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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Damaris Ramos

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Social Media Marketing Strategies for Increasing Small Businesses' Revenues

by

Damaris Ramos

MS, University Carlos Albizu, 2001

BS, University of Puerto Rico, 1999

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration - Marketing

Walden University

June 2021

Abstract

Many small business leaders lack social media marketing strategies, which can negatively affect sales revenue. Small business leaders who fail to increase revenues are at a higher risk of failure. Grounded in the resource-based view, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore social media marketing strategies small business leaders use to increase revenue. The participants were 13 small business leaders in central Florida who successfully managed social media marketing strategies to increase revenues. Data were collected from semistructured interviews, reviewing businesses' social media, financial reports, and interview notes. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Four themes emerged: increasing engagement, educational content, diverse social media platforms, and effectiveness measurements. A key recommendation is for small business leaders to increase engagement by mixing traditional marketing strategies with social media, supporting other businesses, and understanding their audience. The implications for positive social change include the potential for small business leaders to improve employees' quality of life through higher incomes, sales, and opportunities. The community could benefit from increased tax revenue to fund programs and services for citizens.

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Dedication

I dedicate this research study to my son, Anthony. Son, you have been my strength during times of weakness. You have been the light in the darkness when the path seemed confusing. I want to be like you, always consistent and predictable, never judging others, giving them the benefit of the doubt. Your yes has been a yes, and your no has been a no. You are the most straightforward individual I have ever met. For you, I have accomplished higher goals and have never given up. I hope to set an example for you; the sky is the limit. Thanks for your compassion, patience, and unconditional positive attitude during this process. You have been the best present I have ever received in life, and for that, I will be forever grateful. I love you to the moon and back, my love.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

As a marketing strategy, social media is essential to small business owners who want to communicate and establish relationships with their customers, develop branding campaigns, and increase revenues. Business leaders who efficiently use social media as a marketing strategy to create, sustain, and maintain a relationship with customers can improve their business revenue (Galati et al., 2017; Saridakis et al., 2018; Yadav, 2017). However, some small business leaders lack the necessary skills to manage an efficient social media marketing strategy, reducing their ability to generate revenues (Appel et al., 2020). In this study, I explored the social media marketing strategies that business leaders use to increase their business revenue.

Background of the Problem

Business leaders who need to increase their brand visibility can benefit from expanding their traditional marketing strategies by integrating social media into their business plan (Odoom et al., 2017). Some businesses' performance suffers the adverse impact of leaders not having a social media strategy (Lepkowska-White & Parsons, 2019). Social media platforms, such as Facebook, are cost-efficient ways of facilitating relationships between organizations and customers (McCarthy & Mazza, 2019). Social media marketing is a cost-efficient alternative for small business leaders who aim to increase revenue.

Some small business leaders lack strategies to incorporate social media as part of the business plan. Approximately 62% of business leaders lack social media marketing strategies, which can negatively affect sales revenue (Mahfouz et al., 2017). Social media

marketing strategies are cost-efficient for business leaders (Saridakis et al., 2018). Some small business leaders feel alienated by social media and lack the skills to incorporate social media into their marketing strategy, negatively affecting business revenue (Bernard, 2016). This research can increase business leaders' knowledge regarding social media marketing strategies and their visibility, brand promotion, and customer connections to increase business revenue.

Problem Statement

Business leaders who lack social media marketing strategies negatively affect business revenue (Bernard, 2016). Approximately 62% of small business leaders lack social media marketing strategies, which can reduce online traffic and new customer development, negatively affecting sales revenue (Mahfouz et al., 2017). The general business problem is that some small business leaders who lack social media marketing strategies may lose market share. The specific business problem is that some small business leaders lack social media marketing strategies to increase revenue.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore social media marketing strategies that small business leaders use to increase revenue. The targeted population was 12 small business leaders in central Florida who have successfully managed social media marketing strategies to increase revenue. The implications for positive social change include the potential for small business leaders to strengthen connections and engagement with the community, resulting in stronger relationships. The local economy enhancement could improve quality of life through higher incomes, sales,

employment opportunities, and taxes for communities to sustain or increase programs and services for citizens.

Nature of the Study

The three research methods are (a) qualitative, (b) quantitative, and (c) mixed (Matta, 2019). I selected the qualitative method as the most appropriate method to study the problem in a natural state using open-ended questions. Researchers typically use open-ended questions to obtain more information and better understand the topic (Prado & Rizzo Vincenzi, 2018). Researchers use the quantitative method to test hypotheses about variables' relationships (Shaw, 2017). The quantitative method was not appropriate for this study, as I was not testing hypotheses or examining variables' relationships. Mixed-method researchers use both qualitative and quantitative elements (Creamer, 2018). For this research, I did not need to consider variables' relationships by testing hypotheses; therefore, the mixed method was not appropriate.

Designs for qualitative research include (a) case study, (b) narrative, (c) ethnographic, and (d) phenomenological, among others (Padgett, 2017). I used a case study design. Researchers using a qualitative case study design typically obtain an in-depth exploration and extensive knowledge with more than one type of information source to understand a topic (Ridder, 2017). Case studies require using at least two distinct types of data. Researchers use the narrative design to present findings in a chronological order using the participants' stories with their experiences, thoughts, and feelings (Amon, 2017), which was not appropriate for this research as the focus was on the business leader's role with social media as a marketing strategy. Researchers use

ethnographic design to explore cultural group relationships (Edirisingha et al., 2017), which was not appropriate for this study as participants' focus was their business leadership role and not their cultural background. The phenomenological design is applicable for researchers trying to understand individuals' experiences and their meaning (Adams & van Manen, 2017). The research focused on understanding the business leaders' skills, not their personal experiences; for this reason, the phenomenological design was not appropriate for this research.

Research Question

This study's research question was: What social media marketing strategies do small business leaders use to increase revenue?

Interview Questions

Data for this study were collected from participants using the following interview questions:

1. What social media marketing strategies did you use to increase your business revenue?
2. How did you measure the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies for your business?
3. What social media marketing strategies were the most effective in increasing revenue for your business?
4. What social media marketing strategies were the least effective in increasing revenue for your business?

5. How did you combine social media marketing strategies with traditional marketing strategies to increase business revenue?
6. What else can you share about the social media marketing strategies that you have used to increase your business revenue?

Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework was the resource-based view (RBV) introduced by Penrose in 1959 (Penrose, 2009). Business leaders using the RBV focus on organizational resources and values to strengthen the organization (Penrose, 2009). During the 1980s, the RBV concept gained recognition from corporate leaders exploring their employee resources to promote their products and services (Corte et al., 2017). The RBV allows organization leaders to identify, acquire, and utilize resources available to expand their knowledge and achieve competitive advantage (Monios & Bergqvist, 2016). Business leaders implementing the RBV focus on the employees' skills, developing their strengths, and recognizing their challenges to meet organizations' revenue goals (Gupta et al., 2018). Unique, rare, and inimitable organizational resources are part of the marketing strategies for business leaders to incorporate when implementing the RBV theory (Monios & Bergqvist, 2016). Business leaders applying the RBV theory consider the team skills as well as their resources, such as the internet, website, social media platforms, and their marketing strategies with their logos, slogans, branding, as well as their products to increase their business revenues (Monios & Bergqvist, 2016).

The RBV theory is appropriate for a research study assisting the business leaders in identifying critical elements skills with their business partners and employees for their

social media marketing strategies to increase their revenue. According to Madsen (2017), leaders' business revenue might benefit by increasing their sales and customers' social media marketing strategy. Organizational leaders need to identify employees with social media marketing skills to promote the organization's brand and engage with customers. Business leaders recognizing their challenges and limitations of social media resources might benefit from by hiring a professional company to manage their social media marketing strategies.

Operational Definitions

The operational definitions for this study provide simplification of terms and jargon used to implement social media strategies. The clarification of social media's operational definitions as a marketing tool helps leaders implement their approach to increase business revenue. The purpose of the operational definitions is to clarify and reduce confusion with the social media marketing topic as a marketing strategy.

Comments: Social media comments are expressions left after a content post on a social media channel (Galati et al., 2017).

Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM): Complaint or complimentary content via the internet using blogs, pictures, and videos (Geurin & Burch, 2017).

Influencers: Individuals with the capacity to promote a product for adoption, spreading the information with EWOM (Roelens et al., 2016).

Likes: An option on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram allowing individuals to express their interest and approval of content by clicking the "like" option (Ding et al., 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are facts considered to be real but not verifiable (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In this study, I assumed that individuals selected for the interviews answered the questions truthfully and honestly; their information remained confidential to protect their business. The second assumption was that the participants were knowledgeable about the topic; a third assumption was that participants understood the interview questions. The fourth assumption was that information reviewed during research and interviews would be enough to answer the research question. The final assumption was that social media as a marketing strategy positively impacts business revenue, recognizing that it is one of many marketing policies affecting income.

Limitations

Limitations are those variables a researcher cannot control that might negatively impact the research (Queirós et al., 2017). This study's limitations were related to the methodology, design, and the researcher's knowledge of social media marketing strategies. The qualitative method, which allows the researcher to collect the data with semistructured interviews under a natural environment, can limit the technique for future replications if completed under diverse conditions and criteria. The multiple-case design selected for this research advanced the knowledge on the topic with 12 interviews regarding social media marketing leaders' skills; however, the subjectivity of their experiences and opinions can create a limitation for the study. A limitation with the design might be the business leaders' knowledge, opportunities around their business,

and support for their success. Another limitation might be the researcher's reduced knowledge and direct experience with social media platforms as a marketing tool for business-related purposes.

Delimitations

The study's delimitations are those restrictions for research data to be generalized (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). In this multicase study, there were two delimitations. The study of social media marketing was conducted in a limited location, central Florida, with a select 12 small business leaders.

Significance of the Study

Business leaders successfully developing, implementing, and managing social media marketing strategies might increase their brand awareness and engagement with a possible increase in business revenues (Saridakis et al., 2018). Business leaders increasing their understanding of social media marketing strategies might be reflected in the organization's engagement with consumers, their contribution to the brand, and the acceleration of innovation—all factors that might increase business revenues (Madsen, 2017; Pérez-González et al., 2017). Social media marketing strategy managed successfully by business leaders might attract new businesses and opportunities while increasing communication and feedback with a possible positive impact on the organization's performance (Lacka & Chong, 2016).

Contribution to Business Practice

Business leaders implementing social media marketing strategies increase the communication and availability of information for online customers, resulting in possible

higher revenues (Saridakis et al., 2018). Business leaders can integrate input provided by consumers to design and develop products and services for increasing business revenues (de Vries et al., 2017). Business leaders focused on social media engagement incorporate consumers in the cocreation of products and services with feedback collected from customers that support the brand (Keegan & Rowley, 2017). As a marketing strategy for business leaders, social media can reduce costs, increasing businesses' opportunities to improve and maintain their profits (Saridakis et al., 2018). Using social media as a marketing strategy allows business leaders to create customer-centric networks to support and sustain the market at affordable costs while increasing business revenues.

Implications for Social Change

Business leaders increasing their marketing strategies with social media can positively impact their sustainability, improving their revenue (Galati et al., 2017). Using effective social media strategies enables business leaders to develop an online community with a network that supports their business relationships for the benefit of the communities (Chen et al., 2017). Business leaders using social media to connect with their consumers and other companies develop their performance and their community social wealth (Lacka & Chong, 2016). Business leaders increasing tax revenue contribute to society's development with new schools and government programs for individuals in the community as a positive social change.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

In this qualitative multiple case study, I aimed to analyze business leaders' strategies implementing social media marketing to increase revenues. The literature

review provides a collection of previously reported data to sustain new research (Cypress, 2017). A literature review can increase a researcher's knowledge of the advantages and challenges some business leaders experience with social media marketing. Data collected sustained the research question for the research: What social media marketing strategies do small business leaders use to increase revenue?

For the literature review, I collected data from peer-reviewed journals, books, and dissertations with EBSCO Host and ProQuest databases using the following collections: Business Source Complete, ScienceDirect, and Emerald Insight access at the Walden University Library. The following keywords were used during the search individually and combined: *social media, marketing, marketing strategies, social media marketing, social media marketing strategies, resource-based view, resource-based view theory, small business,* and *small business leaders*. Sources included 177 peer-reviewed journals and four books. Of the 181 references, 98% were peer-reviewed journals, with 86% published between 2017 and 2021.

The literature review is organized as follows: first, a background of the conceptual framework, RBV theory, and other possible theories available to understand social media as a marketing strategy. The conceptual framework is followed by an introduction to social media, first as a social network tool followed by information as a business communication tool with advantages and challenges. The third part of the literature review presents social media for business leaders incorporating strategies, challenges, and alternatives to minimize them. The fourth section offers social media with traditional marketing strategies. The fifth section of the literature review discusses

social media strategies to increase business revenue. Finally, I present the conclusions of social media as a marketing strategy for growing business revenue.

