. Social media sites like Facebook, microblogging sites like Twitter, and content communities like YouTube all play a role in facilitating this kind of connection by providing a foundation upon which social networks may be constructed based on common interests and ideals (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2020). In this context, "social connectedness" has been renamed as "social ties", and the degree to which these links are strong or weak is determined by their length and intensity (Muller and Peres, 2019).

Content marketing

material marketing is a kind of marketing in which material is created, shared, and published with the goal of gaining consumers (Nosrati *et al.* 2013). People started using it to spread the word about brands and boost their reputation. Michelin, a tyre brand, was created. Jell-O had salespeople who went door-to-door, giving out free cookbooks, which taught people how to use the product. And more According to Hollebeek and Macky (2019), these cases show how content marketing can help businesses meet customer demands while also building trust, engagement, and lasting connections with customers.

Search engine optimisation (SEO)

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) combines technical and creative components to help online business owners boost user traffic and improve search engine use rankings (Ahmad *et al.* 2022). Entrepreneurs who sell their wares online are well-versed in the most recent developments in the marketing and e-commerce industries. Brands' ability to reach prospective customers is sensitive to changes in search engine algorithms. Thus, it is imperative that online businesses keep up with the ever-changing nature of the internet and, in particular, search engines. Brand owners who want to maintain their relevance in today's market need to be prepared to shift their attention from traditional to online business, with a particular emphasis on online brand strategy (Nosrati *et al.* 2013).

Startup success

Technology startups are significant regional economic drivers and are seen as sources of long-term development (Díaz-Santamaría and Bulchand-Gidumal, 2021). Both researchers and professionals in the field are interested in learning what makes them effective. Nevertheless, the literature is still divided on the best way to measure a digital startup's performance. A number of factors, as well as several theoretical frameworks and real-world examples, contribute to a startup's success (Keogh and Johnson, 2021).

Impact of social media marketing on startup success

The ability to reach and engage a large audience at little expense is one reason why social media marketing is so important for startups (Basri and Siam, 2017). More brand awareness, consumer loyalty, and conversions may result from well-executed social media campaigns, according to research. Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook are great examples of platforms that startups can use to engage with their target audience on a personal level, which may help build trust and a sense of community. Startups may improve their marketing strategy with the help of social media analytics, which provides important insights into customer behaviour and preferences (Bruce *et al.* 2022). To build and expand their market presence, startups may benefit greatly from social media marketing.

Impact of content marketing on startup success

Digital content marketing is crucial because it helps build customer interest and, in this day and age, everyone is tech-savvy and searches for everything online (Rumbay *et al.* 2021). Many people even trust a company more after reading several positive reviews on a single digital marketing platform. Startups fail miserably if they fail to provide excellent customer service and fail to understand and meet the requirements and desires of their target market. The more a company knows about its target market, the better it can serve its customers. A trend is the overarching path that something is taking as it evolves, changes, or turns (Tran, 2021). A trend is a pattern of slow but consistent development in the economic sector.

Impact of search engine optimisation (SEO) on startup success

SEO is very inexpensive in comparison to other forms of marketing, which has led to its increased use among start-ups (Taiminen and Karjaluo, 2015). Search engines may assist new businesses in getting their name out there and competing with more established businesses. Search engine optimisation (SEO) best practices

may help achieve this goal. When a company's public-facing resources—landing page, blog, article, etc.—rank better on search engine results pages (SERPs), consumers are able to discover them, according to Gupta (2016). Many new businesses don't intentionally utilise digital marketing to bring in consumers and keep them as clients, according to research.

Theory

In line with this study, Everett Rogers put out the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which explains the social system-wide dissemination of innovative ideas and technology (Sartipi, 2020). This theory, as it pertains to digital marketing for startups, emphasises the process of implementing novel marketing tactics, including search engine optimisation (SEO), content marketing, and social media marketing. To get ahead of the competition and succeed in the market, startups use these techniques, as they are early adopters. To better understand how startups might impact and quicken the adoption of digital marketing strategies among their intended consumers, the theory highlights the role of social systems, time, and communication channels in the adoption process (Dearing and Cox, 2018).