Resource-Based View

The RBV of the firm, as a conceptual framework, was first introduced by Penrose in 1959, who established that organizational resources and capabilities could strengthen a business's revenue (Penrose, 2009). Business leaders implementing RBV can identify some of their resources, while the dynamic capability addition for the theory transforms skills to capabilities depending on individual competencies (Kim & Park, 2017). According to Arndt and Pierce (2018), the dynamic capabilities, as an additional concept to the already established RBV, were first introduced by Nelson and Winter in 1982 to incorporate dynamic and innovation into the organizational resources' patterns and knowledge. The RBV conceptual model used by researchers, such as Gupta et al. (2018), considers the firm resources a set of assets defining the organization to establish marketing strategies that will assist them in sustainable competitive advantage. Studying the organization's strengths and weaknesses provides a possible financial benefit identifying the resources for their maximum utilization. Business leaders implementing the RBV theory identify the organization's strengths and weaknesses to develop strategies that will impact their performance (Gupta et al., 2018). For Barney (1991), the RBV of a firm needs to specify the importance of improving internal strengths, recognizing weaknesses while minimizing external threats and identifying opportunities for a sustainable advantage for the organizations. Organizational resources provide business leaders with a possible performance advantage for their corporations. Business

leaders implementing RBV theory concepts can obtain data regarding benefits and challenges for their corporate strategies.

With the RBV concepts, business leaders can recognize their available resources and those areas that need improvement. The RBV conceptual framework process's advantages are the ability to focus on organizational planning resources and the continuous development of their performance (Penrose, 2009). Another advantage is identifying weaknesses in the operational process, considering the option of outsourcing services, or cooperating with others in an exchange of services for the organization's sustainability (De Massis et al., 2018). Once business leaders identify their organization's resources needs, they become aware of business strengths and weaknesses for their marketing strategy (Gupta et al., 2018). Small business leaders implementing RBV can identify tangible and intangible resources that can help accomplish company revenue goals. One of the available resources that business leaders have for their marketing strategies is social media. Using social media as a marketing strategy can positively increase revenue if used as a strategic plan.

One of the challenges of RBV is business leaders' inability to adapt to the rapid changes of the business market, especially with technology (Venciute, 2018). Business leaders using RBV might find that some resources might be unreliable if they cannot be replicated or developed, such as company employees' skills (Venciute, 2018). Resources for business leaders are those assets related to an individual's knowledge and experience and the business brand (Varadarajan, 2020). Organizational resources representing advantages or challenges assist business leaders in designing strategies to increase their

business advantage. Part of the corporate resources includes tangible and intangible assets.

RBV, as a conceptual framework, incorporates tangible and intangible organizational assets and capabilities (Zakery & Afrazeh, 2017). Some of the tangible skills that can support an organization's financial performance are assets such as employees and their abilities (Kim & Park, 2017). The intangible assets a company can develop to foster its economic sustainability are related to resources such as the business brand, their knowledge, and their relationship with stakeholders (Corte et al., 2017). The tangible and intangible capabilities of RBV are instruments business leaders use to develop team capabilities. Therefore, an organization's capabilities will depend on individual skills (Kim & Park, 2017). Business leaders identifying social media as a tangible resource for their marketing strategy will need to align their intangible assets, such as their brand and individuals' knowledge and skills, for the development of a unique campaign that will increase their business engagement with consumers, resulting in a possible impact on their revenue.

The RBV theory allows business leaders to distinguish among the competition, including franchises, with differences in team interactions (Corte et al., 2017). Resources transformed on capabilities such as customer service and innovation are dependent on team members' skills that, at the same time, will be influenced by their location (Irani et al., 2017). According to the team members' skills, tangible and intangible resources are distinctive to each business and an asset for the leader's strategy. According to their

resources, business teams' capabilities can be unique to their organization and a source of competitive advantage.

With an assessment of team members' skills capabilities and the organization's assets, organizational leaders can develop a business distinction. Corporate resources can be (a) valuable, (b) rare, and (c) inimitable for the maximum exploitation of the resources promoting possible financial sustainability (Barney, 1991). These three characteristics support RBV's value as a concept for business leaders to develop focused financial strategies. The valuable resources of an organization increase their revenue if they are also rare and difficult to imitate (Corte et al., 2017). A business leader can exploit their resources with more exclusivity throughout more prolonged periods (Corte et al., 2017). A business's rareness can be present with unique machinery or efficient procedures (Gupta et al., 2018). Inimitable resources are those that business leaders have created with a combination of individuals, including their knowledge and equipment, to develop unique organizational processes (Barney, 1991). The difficulty of imitating or obtaining a firm's resources to outperform them is a competitive advantage for business leaders (Corte et al., 2017). Organizations have an inimitable amount of resources combined to create capabilities unique to their team (Irani et al., 2017). Organizational leaders who develop resources that are valuable, rare, and difficult to imitate will sustain a longer competitive advantage (Corte et al., 2017). Business leaders identifying their unique resources with individuals' knowledge of social media as a marketing strategy might benefit the organization with the RBV conceptual framework to increase their revenue.

Organizational competitiveness with business resources such as the organization team members can help business leaders have a more profitable organization. Business leaders aware of firm resources might be able to identify uniqueness in the process to develop an entry barrier and maintain competitive advantage (Gupta et al., 2018). The success of a business's strategies with the conceptual framework relies on the leaders identifying those necessary skills needed to develop their marketing strategies focused on business differentiation and financial sustainability (Gupta et al., 2018). Business leaders considering social media as a marketing strategy resource for their competitive advantage can strengthen their performance with their brand followers' closer relationship (Wang & Kim, 2017). The identification of resources helps business leaders in the development of policies that support the organization's performance. Business leaders can implement other theories to increase their performance in addition to the RBV.

Other theories that might explain some consumer behaviors for business leaders that I considered for this research were social identity theory, social network theory, and self-determination theory (SDT). Social identity theory is used to establish the correlation between individuals and others in the same group (Lyu & Kim, 2020). Social identity theory was developed by Henri Tajfe in the 1970s to establish the sense of identity that individuals derive from their membership of a group keeping their participation as they feel identified with the participants (Horbyk, 2018). As a researcher, considering the individual self-concept in relationship to the group and the sense of belongingness, this theory can be applied to social media as a marketing strategy. Business leaders implementing this theory will require higher levels of knowledge and data analysis to

understand consumers' participation with each other in the brand social media groups and how this information can translate to marketing strategies. A business leader's primary goal is to generate revenue. Most of the time, marketing strategies are not a business leader's specialization, and a straightforward plan is more practical than data analysis.

The social network applies to the study of individuals influencing others while generating word of mouth (WOM; Wang et al., 2020). Social network theory is a concept of different social theories with diverse strands incorporating various approaches adapting to the issue at hand with a collective agreement of the network as individuals influencing each other (Nimmon et al., 2019). WOM and individual influence is considered a marketing strategy with business leaders, motivating individuals to express their opinion and experience with a brand. WOM can be efficient as a marketing strategy as individuals value other consumers' views differently than they do a business-generated promotion. A business leader can implement social network theory when developing social media marketing campaigns, keeping in mind the lack of control over individuals' influence and the possible impact of their brand losing some control over the WOM strategy. This lack of control over WOM results might require business leaders to hire external sources to manage and monitor the business's social media presence. As the focus of this research was the business leaders' social media strategies to increase their business revenue, having a third party managing the business leader account is out of the research criteria for this study.

The SDT is used to identify individuals' autonomy levels; the higher the level of independence, the more motivation an individual experiences as a cocreator with the

brand (de Vries et al., 2017). According to Beck and Davidson (2019), the co-founders of SDT are Deci and Ryan. Deci and Ryan introduced the concept in the 2000s, focusing on college students' motivations to engage with the higher education system. I considered SDT for this research as they place the individual with an active role in any part of the process analyzed. Having a customer as cocreator for a brand might be viewed as a higher level of social media management requiring more participation of the business leader with policies and guidelines to administer the business's social media presence. This research focused on the social media marking strategies that business leaders used to increase their revenue, not requiring in-depth knowledge of the management of their marketing strategies.

These theories help business leaders to analyze consumer behavior with others and the brand to predict their future behavior. Some of them applied as a marketing strategy might require higher knowledge levels and a plan to manage and monitor their interactions. For this reason, the RBV was the best fit for this research, assisting business leaders in identifying their resources as well as their weaknesses to develop a sustainable plan of action. RBV helps leaders promote their business from within the organization while engaging with consumers to increase performance, which made it a well-suited conceptual framework for this study.

Social media can be a marketing strategy for business leaders to improve an organization's performance and competitiveness (Venciute, 2018). As a technology marketing strategy, social media can be explored with RBV to understand how the organization's resources can impact financial performance (Garrido-Moreno et al., 2018).

As a resource for business leaders, social media becomes a strategy to position the organization with competitive performance results (Yingxia et al., 2018). Implementing the RBV theory allows business leaders to identify an organization's resources and increase its performance. Not having the internal resources to sustain a social media marketing campaign might be challenging (Poba-Nzaou et al., 2016). A business leader lacking internal resources to develop, manage, and maintain a social media marketing strategy might consider external resources or increase their inner resources. Small business leaders can implement the RBV conceptual framework considering social media as an available marketing resource.

Social Media

In this section, I discussed social media history and available platforms as a marketing strategy with benefits and challenges for business leaders. Social media, as a social network site, allows individuals to connect around the world. As a communication tool, social media began with blogs in the 2000s, with some previous social network attempts that experienced limited success (Lomborg, 2017). My Space, Flickr, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook were available as social media communication tools by the 2010s (Lomborg, 2017). Social media has overcome a transformation from social connection with My Space in the 2000s, followed by the adoption of Facebook in 2006 as a social platform allowing business leaders to connect with consumers (Lomborg, 2017). The transition of users from My Space in 2007 to Facebook marks an exodus and change in social media platforms (Lomborg, 2017). As a communication tool, social media has allowed individuals to connect with others with no limitations. As a social media

platform, Facebook has allowed individuals to establish and maintain connections with friends and family.

Facebook connects individuals online, reducing the space between friends and family. Facebook developed in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, was developed as a communication tool for Harvard students (Musonera & Weber, 2018). The social media site become one of the most recognized websites for individuals and business leaders, inviting the general public to join the social network in 2006 (Musonera & Weber, 2018). Statistics by Pew Research in 2015 showed that two-thirds of American adults regularly use social media as a networking tool, representing 65% of the American adult population (Shanshan, 2017). Facebook users might engage in social media for the interaction and the self-image, both psychological traits attracting users (Fazlul et al., 2020). Individuals have various reasons to engage in social media. The impression management defines individuals' participation in social media according to the image they want to reflect on network platforms (Shu et al., 2017). Business leaders implementing a marketing strategy online will benefit from understanding individual goals while connecting on media networks. Social media platforms have achieved a connection of individuals allowing them to decide if they are developing and maintaining personal and professional relationships. Individuals on social media networks communicate with others engaging in new and established relationships.

Social media applications allow individuals to connect with friends as a social network platform and develop new relationships (Penni, 2017). Some Individuals use social media sites primarily to communicate with others and exchange information.

Individuals interact online with like-minded groups that support their comments and posts avoiding rejection and isolation (Fox & Frush, 2018). Individuals are more willing to react to content that reflects their beliefs; however, they remain silent if there is opposition (Fox & Frush, 2018). Social media platforms provide individuals with a self-expression outlet to join others and receive support while communicating a message. The social interaction in the online network becomes a priority, with the educational component added value for some individuals.

The search for knowledge and information responds to a smaller number of consumers looking for less interaction with others in social media (de Vries et al., 2017). Social media influences individuals' decision-making processes according to their culture and the online platform selected (Bigne et al., 2018). Organization leaders need to take the time to understand the culture and individual preferences to deliver a targeted message with the right words, timing, and placement (Wong & Yazdanifard, 2015). As an interactive online platform, social media allows individuals to engage in social or educational communication with others. The ability to connect with others on a personal and professional level online comes with some safety risks.

Safety with information shared over online social networks represents a risk for individuals engaging with others. The risk of information leakage is a social media challenge (Lacka & Chong, 2016). Another problem with social media use is the lack of control over communication (Lacka & Chong, 2016). The pre-approved content in social media needs to be regulated by organizations' leaders to avoid personal information risks (Kane, 2015). Social media's ideal environment to positively impact the business is one

open to new ideas and flexible to try new platforms, willing to fail at times (Carpenter & Lertpratchya, 2016). As a marketing strategy for the business leader's social media presents a viable option once there is an understanding of benefits, challenges, and suggested skills for optimal results and revenue. Individuals and business leaders early in developing social media tools need to identify some of the benefits and challenges of online platforms.

Benefits and Challenges of Social Media as a Marketing Strategy

Social Media Benefits

In this section, I present social media marketing with benefits to the business leaders. As a communication tool, social media has provided individuals the benefit of connecting with others around the world. Business leaders observe a transition from Baby Boomers to Millennials in the workforce, and their communication styles have transitioned from print media to online marketing strategies (Radzi et al., 2018). Business leaders have implemented social media marketing to connect with consumers (Keegan & Rowley, 2017). Social media allows customers to control the information they received from friends, family, and companies (Penni, 2017). Online social networks have allowed individuals to exchange written content, images, and audio files over online platforms (Cheung & To, 2016). Social media as a communication tool provides business leaders with the benefits of sharing information with consumers in formats such as photos, videos, and images connecting with all generations. Marketing strategies using social media have changed the way businesses and consumers communicate (González-Romo et

al., 2017). Social media allows consumers to engage and connect with their brand's leaders.

Communication strategies for marketing leaders using social media have the benefit of a two-sided connection. Compared to previous communication tools in marketing, a two-sided communication with customers' contribution is incorporated with social media (Alnsour & Al Faour, 2020). As a communication tool with a two-sided platform, social media generates a substantial amount of free information ready to be analyzed with tremendous benefits for the businesses (Wong et al., 2017). Online sales, an increase of engagement, two-way communication, and the business presence are reasons for a business to have social media (Keegan & Rowley, 2017). Researchers have identified consumer engagement as one of the primary goals of business leaders and marketers having individuals share and participate in the product advertisement (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). The advantages of digital marketing are cost efficiency, interactivity with customers, infinite audience; the permanence of the information; and unlimited content that is easy to measure, adapt, and personalize (Todor, 2016). Personalized ads benefit the customers as they receive information related to their interest in assisting them with the purchase process (Tran, 2017). Facebook provides customized ads according to individuals' previous search, incorporating the promotion of business pages (Tran, 2017). The increase of communication between consumers and brands, the cocreation of content, and the low cost are advantages of social media (Cui et al., 2018). Organization leaders experiencing social media's benefits as a communication tool develop strategies

to connect and engage with consumers. Social media has allowed business leaders to diversify their approach to communicate with their consumers and other business leaders.

Social media has changed the way organizations conduct their business as the social platform impacts the finances, human resources, marketing, communications, and the incorporation of individuals as cocreators of content (Keegan & Rowley, 2017). Social media user-generated data includes comments, likes, and shares, as an interaction between users, generating data to be analyzed by the business leaders for marketing's strategic plans (He et al., 2015a). The benefits of business leaders implementing social media are higher levels of speed spreading a message, lower costs, and individuals' incorporation in codesigning innovative products (Snow et al., 2017). Some of the benefits that social media have are user-generated data of opinions and fresh content (He et al., 2017). Another service that social media provides is the user-friendly design allowing individuals to translate the same skills used for their social media accounts to their business marketing strategy (Kane, 2015). The relationship between social media and the business leaders' ability to reach out to new markets is another advantage of social media (Bocconcelli et al., 2017). The information generated in social media allows business leaders to analyze and understand consumers' behaviors toward their products and services. Data collected from social media can translate into a positive business performance implementing benefits and coordinating the management of the possible challenges.

Business leaders understanding the benefits of social media as a communication tool can impact their organization's performance. With the attraction of new businesses

and opportunities, social media increased communication and feedback might positively impact the organization's performance (Lacka & Chong, 2016). One of the benefits of social media platforms is allowing individuals to increase their performance while sharing information as part of the social media content (Kane, 2015). Social media can benefit organizations to increase their sales and communication with customers (Madsen, 2017). Social media's benefits for communication eliminate the barriers regarding place and time using the internet and the online media platforms (Batum & Ersoy, 2016). Social media posts can direct traffic to the business's website as a branding strategy representing one of the tool's benefits (Lacka & Chong, 2016). Business leaders use social media, link building, and content to drive traffic toward business websites. Marketers use social media as a platform to redirect traffic to the company site while building leads to a higher return on investment (Zhang & Cabage, 2017).

Quantitative responses for social media can be the likes response that provides company leaders with an objective measure to project sales for a pre-release campaign (Ding et al., 2017). Social media data analytics helps business leaders understand their customers and their preferences for a more accurate marketing campaign (Shanshan, 2017). The use of analytics with big data and social media makes a difference for business performance, with those implementing big data having higher success levels (He et al., 2017). With the increase in social media use by business leaders, the importance of understanding marketing analytics has been more prevalent in business strategic decisions and problems (Shanshan, 2017).

Business leaders need to measure the effectiveness of social media campaigns for the return on investment (ROI) using the number of engagements on one post divided by the number of fans and multiplied by 100 (Batum & Ersoy, 2016). Social media increases business performance, especially with the use of metrics evaluations. Business leaders using social media needs to plan, implement, and evaluate for best practices according to the business with metrics incorporating the study of ROI (Keegan & Rowley, 2017).

Access to knowledge, two-way communication, intra, and interorganizational impacting innovation, and business performance are other benefits of social media available for business leaders (Lacka & Chong, 2016). Social media for business assist leaders in communicating, collaborating, managing operations, and developing human, social, organizational, and symbolic capital (Kane, 2015). Business performance can be impacted positively with the implementation of social media as a marketing strategy incorporating information and feedback collected from consumers. As a marketing strategy, social media can be used for small business leaders to generate leads.

Posts published on social media can increase the number of leads for business leaders turning them into customers. Some of the objectives for digital marketing with social media are awareness development, sales, and lead generation (Saridakis et al., 2018). Social media can be efficient, generating leads, with the cocreation of content between customers and marketers or business leaders and the need for a call for action (Zhang & Cabage, 2017). Social media with an individual's development of content helps business leaders increase brand awareness, cultivate honest relationships with customers, generate new leads, develop audiences, create needs for products, and test new products

while developing loyalty with the individuals (Patrutiu Baltes, 2015). Social media and the call for action to share, comment, and invite others to engage with the brand are strategies that can increase lead generation for a business. Social media strategies incorporating consumers in the brand's engagement can raise brand awareness, taking the message without limits.

Social media can increase the business's brand recognition (Kim & Park, 2017). Brand awareness, connectivity, and engagement are three of the primary functions of social media for companies (Kim & Park, 2017). Social media is an essential tool for business leaders to communicate with consumers and develop brand awareness with a unique identity (González-Romo et al., 2017). Social media as a marketing strategy is useful for brand awareness, customer relationship management, sales, research, and service, with branding presenting the best use of social media leaders (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Frequent updates and incentives for participation in a business's social media campaign can positively impact business brand awareness (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). The branding plan should incorporate conversations related to the brand with consistency to maintain a stable image by identifying key stakeholders in the process (Serbetcioglu & Göçer, 2020). A brand awareness plan using social media can include the consumers who trust and support the brand as cocreators. Once a consumer trusts the brand, they are more willing to share their posts with others.

The generation of trust is one of the goals of building a relationship in social media between business leaders and their consumers. Social media is a channel for social connections and solutions, building trust among individuals, while organizations share

information and offer solutions (Shareef et al., 2020). Building brand trust is essential for business leaders working towards customer engagement (Gretry et al., 2017). As a marketing tool, social media expands the possibility of having consumer relationship management, which may increase the consumer's trust and loyalty (Lacka & Chong, 2016). Accounts missing a profile image are less trusted by individuals and business leaders (Shu et al., 2017). As an innovative strategy using the latest technology, social media will allow organizations to extend their knowledge, skills, and abilities incorporating constant changes (Snow et al., 2017). Business leaders' consistency in social media communication with consumers is a strategy to develop trust. Social media strategies connecting with consumers increase their knowledge of the brand with their publications.

The use of online information provides buyers knowledge about the products they would like to purchase and information on brand performance and possible issues (Wu et al., 2020). Consumer management and the influence in their purchasing decisions is one of the benefits of social media for business leaders (Wong et al., 2017). There is a correlation between social media use and the positive effects on external information, the share of knowledge, and innovation (Pérez-González et al., 2017). The amount of data generated by social media can help business leaders understand the customer's demographics, patterns, and preferences (Balan & Rege, 2017). As a communication tool, social media helps business leaders generate educational information to increase consumers' awareness of the brand. Digital technology will strengthen group work processes and improve internal and external communication with employees and

stakeholders (Snow et al., 2017). To understand the consumers' needs, interpreting the data generated in social media, including comments and interaction with the business leaders, is imperative.

Consumers using social media can communicate with their brands' leaders and express their needs and complaints about their products. Marketers have used online network platforms to understand consumers' sentiments to match them with products and services that satisfy their requirements (Ordenes et al., 2017). The use of mobile devices and marketing strategies with apps, games, and location-based advertisements to promote products and services allows marketers to reach customers at any location (Jyotiram Gaikwad & Kate, 2016). Consumer brand interaction on social media provides business leaders opportunities for their business marketing strategies (Gretry et al., 2017). Social media has many advantages as a marketing strategy that might transform into disadvantages if business leaders are not aware of possible negative consequences and plan to minimize the impact.

Social Media Challenges

In this section, I present social media marketing with some of the challenges for business leaders. Some of the social media disadvantages relate to information users share over online networks, among other communication issues. Difficulties with customers using social media are associated with customers not experiencing the merchandise they would like to purchase, a lack of trust with making online payments, and the possibility of fraud (Todor, 2016). The copyright of the social media content represents a possible challenge with the lack of data protection that anyone can copy

(Todor, 2016). Business leaders have reported difficulty with the implementation of social media and the measuring of the ROI, the lack of individuals adequately trained, the integration of social media to other organizational functions, and the lack of skills of the leaders to integrate social media with traditional marketing strategies (He et al., 2017; Zhang & Cabage, 2017). Different social media platforms for a business leader can become a challenge when they are not synchronized; they need consistent messages to maintain uniformity throughout the platforms (Lepkowska-White, 2017). Making social media posts that can be attractive and efficient to engage with consumers following the brand is a constant challenge for business leaders promoting their brand (Alalwan, 2018).

Pan et al. (2019) agree that selecting acceptable content for social media as a marketing strategy aligned to the business goals is a challenge that business leaders need to face while developing a successful marketing strategy. Social media content has many challenges for business leaders not having specifications of the type of material to create, how often they should post, and how to manage consumers' feedback (Lepkowska-White & Parsons, 2019). Not having the resources to address customers' feedback in a timely and professional manner with an action plan becomes an issue for small business leaders who might not hire additional staff to manage the online platforms (Lepkowska-White & Parsons, 2019). Marketers promoting a brand as one of the goals for the business can use social media while competing for customers online as a marketing strategy with the use of influencers; however, this presents the challenge of their reputation and how it can adversely impact the brand (Vodák et al., 2019). Technology might be a challenge for some business owners due to their lack of knowledge and the ability to respond quickly,

avoiding this option as a marketing strategy (Lepkowska-White, 2017). Some business leaders encounter difficulties when using social media as a communication tool.

Business leaders could use social media as a communication channel to connect with consumers while promoting their business as a marketing strategy. As a communication tool between business leaders and internal contacts, social media can present additional challenges. Leaders implementing social media as an internal business communication tool might face the following challenges: individuals not considering the communications related to the workplace, not understanding the informality of the conversations, censorship of the system interfering with the discussion, and management not supporting the new initiative for internal communication (Madsen, 2017). Internal social media as a form of communication for coworkers seems to be a challenge for employees who would not interact spontaneously due to their lack of trust in the organization (Madsen, 2017). Generationally social media with digital platforms might be a challenge, with business leaders reaching out to seasoned generations preferring traditional marketing strategies (Todor, 2016). Business leaders can implement a social media marketing strategy without incorporating the platform as a communication tool. Social media platforms, as a marketing strategy, presents many more advantages than challenges for business leaders.

Considering the use of social media as a marketing strategy, business leaders might benefit from reviewing the following challenges divided into three categories discussed by Poba-Nzaou et al. (2016); technological, organizational, and environmental. Within the technological category, issues to be considered by the individuals are related

to network security, speed of changes, the complexity of the social media tools, and the duality between the personal and the professional roles, including a nonprofessional image and reputation (Poba-Nzaou et al., 2016). The organizational category includes issues related to a lack of understanding of social media laws and regulations and a lack of support from the business leaders (Poba-Nzaou et al., 2016). Social media's environmental issues are related to ethical and regulatory issues (Poba-Nzaou et al., 2016).