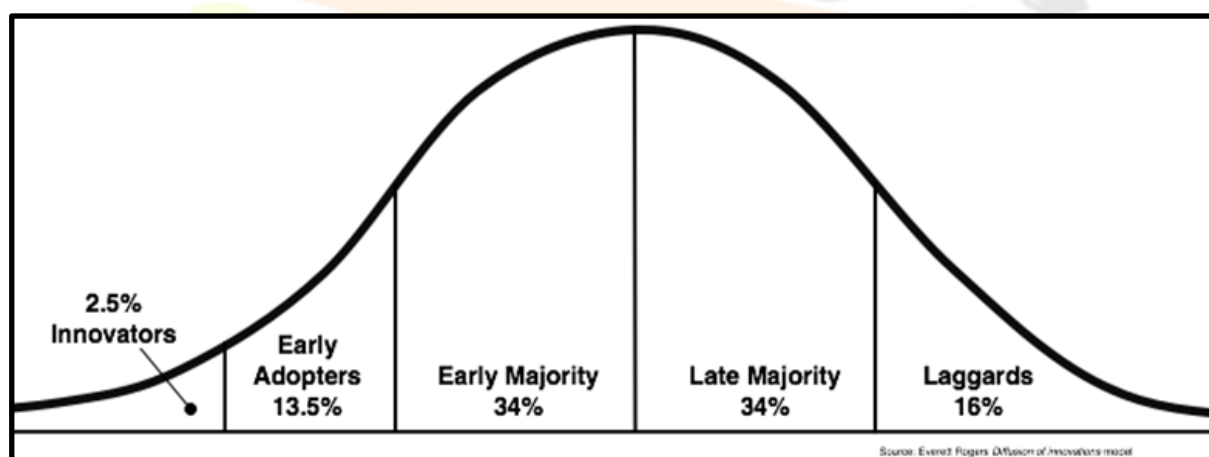


Figure 2: Diffusion of Innovations Theory

(Source: Sartipi, 2020)

Literature gap

There has been a dearth of studies on the ways in which digital marketing tactics affect startup success despite the abundance of literature on the topic generally. The current body of research often applies broad conclusions to all companies without delving into the unique possibilities and threats that startups confront when trying to use digital marketing to expand.

Research Methodology

Research Philosophy

This study used the Interpretivism research philosophy. The foundation of interpretivism is the idea that reality is socially produced, multifaceted, and subjective. Truth and knowledge, it says, are relative, dependent on context (both cultural and historical), and constructed from individual experiences and interpretations (Zangirolami-Raimundo *et al.* 2018). The application of interpretivism was made possible by its focus on comprehending the personal experiences and interpretations that people, especially entrepreneurs of new businesses, make of digital marketing tactics (Dźwigoł and Dźwigoł-Barosz, 2018). This approach delves into the perception and implementation of these tactics, offering subtle insights into their influence on startup success.

Research Approach

This study used a deductive research approach. An acceptable conclusion may be methodically drawn from a set of premises using the deductive approach. A bottom-up approach, known as induction, begins with observations and progresses from specific experiences to more general premises (Mishra and Alok, 2022). In contrast, the deductive approach is top-down. Existing ideas on the influence of digital marketing tactics on startup success were tested using a deductive approach. This strategy systematically examines the validity of known assumptions in relation to startups by beginning with these hypotheses and then doing empirical research (Newman and Gough, 2020).

Research Design

This research used an explanatory design. When studying complicated social problems, researchers might benefit from using an explanatory design to test hypotheses and establish correlations between variables (Snyder, 2019). Additionally, it helps researchers understand previously unstudied systems, fill in research gaps, and answer queries. To decipher the web of connections between digital marketing tactics and the success of startups, an explanatory design was used. By offering in-depth explanations of how and why these techniques affect different success criteria in startups, this approach helps test ideas, solve particular research questions, and fill existing gaps (Pandey and Pandey, 2021).

Data Collection Technique

Secondary qualitative data collection entails examining preexisting data sources such as academic publications, industry reports, case studies, and web material pertinent to digital marketing and business performance (Mohajan, 2018). Using this method, researchers may access a plethora of pre-existing data, providing a wide range of viewpoints and in-depth understanding. Researchers may get a better grasp of a topic by researching related studies and anecdotal evidence for patterns, correlations, and trends. When primary data collection is too difficult or time-consuming, secondary qualitative data collection is a great alternative (Mukherjee, 2019).

Data Analysis

For this research, secondary qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. Finding, evaluating, and reporting on recurring ideas (themes) inside data is the goal of this approach. Researchers may learn important things about how digital marketing methods affect startup performance by coding the data and putting related codes into overarching themes (Säfsten and Gustavsson, 2020). By breaking down the data into its component themes, thematic analysis sheds light on the complex relationship between startup development and SEO, content marketing, and social media marketing. Synthesising multiple sources of qualitative data is where this approach really shines, allowing us to uncover both commonalities and differences in the elements that impact company success (Bairagi and Munot, 2019).

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations included preserving intellectual property rights, preventing plagiarism, and assuring the quality and integrity of secondary data sources. To further guarantee that the study and results were presented truthfully and without prejudice, researchers were transparent when interpreting the data and gave proper credit to all sources (Patel and Patel, 2019).