Challenges for Business Leaders Using Social Media. The role of leaders implementing social media for brand awareness includes paid campaigns, network connections, content development, communications, and the creation of engaging opportunities (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). The development of a brand using social media needs to be positioned in social media conversations once the organization has developed internal communication that supports external engagement (Serbetcioglu & Göçer, 2020). Business leaders need to be aware that some consumers will help the brand and their efforts to use social media platforms as a marketing strategy, while others might reject the plan and take it as a negative approach for the business (Felix et al., 2017). Leaders might experience the challenge of not having clear expectations with the teamwork regarding their participation in social media strategies to support their marketing campaigns (Felix et al., 2017). Criticism about the lack of structured instruction on effectively implementing social media as a communication tool is a prevalent issue for leaders implementing social media strategies (Gretry et al., 2017). Business leaders need to define clear rules and structure of social media interaction for employees, removing

policy inconsistencies and unclear parameters to determine their plan as a marketing strategy (Felix et al., 2017). Vague specifications about social media communicators' role create confusion with the individual in the position with consequences of psychological stress and dissatisfaction as a social media communicator (Carpenter & Lertpratchya, 2016). The unstructured data generated by social media has represented a challenge for business leaders that lack strategies to process the information into quantifiable data to be applied to the business strategies and support decision-making (Wong et al., 2017). Big data limitations are observed in the lack of business leaders' skills to gain access to the value generated by the information (He et al., 2017). When consumers have control over social media exchange, data represents a challenge to some business leaders with the change in control of information (Felix et al., 2017). Consumers have more power of communication with authority and credibility than agencies as an opportunity for marketers to promote user-generated content (Geurin & Burch, 2017).

Challenges with social media use are also present with a lack of knowledge of some business leaders, creating a negative perception and blocking media adoption possibilities (Lacka & Chong, 2016). Companies with leaders who do not support social media present challenges to implementing the program among coworkers (Madsen, 2017). The lack of understanding of social media benefits might limit organizations from taking advantage of social media marketing strategies (Lepkowska-White, 2017). Social media and the lack of knowledge of some chief marketing officers (CMO) with the B2B strategy, versus the business-to-consumer (B2C), keeps them from implementing traditional marketing strategies while only minimal CMO are experimenting with social

media with a mix of traditional ones (Bernard, 2016). CMOs experiencing confusion with the value that social media can provide the organizations, and the missing opportunities, negatively impact the companies they represent (Bernard, 2016). Executives posting messages about the company's values have more followers (Jacobson, 2020). As an internet-based strategy, social media needs business leaders to learn every new procedure and media platform available to represent the latest technology available (Felix et al., 2017).

Businesses without a social media presence result in lower engagement with consumers and reduced revenue from electronic commerce (Saridakis et al., 2018). Organizational leaders who do not implement social media marketing strategies experience a lack of innovation integration and possible business failure (Pérez-González et al., 2017). Guided mastery modeling theory stated that both supervisors and employers must work together to achieve e-commerce that will depend on the organization's resources to be successful (Saridakis et al., 2018). The idea to increase the knowledge of social media and sales corresponds to a concern of small and medium businesses that need to sustain their companies with the innovation that social media offers at an affordable cost to increase sales (Bocconcelli et al., 2017). Leaders enhancing the digital organization model's success are team players that adapt to change and technology innovation (Snow et al., 2017). While expanding social media as a marketing strategy with advertisements, business leaders need to be aware of possible consequences with diverse approaches to minimize the negative impact (Felix et al., 2017). Brands' unwanted content on Facebook might generate a sense of aversion in some consumers

that might reduce the time spend on the platform to avoid unsolicited advertisements (Pelletier et al., 2021).

Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms provide business leaders with various opportunities according to their marketing goals. Some business leaders using Facebook as their social media marketing strategy reported that they decided on the platform with user-friendly tools for their business goals (Radzi et al., 2018). Marketing strategies by business leaders using Facebook need to consider the target population generations to have more efficient campaigns; for Generation Y is essential to recognize that their opinions count (Radzi et al., 2018). Businesses with Facebook pages provide consumers with the option to communicate with them directly and at any time (Radzi et al., 2018). Facebook can reach many individuals with strategies promoting products worldwide in different markets (Odoom et al., 2017). Facebook users have reported the need to be in touch with family and friends as one of the main reasons they engage in their platform; in fact, business leaders need to consider this while developing their marketing campaigns (Ambrose et al., 2020). The social information collected on Facebook from an individual when liking or engaging with a brand is shared by the system with their friends' ads on their news feed, letting them know of the friend engagement with the brand as a marketing strategy (Xue, 2019). Facebook has presented an advantage over other social media platforms, allowing profound communication levels while Twitter can sustain faster communication levels (He et al., 2017).

Twitter is used to disseminate information that will be retweeted, implementing electronic word-of-mouth (Xun & Guo, 2017). With quantitative statistical analysis, IBM Watson Analytics revealed more females than males posting on Twitter with lower negative messages on this social media platform (Balan & Rege, 2017). Twitter marketing campaigns tend to use more influencers as part of their marketing strategies than the traditional social media marketing strategies that are considered by some less efficient as Twitter influencers seem to have a closer relationship with their followers (Harrigan et al., 2021). Business leaders considering using influencers for their Twitter and social media marketing strategies need to be aware of the possible inflation of fake influencers with paid followers and engagement (Jang et al., 2019). One of the benefits of Twitter compared with other social media platforms is the speed of the message reaching multiple individuals in a public setting (Xun & Guo, 2017). Instagram differentiates from Twitter as users can have a private or a public account.

While Instagram reaches 100% of followers, Facebook only reaches out a small portion of the followers due to the algorithms and saturation, even though Facebook is the most popular media platform with the highest number of followers (Geurin & Burch, 2017). Instagram has the strongest bond among consumers with the priority of visual communication with photos and videos (Soedarsono et al., 2020). Images with positive and pleasant provocative feelings for certain products that attract younger generations seem to be more efficient than those with educative campaigns in Instagram posts (Laestadius et al., 2019). Instagram images on a post for business leaders as a marketing campaign might incorporate user-generated content at times with informal

communication and minimal information about their product characteristics (Vassallo et al., 2018). Creating posts on Instagram for a business can include pictures that have personal instead of professional images with non-formal language adapting to the target audiences' habits as a marketing campaign to attract and interact more with individuals (Soedarsono et al., 2020).

Promoting individuals' lifestyles using products seems to be a more efficient marketing campaign on Instagram than the product's information (Vassallo et al., 2018). A marketing strategy to engage consumers on Instagram adds it is incorporating questions about the photos with captions urging individuals to like or comment on the post (Soedarsono et al., 2020). Engagement rated between business leaders using Instagram and consumers is higher in this platform than Facebook (Vassallo et al., 2018). The use of celebrities as influencers is a marketing strategy used by some business leaders on Instagram (Vassallo et al., 2018). Some studies revealed that individuals do not initiate conversations on Instagram posts most of the time, becoming passive users and their brands' supporters (Vassallo et al., 2018). Business leaders using Instagram for their marketing strategy needs to understand individuals' reasons to interact in social media, such as the sense of belongingness while avoiding social isolation, to generate targeted campaigns considering these needs (Ambrose et al., 2020). While Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are social media platforms used for business to promote their products and services, LinkedIn takes this opportunity a step forward, allowing individuals to market themselves formally.

LinkedIn has an advantage for business leaders looking forward to having meetings with individuals that were not responding through emails; once they have a common contact, the response levels improved to schedule business meetings (Bernard, 2016). Individuals use LinkedIn to market their skills and brand themselves in search of career advancement, considering their potential employers' requirements for the ideal candidate (McCabe, 2017). While using LinkedIn, individuals need to complete the entire application to increase their chances to be found by the companies (McCabe, 2017). Business leaders need to be aware of each social media platform's strengths and limitations for their marketing goals to take advantage of the service.

Gaps in the Literature

Social media, as a marketing strategy, present some limitations for business leaders. Digital marketing as a communication strategy seems to be more efficient with business leaders that develop their skills and knowledge of best practices to impact the organization with the combination of traditional and digital marketing strategies (Vynogradova & Drokina, 2020). As a marketing strategy, social media needs to provide business leaders a justifiable revenue for the organizations. Sometimes, measuring the return on social media investment is a challenge since there is not enough information regarding individuals' behaviors in different social media platforms to project and predict consumers' plans (Alves et al., 2016).

Another gap in the literature regarding social media marketing is related to the business leaders and their role in promoting their business with their knowledge of the organization and their products and services (Alves et al., 2016). There is a need for

social media as a marketing strategy for business leaders to understand how online sharing can be increased and promoted to support the cocreation of information (Alves et al., 2016). For this research, social media as a marketing strategy for small businesses is an underexplored territory. As a specific group, the business leaders in the service area have particular needs when marketing their business as they do not promote a product. For business leaders, social media education and experience can impact a financial advantage for the organization.

Social Media Marketing Strategies

Business leaders considering social media implementation as a marketing strategy will benefit from understanding their business's specific characteristics and the online platforms, considering that online marketing strategies are not universal to every organization (Batum & Ersoy, 2016). Business leaders need to find the industry and products they represent to use social media as a marketing strategy, a difficult task for some business leaders in charge of the marketing strategies (Felix et al., 2017). One of the focus of business leaders and marketers while developing a social media strategy is creating and sustaining relationships with their brand supporters, considering them while developing social media content (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). As a marketing strategy, social media depends on reviews and referrals of satisfied consumers (He et al., 2017). Business leaders use social media reviews provided by customers as feedback to improve services and products; social media interactions with businesses have been sources of idea generation and new product development with the customer's feedback (Cuiqing et al., 2017).

Business leaders observing the impact of social media connecting individuals with their brands become part of the online communities connecting with other businesses and consumers. Online platforms have opened the possibilities for business leaders to market their products using technology (Geurin & Burch, 2017). The implementation of social media apps such as Facebook and WhatsApp has facilitated communication between customers and business leaders (Saridakis et al., 2018). Business leaders use social media platforms to communicate with consumers worldwide with a two-way communication style; Twitter as the two-way communication channel between consumers and marketers has become a valuable tool for businesses (Cheung & To, 2016). Some organizations duplicating the social media format have created platforms for internal communication and knowledge sharing to incorporate other professionals to join the network, increase awareness and advance innovation with a team effort (Kane, 2015). Marketers and business leaders learning and implementing social media can benefit the organization with different marketing strategies.

Word of Mouth

Marketers use WOM as a strategy to promote business products and services. Consumers promoting information to other individuals have proven their effectiveness beyond marketing efforts, with e-WOM (Roelens et al., 2016). Marketers implementing online strategies use e-WOM, transforming traditional market techniques (Geurin & Burch, 2017). E-WOM promotes a message on different online platforms while creating business and product awareness (Marchand et al., 2017). Social media informs, persuades, and influences consumers' behaviors (Wong et al., 2017). The e-WOM

presents a strong influence on consumers purchasing decision-making processes, making it a powerful tool for businesses that want to attract consumers and improve their performance (Berné et al., 2020). Marketers study the susceptibility to influence consumers' behaviors and decisions towards available products or services (Zhang et al., 2017). Organizations benefit from consumer-generated content as other consumers value their opinions and experiences more than firm-sponsored information (Geurin & Burch, 2017).

Customers as cocreators of content in social media and the e-WOM are efficient communication tools (Jyotiram Gaikwad, & Kate, 2016). Consumers generating content as the e-WOM strategy present a cost-efficient plan increasing profit with minimal investment for the organization (Geurin & Burch, 2017). Consumer-generated content can help business leaders evaluate the individual's perceptions of the brand awareness to adjust the message for other consumers (Geurin & Burch, 2017). Consumers take advantage of consumer-generated content reviews to purchase products and services (Berné et al., 2020). Clients using the user-generated content versus marketer's content development sustain the importance of e-WOM to educate other customers (Geurin & Burch, 2017). The e-WOM develops higher trust levels as clients desire to help each other (Geurin & Burch, 2017). User-generated microvideos and agency-generated videos have a similar impact on users, with the first one creating more trust in consumers (Gu et al., 2020). The quality of user-created sentiment microvideos versus agency-generated videos results in better reviews and behaviors towards the brand (Gu et al., 2020). User-generated microvideos have a more trustworthy impact on consumers and higher positive

response levels towards action, even though the video's quality levels were lower (Gu et al., 2020).

Organizations need to be aware of e-WOM, monitor consumers' communication, engage with them, and use their interest to communicate for their financial advantage (Berné et al., 2020). Online agents can promote the business with their products and services using external WOM from consumers trying free samples, while consumers develop the e-WOM (Zhang et al., 2017). Researchers indicated that the e-WOM reviews and external reviews after sampling impact the sales positively (Zhang et al., 2017). Marketers and business leaders need to be aware of various consumers and their styles for a product released and the post-release information with the e-WOM (Marchand et al., 2017). The negative e-WOM is more effective than marketers created content when customers are looking for a product or service review (Yen, 2016). Business leaders implementing the use of e-WOM can consider influencers to promote them. Influencers promoting businesses become cocreators of content in social media.

Influencers

Influencers, as a group of individuals, connect with others on online networks. Organizational leaders need to identify influencers who can impact information shared on their media channels (Roelens et al., 2016). Identifying influencers as customers or employees will allow organizations to take advantage of their impact on the network to promote a message (Kane, 2015). Influencers' importance has transformed marketers' job to recognize and incorporate them into their strategies (Lyu & Kim, 2020). Influencers' use is more efficient when promoting businesses in their area of expertise, as trust relates

to their influence (Lyu & Kim, 2020). Originality, media components, and influencers' opinions positively impact the post likes (Chen & Fu, 2016). Influencers' importance is related to social media and marketing strategies connecting with people and conveying a message to customers as the most valuable acquisition for a company (Roelens et al., 2016). Consumers are more influenced by other individuals' online reviews of products and services as their purchasing habits evolve from traditional brick and mortar to online shopping (Lyu & Kim, 2020). The role of consumers engaging with the brands on social media, depending on the intensity, can turn them on brand representatives and potential influencers (Vodák et al., 2019). The cocreation between marketers and consumers is presented with a general definition of creating content to attract, engage, and maintain consumers to produce a profit (Keegan & Rowley, 2017). Social media users generate qualitative data to be deconstructed and applied to increase business performance (Wong et al., 2017).

Cocreation of Content

Organizations inviting consumers to cocreate with them have found a value of social media with consumers while collecting information related to their wants and needs (Cheung & To, 2016). User-generated content creating big data and knowledge management (KM) of consumers needs to be studied by business leaders to understand their organization's needs and their competition weaknesses according to the customer's opinion (He et al., 2017). Information systems (IS) professionals use text mining to obtain business strengths and weaknesses for business improvements and innovations (He

et al., 2017). The more consumers perceived value with social media, the more they participate in the cocreation of content (Cheung & To, 2016).

As consumers believe that social media friends have valuable opinions and feedback, the more they engage in the cocreation of content (Cheung & To, 2016). The support of family, friends, and social media's user-friendly capacity to cocreate content increases individuals' engagement (Chen & Fu, 2016). Crowdsourcing can also be named outsourcing to the crowds or selecting another professional on the topic to develop content, pulling ideas with others' support to become cocreators (Bai & Yu, 2020). As cocreators and storytellers, consumers use social media marketing strategies to promote a brand (González-Romo et al., 2017). Content marketing is related to a brand's positioning while telling their business story to engage individuals with an emotional connection (Patrutiu Baltes, 2015).

Storytelling

Storytelling is a crucial social media marketing strategy for business leaders (González-Romo et al., 2017). Incorporating consumers in the storytelling using videos and social networks engages individuals and develops a strong sense of belongingness (González-Romo et al., 2017). It takes a combination of media content for higher engagement and multiple sources for the same message (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). High-end brands with exclusive products use videos and storytelling to create a series of short videos telling the business's story with concise, motivational, and emotionally inspiring content to connect with the consumers (González-Romo et al., 2017). Posts containing emotional information and those fulfilling multiple gratification areas have a more

significant acceptance by followers (Chen & Fu, 2016). Stories about the brand conveying an emotion are considered indirect marketing for the content marketing process (Patrutiu Baltes, 2015). The difference between a message that goes viral and one that does not is the number of views, shares, and likes (Wong & Yazdanifard, 2015). Images attract an individual's attention more than text-only messages (Klostermann et al., 2018). Viral posts have positive messages with emotion that evokes people to identify with the brand (Wong & Yazdanifard, 2015). Creative strategies need to be emotionally transformational or functional informational (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). As social media platforms serve a psychological purpose for participants, marketing campaigns need to have sentimental value with social engagement (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Business leaders can use storytelling with emotional content as an advertisement marketing strategy.

Advertisement

Business leaders and marketers can take advantage of free and paid advertising on social media. Paid advertisements on social media are ads placed on fan pages of an unrelated product or in the consumer's timeline (Broeck et al., 2017). Individuals reject paid ads more when they are in their timeline instead of the general news feed (Broeck et al., 2017). Social content advertisements are received more positively than ads related to a product or service (Broeck et al., 2017). Business leaders developing a social media marketing campaign need to have a target audience identified to create specific content according to their goal (Wong & Yazdanifard, 2015). For ad content, developers report that the lack of guidance for content creation allows them the freedom to experiment with different strategies testing to verify the most effective campaign (Carpenter &

Lertpratchya, 2016). Marketers use ads on social media with the concept of content marketing to engage with consumers.

The idea of content marketing allows business leaders and marketers to communicate with customers without selling, delivering educational information to increase loyalty (Patrutiu Baltes, 2015). Content marketing with education as a goal can create an image for the company as an expert on the topic (Patrutiu Baltes, 2015). There is a distinction between advertisement and content marketing, with the last one being more storytelling, not just to show what they are but to prove it with content (Wong & Yazdanifard, 2015). Brand content on social media as a marketing strategy needs to be diversified to avoid boredom on individuals receiving the same posts approach to prevent the audience from disengaging from the brand (Wong & Yazdanifard, 2015). Social media, as a marketing strategy, needs to be managed strategically by business leaders.

Social Media Marketing Management Strategies

Organizational leaders need to monitor social media conversations about their brand and respond to negative and positive feedback (Koshkin et al., 2017). Company leaders benefit from having a plan to deal with negative social media before initiating a social media campaign (Ángel & Maite, 2020). As a communication channel between businesses and customers, social media have an open communication line for dissatisfied customers to publicly express their experiences and opinions on the company's social media platforms (Yen, 2016). Business leaders aware of negative comments impact can reduce the possible issues (Yen, 2016). Marketers and business leaders taking advantage of complaints or negative feedback can increase innovation and consumer satisfaction.

Regarding gender, women share more negative information on social media networks (SMN) as a self-expression mode; men post negative information in blogs as an expectation of personal outcomes of using blogs (Yen, 2016). Claims expressed in social media usually are resolved faster due to the public platform and consumers' consideration for the resolution (Gunarathne et al., 2017). The lack of negative feedback management by business leaders in social media besides blocking or hiding from someone is an area in need of further exploration considering the business environment and the inappropriateness of blocking someone (Kane, 2015).

Traditional Marketing Strategies Incorporating Online Marketing Strategies

Conventional marketing strategies have provided business leaders with stability and consistency, gaining the customer's trust (Todor, 2016). Billboards, magazines, tv commercials are traditional marketing strategies. Business leaders still use business cards, ads in magazines, newspapers, printable material such as brochures and radio as conventional marketing strategies (Todor, 2016). Some of the advantages of traditional marketing strategies are faster results, durability, and higher trust levels (Todor, 2016). Some disadvantages of conventional marketing strategies are the difficulty in measuring outcomes, higher costs, static displays with no interaction, slow timing to respond to changes, customization not targeting specific customers, and reducing pricing options (Todor, 2016). Advertisement and social media are presented as a simple two-way communication strategy, while traditional ads offer information formally in only one direction (Gretry et al., 2017).

The role of technology, in general, is identified as a change that disrupted the marketing field (Ferrell & Ferrell, 2020). The use of social media by individuals worldwide, with half of the population connected to the internet, has placed marketers in a continually changing and evolving field (Ferrell & Ferrell, 2020). The recession of 2008 initiated the decline of print media, with digital marketing taking over marketing strategies as a more affordable way to promote businesses (Lomborg, 2017). Traditional marketing strategies are a past tool as technology has provided marketers with a more financially available plan to develop a message without boundaries (Jyotiram Gaikwad & Kate, 2016). The use of multimedia formats such as video, pictures, and audio, creates a more fulfilling experience with higher engagement levels from followers (Chen & Fu, 2016). Changes in the marketing business from brick-and-mortar to online gives e-marketing a substantial presence with a promising future (Jyotiram Gaikwad & Kate, 2016).

Online stores differ from conventional shops, with a lack of social interaction present in brick-and-mortar stores (Richard & Habibi, 2016). Social cues in online stores are needed to increase consumer engagement and purchase decisions (Richard & Habibi, 2016). Pre-attentive data of websites with; colors, fonts, and music and the cognitive influence of information and entertainment are part of the website's effects on consumers' behaviors (Richard & Habibi, 2016). The difference between marketing and e-marketing responds to the advertisement's platform; in e-marketing, the ad is digital and online. The advantages of e-marketing strategies are the flexibility to reach customers' electronic media of their preference with a tailored message (Jyotiram

Gaikwad & Kate, 2016). Business leaders use digital marketing communication (DMC) to improve customer relationships (McCarthy & Mazza, 2019). Combining traditional and digital engagement with customers is part of the marketing mix available for business leaders.

The balance between traditional and digital marketing can be reached by marketers, incorporating them in marketing campaigns. There are divided opinions by marketers and business leaders about the most effective mix of marketing strategies. Some business leaders indicate that digital media is taking over the market, while others sustain that both are effective at the same rate. Digital media is increasing exponentially, while traditional marketing strategies are declining (Todor, 2016). The best approach for a business brand is a combination of both marketing strategies to impact higher levels of the population according to the organization's objectives and considering different generations' preferences with alternatives to the path (Todor, 2016). The process of social selling is taking over cold calling to determine a match of requirements with the company products and services (Das et al., 2020). Social media, as a marketing strategy, is a profitable option for business leaders to increase revenue.

Social Media Marketing Strategies to Increase Revenue

The use of Facebook as a marketing strategy by the business leaders correlates to an increase in income, the development of a relationship with customers, and a channel of direct information that results in a low-cost plan (Odoom et al., 2017). Business leaders incorporating technology and social media marketing strategies increased their performance, as evidenced by higher revenue levels (Saridakis et al., 2018). Business

leaders implementing social media strategies increase online customers' communication and availability, resulting in higher business revenue (Saridakis et al., 2018). According to their target market, with the correct social media alignment and the business's goals, business leaders can increase revenue.

Business leaders developing a social media marketing strategy can approach the tool with an informational and promotional plan while connecting with consumers (Fika et al., 2018). An informational social media campaign can incorporate data related to the business address, contact information, location, and details of their products containing reviews and testimonials (Fika et al., 2018). The promotional business campaign in social media for a business leader can promote business products with lower prices, free products, or a video promoting a product (Fika et al., 2018). The practice to provide customers with free products in exchange for a review as a marketing strategy using social influence seems to impact the individual's acquaintances, and friends purchase decisions as they rely more on the individual report, creating a direct impact on the business revenue (Yerasani et al., 2019). An example in the literature for a retailer surviving over a century of changes implementing new technologies and adapting to the consumer's demands was JCPenney.

JCPenney business leaders determined their social media marketing strategies as imperative to remain competitive in a continually changing market, engaging with consumers with a mix of offline and online approaches (Mahfouz et al., 2017). Mahfouz et al. (2017) studied the case of JCPenney and its marketing restructuring to remain competitive in the market as a model from an organization that was adapting to consumer

habits using new technologies. Marketers for JCPenney trying to increase customers' traffic to the stores and websites used social media videos, filming real customers to identify another receiver of a substantial gift at the store (Mahfouz et al., 2017).

Using Twitter, social media marketers at JCPenney took advantage of Super Bowls events redirecting the customers' attention to their website with hashtags directly related to the game during real-time (Mahfouz et al., 2017). The campaign got the attention of customers and other companies concerned by the amount of traffic created on the social media platform (Mahfouz et al., 2017). Marketers reported a direct impact on sales for the retailer during the weeks that followed the game (Mahfouz et al., 2017). The JCPenney marketers launched YouTube using videos for their product promotions using youth influencers and professional athletes developing their content with company clothes for a back-to-school campaign (Mahfouz et al., 2017). Incorporating YouTube was a supplementary marketing strategy as their Facebook account had more reach than Twitter (Mahfouz et al., 2017). Facebook's social media campaign had a more educative and instructional approach than Twitter and YouTube, increasing brand awareness with their posts while incorporating blog reposts. In expanding their number of followers for a Hispanic social media business account, the business leaders decided to pay Facebook to reach new followers with their ads, discontinuing the practice of paying for customers' reach a couple of months later (Mahfouz et al., 2017). For the Instagram business account, the JCPenney marketers linked the account with the Facebook account to share the same messages (Mahfouz et al., 2017).