Data Analysis and Findings

Findings

Author	Impact of social media marketing on startup success
Gloor <i>et al.</i> (2020)	<p>The aim of this research is to investigate how the success of startups is affected by the makeup of boards and the social media presence of board members. The researcher created a one-of-a-kind database of around 500 tech startups in the United States by combining data from various sources. Although they do not increase sales, the researcher discovered that startups with more venture capitalists on the board and board members who are active on Twitter get more investment over time. The capacity of startups to convert assets into sales is higher when there are no venture capitalists on the board and no Twitter users among the board members. Although venture capitalists' presence does not always translate into sales growth and operational efficiency, the findings show that startups may benefit from collaborating with them due to the ability to receive more money. This aligns with previous studies. Gender representation on the board and members' roles within the network of interlocking directorates are two of the many control factors they use.</p>

Table 1: Impact of social media marketing on startup success

(Source: Author)

Author	Impact of content marketing on startup success
Mansour, (2015)	<p>Content Marketing (CM) is a relatively recent marketing idea that has not yet found a home in marketing theory. Without realising it, the majority of companies use at least one of its technologies. This research aims to understand better how Content Marketing (CM) may be used in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with a focus on IT startups. There is a lack of research on IT startups in comparison to other types of startups and SMEs. In order to demonstrate the connection between CM practice and IT startups, taking into account their unique traits, a preliminary framework was built based on a literature study. After that, we did some empirical study to find out how IT startups are using marketing and what chances CM may provide them. A research involving many cases has been put into place. In all, thirteen interviews were conducted. High-tech startups, low-tech startups, and industry specialists from Portugal and Egypt were all represented in the sample. Content marketing is still a relatively unknown concept to most companies, according to the study. Entrepreneurs with training in management understand the importance of marketing more</p>

	than those with technical training. Lastly, the lack of marketing skills is a bigger problem for technology-based startups than limited financial resources. Business organisations in the two nations were identical.
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Table 2: Impact of content marketing on startup success

(Source: Author)

Author	Impact of search engine optimisation (SEO) on startup success
Prabhu (2019)	There are new challenges and opportunities for startup businesses in the digital era. One strategy that new businesses use to get their products and services out there is advanced marketing, which makes use of various forms of digital media. Computerised advertising's primary goal is to attract customers and facilitate their interaction with the business using high-tech digital media. The importance of sophisticated marketing for new startup businesses and their clients is the main focus of this essay. Computerised showcasing has an effect on new company transactions, which the researcher examined. Additionally, this study explains the differences between conventional advertising and sophisticated showcasing. This study has shown several forms of sophisticated digital marketing online advertising, their feasibility, and their impact on sales for new startups. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is a technique for improving a website's or a page's visibility in a web crawler's "regular" or un-paid ("natural") indexed listings. Over time, a site's visibility in the query item list and its position on the indexed lists page determine the number of visitors it receives from internet searcher customers. Website optimisation might aim for many kinds of searches, such as image look, local search, video search, academic research, news search, and vertical web crawlers that are specific to a certain sector.

Table 3: Impact of search engine optimisation (SEO) on startup success

(Source: Author)