JCPenney leaders attributed the success of their social media marketing campaign to their understanding and expertise of the social media accounts and technology, their knowledge of the brands as well as their customer's engagement with the company as well as their flexibility to adapt to consumer habits (Mahfouz et al., 2017). The company marketers incorporated customer-friendly social media events to support nonprofits and accomplish their social impact plan (Mahfouz et al., 2017). JCPenney survived over a century as a brick-and-mortar retailer with a catalog and digital marketing strategies adapting to the technology and the customer's habits changes. Small business leaders can adapt the model of JCPenney with the social media marketing strategies at a smaller scale, considering their resources and budget, taking advantage of all the free opportunities that the platforms provide to the individuals.

Some small business leaders perceive advertisement as an expense instead of a strategy to generate revenue, limiting their company revenue (Cole et al., 2017). Business leaders implementing social media marketing strategies at times do not have the skills to measure the impact on their income; depending on the marketing campaign, at times, there might not be a direct or immediate impact from the media posts on sales and revenue (Popp et al., 2017). Marketers must have a consistent social media campaign with daily posts updating products and services constantly to increase their revenue (Fika et al., 2018).

Conclusion

In Section 1, I presented the foundation of social media marketing strategies. The section included the business problem foundation and background supported by; (a) the

problem statement, (b) the purpose statement, (c) nature of the study, (d) the research and interview questions, (e) the conceptual framework; RBV, (f) the operational definitions, (g) the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, (h) the significance of the study and (I) the literature review. The research's focus incorporated information on business leaders' skills implementing social media marketing to increase their businesses' revenue.

In Section 2, I presented the research process to support social media marketing strategies research. Section two included (a) the role of the researcher, (b) the participants, (c) the research method and design, (d) the population and sampling, (e) the ethical process, (f) data collection, with the organization techniques, and analysis, (g) concluding with the reliability and validity. In section three, I presented; (a) the findings, (b) the applications to professional practice, (c) the recommendations for actions and further research, (d) the reflections, and (e) conclusions.

Transition

In Section 1, I presented the foundation of social media marketing strategies. The section included the business problem foundation and background supported by; (a) the problem statement, (b) the purpose statement, (c) nature of the study, (d) the research and interview questions, (e) the conceptual framework; RBV, (f) the operational definitions, (g) the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, (h) the significance of the study and (I) the literature review. The research focused on business leaders' skills in implementing social media marketing to increase their revenue.

In Section 2, I presented the research process to support social media marketing strategies research. Section two included (a) the role of the researcher, (b) the participants, (c) the research method and design, (d) the population and sampling, (e) the ethical process, (f) data collection, with the organization techniques, and analysis, (g) concluding with the reliability and validity. In section three, I presented; (a) the findings, (b) the applications to professional practice, (c) the recommendations for actions and further research, (d) the reflections, and (e) conclusions.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I present my role as the researcher during the study. Also, I discuss the selection of participants, with details regarding the population and sampling. I explain the research method and design and information regarding the ethical process. I describe the data collection, organization, and analysis during this section. I sustain the study's reliability and validity in this section. This section concludes with a summary of critical points and a transition to introduce Section 3.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore social media marketing strategies that small business leaders use to increase revenue. The targeted population was 12 small business leaders in central Florida who have successfully managed social media marketing strategies to increase revenue. The implications for positive social change include the potential for small business leaders to strengthen the connections and engagement with the community resulting in stronger community relationships. The local economy enhancement could improve quality of life through higher incomes, sales, employment opportunities, and taxes for communities to sustain or increase programs and services for citizens.

Role of the Researcher

In Section 2, I present my role as the researcher during the study. Also, I discuss the selection of participants, with details regarding the population and sampling. I explain the research method and design, as well as information regarding the ethical process. I describe the data collection, organization, and analysis during this section. I sustaine the

study reliability and validity of the study during this section. This part concludes with a summary of critical points and a transition to introduce section three.

This proposed qualitative multiple case study aimed to explore social media marketing strategies that small business leaders use to increase revenue. The targeted population was 12 small business leaders in central Florida who have successfully managed social media marketing strategies to increase revenue. The implications for positive social change included small business leaders' potential to strengthen the connections and engagement with the community, resulting in stronger community relationships. The local economy enhancement could improve individuals and their family's quality of life through higher incomes, sales, employment opportunities, and taxes for communities to sustain or increase programs and services for citizens.

Participants

Participants were 13 small business leaders in the central Florida area from three different counties. Criteria to participate in the research were that participants' social media accounts must be active and the business must have been in operation for a minimum of 2 years. The participants in this study were small business leaders implementing social media marketing strategies to increase revenue. An essential part of research is gaining access to participants for data collection (Cypress, 2017). I identified the participants through professional associations in central Florida that represented the general population's cultural diversity. Rapport with participants is essential for research result quality (Vass et al., 2017). I have a professional relationship with some of the leaders of certain central Florida chambers of commerce. I completed an initial search for

the most active chambers of commerce on Google and reviewed the chambers' social media pages to confirm their active status according to the recent activity of posts.

I contacted the designated leaders of three chambers of commerce via telephone to discuss the research topic and the participant criteria for small business leaders. I followed up the conversation with emails with the requirements, the interview protocol, and a consent form. Researchers can access participants to provide information concerning the study's details and authorization (Grady et al., 2017). The chambers of commerce member list is public, which allowed me to select and contact 45 business leaders who met the participation criteria for the study. I contacted the business leaders via email with a copy of the requirements, the interview protocol, and an informed consent form. The first 12 business leaders who answered and agreed to participate in the study were part of the research. I completed 13 interviews to confirm data saturation. I retained the contact information from the additional participants interested in participating as potential replacements in case some selected business leaders withdrew.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

For this study, I selected the qualitative research methodology to obtain detailed information and a deeper understanding of the topic. Qualitative researchers collect comprehensive data, including participants' perceptions and experiences (Yin, 2018). The qualitative research method helped create an understanding of business leaders' experiences and opinions regarding implementing social media as a marketing strategy. Researchers who use the qualitative method with open questions during the interview

process can reach a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study (Vass et al., 2017).

Quantitative researchers collect numerical data to test hypotheses and determine if a relationship exists between dependent or independent variables (Shaw, 2017). The quantitative research process can assist researchers in answering *if* or *what* questions. In contrast, qualitative research can help a researcher solve the *why* of an issue (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I did not collect numerical data, test hypotheses, or examine the relationship between variables; therefore, the quantitative method was not appropriate for this study. Researchers using a formal interview process justify collecting detailed data from various participants and their business documents to reduce possible bias during interviews (Yin, 2018). The mixed method is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, with the last one using theories and the research of cause-and-effect relation (Hewlett & Brown, 2018). I did not use the quantitative method to answer the research question; therefore, the mixed method was not appropriate for this study.

Research Design

I considered the following research designs for this study (a) case study, (b) narrative, (c) ethnography, and (d) phenomenology. The selected design for this research was a multiple case study. The multiple case study is appropriate to study specific issues with in-depth data collection and comprehensive knowledge of a phenomenon (Ridder, 2017). Researchers can use the multiple case study design to understand social media marketing strategies, providing business leaders data to increase their revenue through marketing strategies and best practices according to the media platform and business

goals. According to Yin (2018), researchers need to define their cases before initiating sampling. In this research, the multiple cases were 13 small business leaders managing social media accounts as part of their marketing strategy.

Researchers use a narrative design to explore storytelling from individual or group experiences (Yin, 2018). I was not concerned with individual stories of small business leaders; therefore, I did not select the narrative design. Ethnographic researchers study cultures, groups, or organizations (Hod et al., 2020). I was not exploring the culture of business leaders who implement successful social media strategies; therefore, the ethnographic design was not appropriate for this study. The phenomenological design is applicable for researchers trying to understand individuals' experiences and their meaning (Adams & van Manen, 2017). In this research, I focused on understanding the business leaders' skills, not their personal experiences; thus, the phenomenological design was not appropriate for this research.

Population and Sampling

For this research, I selected a population of 12 small business leaders in the central Florida area who have successfully implemented social media marketing strategies to increase revenue. I completed an additional interview with a 13th participant to confirm data saturation. The participants were chosen purposefully from three professional chambers of commerce member lists in central Florida. Researchers use purposeful sampling to select participants according to research criteria (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Researchers using purposive sampling as a nonprobability method select participants with criteria matching the population's topic (Yin, 2018). The use of

purposeful sampling and size allows a researcher to select participants representing the study criteria to answer the research question (Gentles & Vilches, 2018).

Data saturation varies according to each study. A researcher can achieve data saturation with a homogeneous group of 12 participants (Guest et al., 2006). I selected a sample of 12 participants in the same region with similar levels of experience. I reached data saturation with 12 participants, and there was no need to increase the participants' sample. Participant 13 served the purpose of confirming data saturation. I collected data through semistructured interviews, probing questions, and a follow-up interview until no new data emerged. Researchers reach data saturation when there is no further information and participants provide similar information (Hennink et al., 2017).

The criteria for selecting the study participants included 13 small business leaders from central Florida in three different counties. I chose participants from separate chambers of commerce found through a Google search to review different groups' websites and their social media presence to select the three most active chambers of commerce in the area. To qualify as current and active, the chamber of commerce's social media account needed to have posted during the previous month. After selecting the three main chambers of commerce, I contacted the designated leaders via phone and emailed them the research criteria. Qualitative researchers use criteria to choose the most informed participants to answer the research question with their knowledge on the topic (Asiamah et al., 2017). I chose a sample of 45 small business leaders who were (a) successfully using social media as a marketing strategy and (b) had been in service for at least 2 years. Specific selection criteria help researchers obtain accurate data to answer

the research question (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). The targeted population for the research was 12 business leaders from the chambers of commerce in central Florida. I reviewed each potential participant's organization's social media pages to verify the study criteria's accuracy.

The 45 selected participants from the chambers of commerce member lists received an email with the research goal, criteria, the informed consent form, and the interview protocol, including the research questions. Upon confirmation of selection criteria being met, participant selection occurred according to availability; the first 12 participants who answered the email accepting the invitation were part of the research. Participant 13 was used to confirm data saturation. Participants not selected were kept on a list in case some of the participants could not be part of the research or additional participants were needed to reach data saturation.

I conducted interviews with video conferencing to collect all the data virtually. I completed the virtual conferences using Zoom. I suggested that the participants choose a quiet place to share their knowledge with confidentiality at their convenience. A quiet location at a participant's workplace is conducive for an interview (Ecker, 2017). Confidentiality and comfort while conducting interviews can influence a participant's responses and the research results (Ecker, 2017).

Ethical Research

The Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved the research proposal before I took any investigative action. The IRB approval number for this research is 11-11-20-0654091. Candidates for the study received an email

containing an invitation, consent forms, research questions, and criteria followed by a phone call to participate in the study. I informed participants of the voluntary nature of their participation and the possibility of retrieving their information after the interview.

As the researcher, I emailed all potential participants the informed consent form. A consent form allows researchers to access data during the interview with participants' written authorization (Grady et al., 2017). Once participants decided to be part of the research, they signed the form and emailed it back or replied to the email with a statement establishing they agreed to participate in the research.

The consent form informed the participants of their voluntary participation, the confidentiality of the data, and the possibility of retrieving their information after completing the interview. I scheduled interviews using video conferencing with questions previously established and no additional questions regarding the business's or participant's private information. I reviewed the interview process with the participants, including the recording and protecting their business and personal information, to ensure confidentiality. According to Gudkova (2017), privacy during the research process and data management is crucial for a study. I read the interview protocol to the participants, provided them with contact information, and informed them of their ability to withdraw their responses via email after the interview or refuse to answer any question during the interview. Appendix A contains the script. I informed the participants that there was no incentive for their participation in the consent form and the interview protocol.

As a researcher, I did not collect any personal information. I focused the interview on the study questions exclusively, reminding participants to protect information that

could identify the business or their identity at the beginning of the protocol. During a study, researchers need to protect any information that might identify the participants (Gudkova, 2017). There were no questions about the participant's or their business's identification, such as names, addresses, or roles. The data did not contain any identifiers besides the research questions and answers. I used pseudonyms to identify the participants with the letter P and a number for each one: P-1, P-2, etc. The protection of the participants is the responsibility of the researcher, so I removed all identifiers from the data collected.

The data collected were saved in a password-protected hard drive, and backed up on a USB flash drive protected with a password and placed in a locked box. According to Walden University requirements, I will store the data for 5 years and then will delete or shred the digital and paper documents related to the study. It is recommended for researchers to eliminate study data after 5 years (Yin, 2018).

Data Collection Instruments

The IRB reviewed and approved the research proposal before I took any investigative action. Candidates for the study received an email containing an invitation, consent forms, research questions, and criteria followed by a phone call to participate in the study. I informed participants of the volunteer aspect of their participation and the possibility of retrieving their information after the interview.

I emailed all potential participants the consent form. Participants completing the consent form provides researchers to access data during the interview with their written authorization (Grady et al., 2017). Once participants decided to be part of the research,

they signed the form and emailed it back or replay to the email with a statement establishing that they have agreed to participate in the research.

The consent form informed the participants of their voluntary participation, confidentiality with the data, and the possibility of retrieving their involvement after completing the interview. I scheduled the interviews using video conferencing with questions previously established and no additional questions regarding the business's private information or the participant. I reviewed the interview process with the participants, including the recording, protecting their business, and personal information, to ensure the data protection for confidentiality. The IRB approval number for this research is 11-11-20-0654091. According to Gudkova (2017), privacy during the research process and data management is crucial for a study. I read the interview protocol to the participants with contact information if they would like to withdraw their responses via email after the interview or refuse to answer any question during the interview; Appendix A contains the script. I informed the participants of the lack of incentive for their participation in the consent form and the interview protocol.

I did not collect any personal information. I directed the interview to the study questions exclusively, reminding the participants to protect the information that identifies the business or their identity at the beginning of the protocol. During a research, the researchers need to protect any information that might identify the participants (Gudkova, 2017). There were no questions about the participant or business identification, such as names, addresses, or roles. The data did not contain any identifiers besides the research questions and answers. I used pseudonyms to identify the participants with the letter P

and a number for each one: P-1, P-2. The protection of the participants becomes the responsibility of the researcher, removing all identifiers.

The data that I collected was saved in a password-protected hard drive, backup in a USB (universal serial bus) flash drive protected with a password, and placed in a locked box. According to Walden University, I stored the data and deleted or shredded the digital and paper documents related to the study interviews after 5 years. It is recommended for the researchers to eliminate data for their study after 5 years (Yin, 2018).

Data Collection Technique

In this research, I studied small business leaders' marketing strategies positively impacting their business revenues. I asked the selected participants to engage in a video conferencing interview with follow-up probing questions. Semistructured interviews allow the researcher to gain insightful data from experts regarding the phenomenon under study (Brosy et al., 2020). Before the interviews, I reviewed the participant's social media leading platforms to verify the account's active status. Participants from each chamber of commerce were selected as they became available to participate. Participants received a phone call to establish rapport and present the research study's purpose and expectations, followed by an email with the consent form for their voluntary participation. Non-coercive methods by the researcher to invite participants need to express the process's voluntary aspect (Vass et al., 2017). I coordinated the video conferencing with the participants to collect the data virtually. Before the interviews, I read the protocol (see Appendix A) to participants with an emphasis on confidentiality

and no compensation for their involvement. I used code names during the interview process to protect the identity of the participants. Codes substituting the participants' identifiers will preserve their confidentiality (Spillane et al., 2017).

There are advantages and disadvantages to the selected instruments. I used an interview protocol to inform participants of the data collection process and what to expect during and after the interview in a standardized way. The standardized method of the interview protocol provided a formally structured advantage for the research process. Semistructured interviews allow the researcher the flexibility to ask probing questions for additional clarification (Brosy et al., 2020). One of the disadvantages of semistructured interviews is that they will leave the topics and themes to the researcher's interpretation as with the possibility of a biased result (Vass et al., 2017). I used the NVivo12 program to generate codes and themes from the data collected for analysis without bias interference.

The member checking process increases the research validity and credibility of the research with the participant's data confirmation (Fusch et al., 2018). During the member checking process, the researcher can accurately confirm the interview interpretations (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I asked each participant to review a summary of the interview to ensure that I interpreted their responses correctly.

Data Organization Technique

Data organization prepares the data for analysis (Yin, 2018). During the compilation of data, I kept track of the interviews in an electronic format, with video recordings (Zoom) and transcriptions in addition to computer notes in Microsoft Word

and Excel. As a journal, the electronic records help the researcher keep an accurate data collection report (Cypress, 2017). Researchers use NVivo 12 as a data analysis program to organize themes and codes. Codification programs are an indispensable tool for researchers to manage data objectively (Cayir & Saritas, 2017). The 13 participants had codifications with the letter P and numbers, P-1 to P-13, to protect their confidentiality. Data organization and analysis are crucial for a reliable study (Yin, 2018).

Data collected is stored in a password-protected hard drive with additional backup in a USB flash drive with a password and locked away for 5 years. After scanning them, I destroyed all paper documents and turned them into an electronic format keeping all information in the hard drive and flash drive locked and stored for 5 years. Data securely stored with passwords after completing the research increases the information's confidentiality (Ecker, 2017).

Data Analysis

For this qualitative multiple case study, I used the methodological triangulation with the semistructured interviews, notes, transcripts, the business social media platform review, and a literature review synthesis. The researcher can achieve triangulation with the data collected for the research's validation and dependability (Twining et al., 2017). One of the benefits of implementing the triangulation is increasing the studies' validation and reliability with multiple data sources (Twining et al., 2017). Triangulation is an appropriate approach to analyzing the data using various data sources (Fusch et al., 2018). With triangulation, the researcher understands the topic under study (Petrescu &

Lauer, 2017). With the implementation of the triangulation, this researcher achieved data dependability and validation.

According to Yin's five-phase process, the data analysis should incorporate the (a) collection, (b) disassembling, (c) reassembling, (d) analysis, and (e) conclusions of the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2018). I initiated the data collection with the business social media platform's review to verify their active status. As a researcher, I used the interview protocol in Appendix A to ensure uniformity during the data collection process. I used a semistructured interview with probing questions to confirm data. As part of the data analysis process, I reviewed the business leaders' social media accounts as a research criterion. The transcription of the data to a written format is part of the data collection (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2016). I scheduled a follow-up phone meeting with an interpretative interview summary to complete the member check for data reliability and validity.

The second step in the process is the disassembling of the data collected. During the disassembling process, the researcher separates the data into smaller sections to generate themes and codes (Yin, 2018). During the disassembling of the data, I separated every research question and answered it after each interview. I took the data and reduced it into separate smaller sections in preparation for reassembling.

During the third step, reassembling, the researcher organizes the data into consistent themes and codes according to Yin (2018); I extracted the data from the NVivo12 program, results were represented with visual figures. The data's reassembling

process helps the researcher cluster data for analysis and a deeper understanding (Tuapawa, 2017).

For the fourth step, the researcher reports the data results for the analysis or interpretation (Yin, 2018). The researcher needs to remain objective while reporting data avoiding manipulating possible outcomes before conclusions (Tuapawa, 2017). During this stage, I determined the research results to conclude the process. In the fifth step, the conclusion, the researcher place the meaning of the data and the possible answer to the research question (Yin, 2018). A study's findings presented the researcher with a better understanding of the phenomenon (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2016). This researcher reviewed all the data analysis phases as needed to ensure data credibility.

Researchers use triangulation to collect the data with interviews and transcriptions to avoid misinterpretations (Fusch et al., 2018). I conducted the member checking with a follow-up interview to confirm the data using the transcription summary, notes, and the company's social media. Researchers implementing member checking can verify the interview information for accuracy and avoid the researcher's bias of opinion or experience (Fusch et al., 2018). Key terms emerged with the collection, disassembling, reassembling, analysis, and conclusion of the data objectively to avoid the researcher's subjectivity and bias opinion (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2016). Themes from the data sustained the literature review to answer the research question; information is in section three.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

As a researcher, one of the main goals is to produce the results of a study that are reliable and valid. For research to be reliable, others should replicate the research process and outcomes (Yin, 2018). To ensure the research process's reliability and results, the researcher can request feedback from the participants (Nandi & Platt, 2017). Researchers aware of their role as instruments of the study need to remain objective and reduce their biased contribution. To mitigate bias results during the research, the researcher should implement data triangulation (Fusch et al., 2018). I executed the triangulation with the semistructured interview, member checking of data interpretation, the transcript summaries, and the business social media platform review. During the member checking, the researcher presents the participant with an overview of the interview to be reviewed (Yin, 2018). For an individual to replicate the research, the data collection needs to have detailed records for a dependable replication (Cypress, 2017). For analysis results to be reliable, the researcher must prevent infiltrating personal opinions remaining objective (Fusch et al., 2018). I reached the dependability for the research remaining objective during the interview with an exclusive focus on the interview, probing questions, and the business social media platform review. To complete the member checking process, I followed up with the participants and the interview transcript summary to confirm the data. For the data analysis, the use of the NVivo12 program ensured the dependability of the results for others to replicate the research with the interview questions, responses,

themes, and codes. The dependability process helps the researcher remain objective based on data, not opinions (Yin, 2018).

Validity

Researchers maintain the study's validity by triangulating data for accuracy and truthfulness in the study results (Fusch et al., 2018). Credibility is the link between the researcher's findings from the study with the reality for the business leaders participating in the interview. The researcher can achieve the study's validity and truthfulness with accurate data collection (Cypress, 2017). The data triangulation for this study incorporated the member checking with the researcher's verification of the business social media platform, semistructured interviews with probing questions, and electronic side notes as a journal during the interview as recommended by Marshall and Rossman (2016). Once I completed the interview, I validated the data transcription summary with the interviewees on the phone.

The study's transferability ensures that future researchers can replicate the study for new research (Yin, 2018). The researcher provided in-depth detailed data of the study for transferability with information regarding study participants, population sample, method, design, and data management for future research and an interview protocol (Appendix A) with detailed information and formality. The corroboration of the study results ensures data confirmability (Fusch et al., 2018). I confirmed that the data collected was not biased during the confirmability, with personal influences remaining objective with the data. An organized and detailed audit trail of the research process establishes the data confirmability (Yin, 2018). Researchers achieve data saturation when no new

information surfaces during the data collection with triangulation from multiple resources (Twining et al., 2017). As the researcher, I used a semistructured interview to ask the 13 participants the same questions and reach data saturation with the support of additional sources such as social media platforms and a follow-up phone call to confirm the data with a summary of the transcript. Triangulation with data from various sources such as the interviews, document review, and observations during the research strengthens the study results and helps the researcher achieve data saturation (Fusch et al., 2018).

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I presented (a) my role as the researcher with the selected (b) research method and (c) design with the (d) participants, (e) population, and the (f) ethical considerations for the research. Considering data management, I included (g) data collection instruments, (h) technique, (i) organization, and (j) analysis. To conclude Section 2, I explained the process of (k) reliability and (l) validity of the data.

For Section 3, I present the research findings with a focus on professional practice and social change for business leaders. I conclude Section 3 with recommendations for actions and further research. The final part of Section 3 incorporates reflections and conclusions of the research.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

In this qualitative multiple case study, I explored social media marketing strategies that small business leaders use to increase revenue. As a marketing strategy, social media is a cost-efficient practice for business leaders with limited funds to promote their products and services (Balan & Rege, 2017). Business leaders' skills make a positive impact on the implementation of social media for their business. Abu Bakar et al. (2019) established that few business leaders have achieved their full potential in managing an efficient social media marketing strategy.

For this research, I conducted 13 interviews via video conferencing to collect data from business leaders who have successfully implemented a social media marketing strategy for at least 2 years and increased their revenue. Business leaders were 54% women and 46% men, with 57% providing services and 43% providing products (See Figure 1 and Figure 2). The data that I collected to triangulate the findings incorporated a review of the literature related to the topic, an analysis of the business leaders' social media platforms, video conference interviews, phone interviews with transcripts, and journal notes. The themes that emerged from the data analysis included (a) increasing engagement, (b) educational content, (c) diverse social media platforms, and (d) effectiveness measurements of social media marketing strategies. The themes support the theoretical framework, assisting business leaders in identifying essential business leaders' resources. The research results revealed effective social media marketing strategies that small business leaders implement to increase revenue.