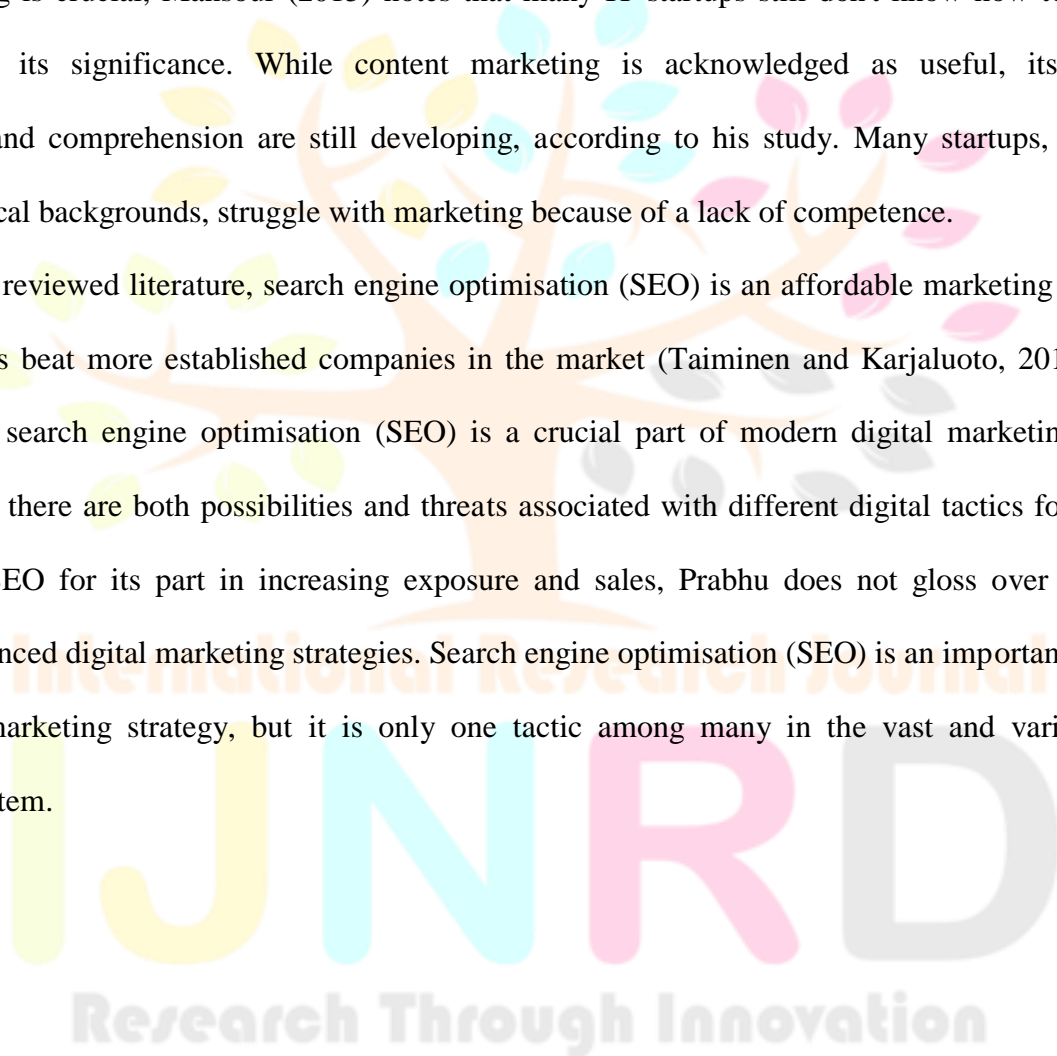
Discussion

Through the use of social media analytics, startups may greatly profit from social media marketing (Basri and Siam, 2017; Bruce *et al.* 2022) on platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. This marketing strategy increases brand exposure, customer loyalty, and engagement. Gloor *et al.* (2020) discovered that

while startups with active board members on social media, especially Twitter, get more funding, it does not always mean that sales would improve. Rather than directly driving sales, the participation of venture capitalists on boards was associated with increased investment, indicating that board members' social media involvement may indirectly boost startup success.

Digital content marketing is crucial for startups, according to the literature review (Rumbay *et al.* 2021; Tran, 2021). This is because it helps startups understand their target market's requirements and meet those needs via online interactions and favourable reviews, which in turn generates consumer interest and confidence. While content marketing is crucial, Mansour (2015) notes that many IT startups still don't know how to use it or even understand its significance. While content marketing is acknowledged as useful, its practical implementation and comprehension are still developing, according to his study. Many startups, especially those with technical backgrounds, struggle with marketing because of a lack of competence.

According to the reviewed literature, search engine optimisation (SEO) is an affordable marketing tactic that may help startups beat more established companies in the market (Taiminen and Karjaluoto, 2015; Gupta, 2016). Although search engine optimisation (SEO) is a crucial part of modern digital marketing, Prabhu (2019) notes that there are both possibilities and threats associated with different digital tactics for startups. While praising SEO for its part in increasing exposure and sales, Prabhu does not gloss over the wider influence of advanced digital marketing strategies. Search engine optimisation (SEO) is an important aspect of every startup's marketing strategy, but it is only one tactic among many in the vast and varied digital marketing ecosystem.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This research highlights the critical role of digital marketing strategies in startup success. Social media marketing enhances brand visibility and engagement, though its impact on direct sales is indirect. Content marketing builds consumer trust and interest, but many startups, particularly those with technical backgrounds, struggle with its implementation. SEO offers a cost-effective means to compete with established firms by improving online visibility, though it is just one component of a broader digital marketing strategy. Understanding and effectively applying these strategies is essential for startups to thrive in the competitive digital landscape.

Recommendations

Social media marketing may help entrepreneurs succeed with their startups by fostering customer loyalty and trust via interactions with audiences on sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Prioritising content marketing means concentrating on producing high-quality, relevant content that caters to the demands of the target audience and inspires trust in their products. To further increase their online presence and compete successfully with more established businesses, startups should also engage in SEO tactics. In order to stay ahead of the curve and make the most of their marketing budgets, companies must constantly improve their digital marketing strategy and gain marketing expertise.

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