Figure 1

Research Population Demographics: Gender

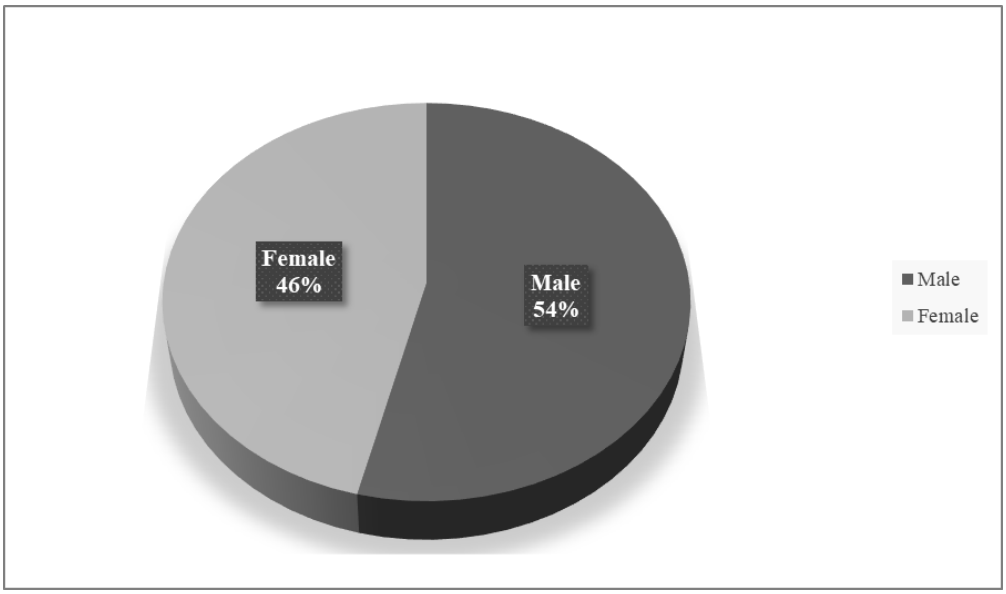
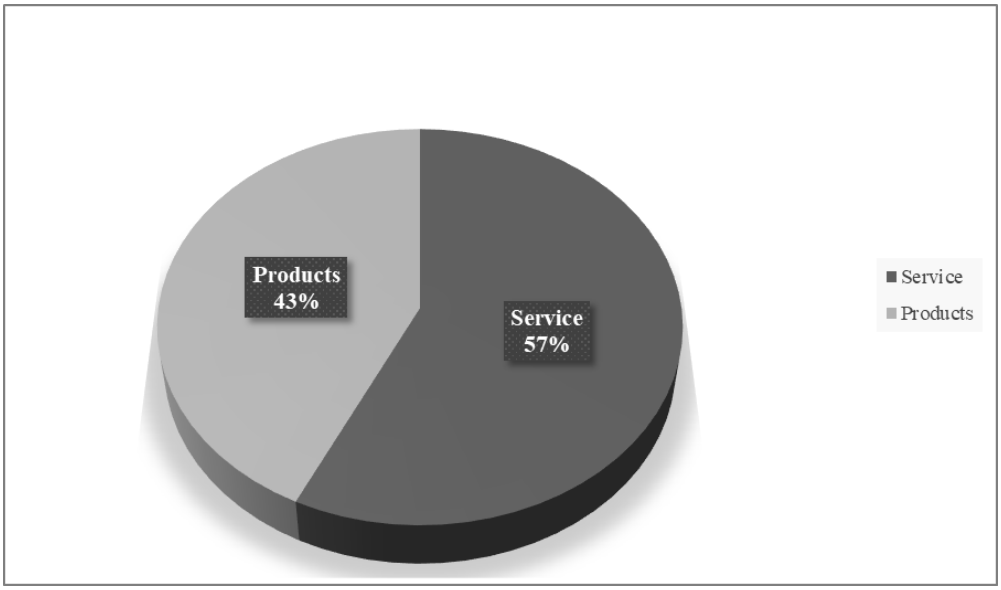


Figure 2

Research Population Demographics: Business Specialization



Presentation of the Findings

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to answer the overarching research question: What social media marketing strategies do small business leaders use to increase revenue? I conducted 13 interviews via video conferencing to collect data virtually. The business leaders interviewed have successfully implemented social media marketing strategies and reported increased revenue because of these strategies.

All participants agreed to participate in audio recorded interviews via online conferencing software. I collected data virtually and confirmed the interview transcripts over the phone as a follow up. I called each participant within days of the interview to discuss the transcript. After the interview, I sent an email with the transcript to verify the interview information's accuracy over the phone, clarifying the researcher's interpretation of the data. During the member-checking process, participants confirmed the interpretations of the interview with the transcript summary. Participants explained their answers during the interview for accuracy of results. Upon completing each interview, I uploaded the data to NVivo 12 software to identify themes. A review of the business leaders' social media platforms and the journal notes was also part of the data analysis.

After the data analysis of 12 participants, no new themes emerged from the data. I completed an additional interview to confirm data saturation with no new themes; I conducted 13 interviews. To protect the participants' privacy and the data they shared, I used codes to identify them: P-1, P-2, P-3, etc. I compared the research results with the NVivo 12 themes and the business leaders' social media platforms for data triangulation.

Themes and codes emerged from the research findings after I analyzed the interview transcripts in NVivo 12. During the data analysis, I uploaded each interview transcript in NVivo 12, reviewing each sentence and categorizing them according to the research questions and additional topics presented by participants. Themes included (a) increasing engagement, (b) educational content, (c) diverse social media platforms, and (d) effectiveness measurements for social media as a marketing strategy. The four themes from the research are presented in Tables 1 through 4, with excerpts from the 13 interviews' data analysis.

Theme 1: Increasing Engagement

Increasing engagement for business leaders and their followers is a marketing strategy that corresponds to the number of social media interactions and the connections during those instances. Business leaders' higher communication levels achieve increased engagement with followers (Tafesse & Wien, 2018). Increasing engagement as a social media marketing strategy was the first theme resulting from the research (Figure 3). The subthemes sustaining the engagement include (a) traditional marketing strategies mixed with social media, (b) support other businesses, and (c) understand the audience. Table 1 contains excerpts from some of the interviews representing the theme. Goals using social media as a marketing strategy depend on the final business plan with the targeted market. Even though business leaders' main goal is to increase revenue, the results showed that engagement is the priority for business leaders using social media as a marketing strategy. Business leaders can achieve higher engagement levels with content that

motivates two-way communication by engaging with consumers on social media (Tafesse & Wien, 2018).

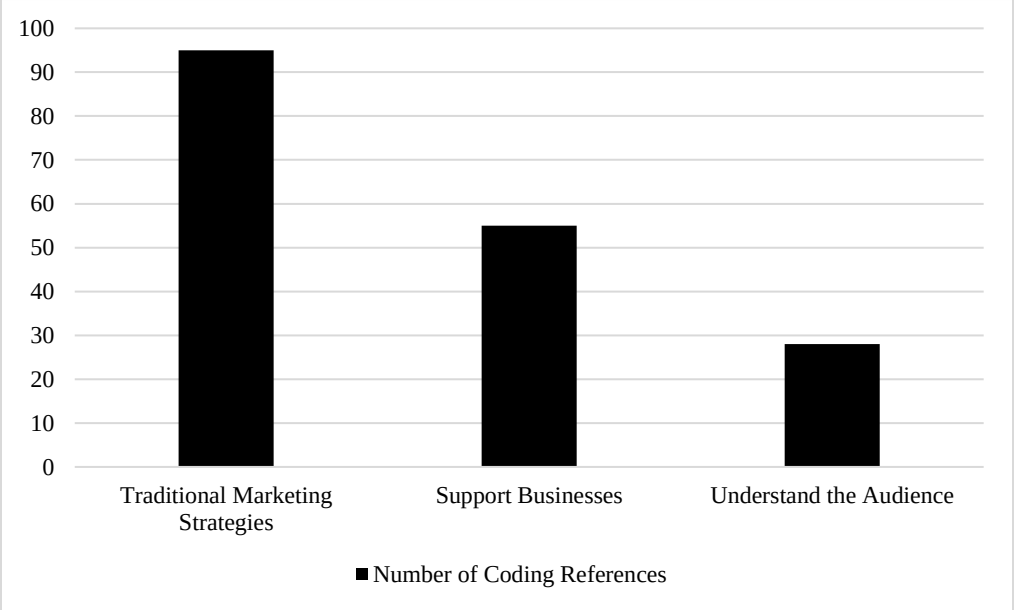
Table 1

Theme 1: Increasing Engagement

Subtheme	Participant	Excerpt
Traditional marketing strategies mixed with social media	P-3	"I like to network because I like to build that relationship."
Support other businesses	P-7	"We're really just a big family, and we're supporting one another."
Understand the audience	P-9	"Making sure that my content was curated in a way that he made sense to my audience."

Figure 3

Theme 1: Increasing Engagement



Engagement

Business leaders working toward increasing sales and revenue focus on engagement with customers (Keegan & Rowley, 2017). Some participants indicated that engagement was one of their primary social media marketing strategies to increase revenues. Business leaders can use the level of engagement from customers with their brand as an effective measurement strategy (Tafesse & Wien, 2018). As P-10 stated, “I have higher levels of engagement when I do live videos with a radical position.”

Participants reported engagement at different levels according to the platform used once they identified their target market and how to engage with their audience. Social media engagement correlates with increased sales with hashtags and specific times and dates to post according to the target market preferences (Yost et al., 2021). For P-3, engagement resulted in higher numbers in Instagram than Facebook: “Instagram gets more engagement versus Facebook for me.” Business leaders reported this distinction between platforms in engagement according to their products and services. Business leaders reported different levels of engagement with diverse targeted market demographics characteristics. As P-6 stated, “Instagram is where you’re going to just engage and connect with people; you have to have different strategies because it’s a different type of audience.” P-10 said,

> The most effective strategy that I have used is Facebook, according to my previous market. Now my strategy is trying to get into all other markets, so I am going to start using Instagram more to reach a younger group of followers.

Business leaders' higher proficiency levels are essential to engage with customers (Braojos et al., 2017). A lack of effective strategies to engage followers on social media might be a challenge faced by business leaders. P-3 reported, "I started doing LinkedIn blogs when I had my assistant with me, and we did that on a regular basis; I did not get too much engagement." A focus on engagement with a current number of followers should be a more prominent goal for business leaders than increasing their number of followers. As P-11 stated, "Some people rely on vanity metrics, and I think that's the wrong way to go; how many views, likes, and views does not equal revenue." A review of the business leaders' social media pages confirmed their statements during the interviews. P-10's Facebook page had higher engagement levels with followers on live videos and lower engagement levels on Instagram, according to the number of followers.

Engagement as the first theme in the data represents one of the leading business goals leaders have with their social media plan as a marketing strategy. Social media engagement is increased by clearly defined goals and planning when developing a marketing strategy (Ihejirika et al., 2021). Social media with diverse platforms and free of charge options represent a possible alternative for small business leaders. Advertisement on social media platforms is an option for business leaders to promote their businesses (Broeck et al., 2017). The results confirmed that business leaders using social media as a marketing strategy might increase customer engagement for brand awareness and positively impact business revenue (Madsen, 2017; Pérez-González et al., 2017). Business leaders connecting with consumers reported a mixed marketing strategy with traditional marketing and social media to increase engagement.

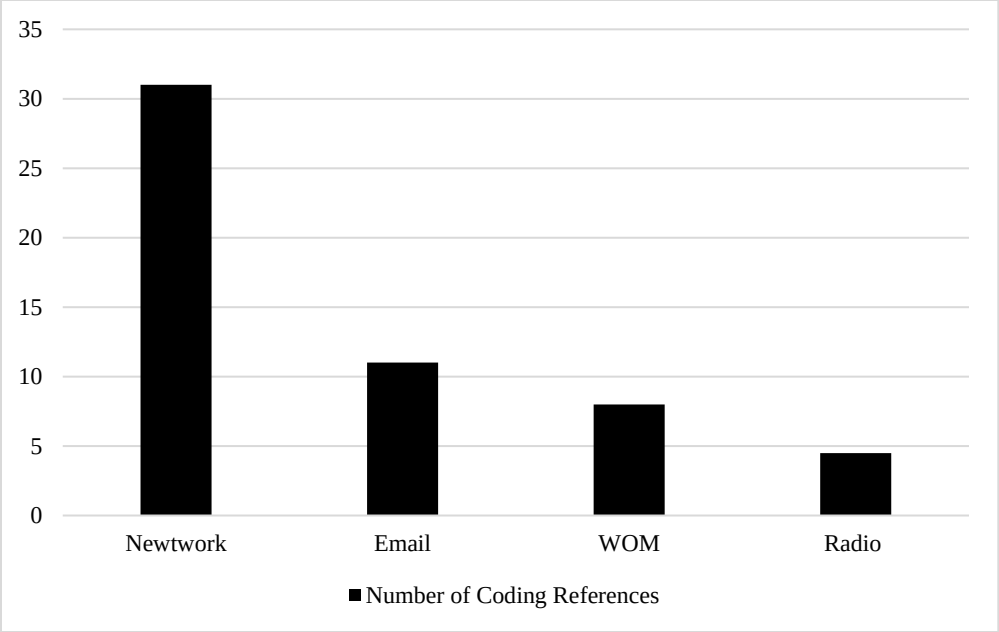
Traditional Marketing Strategies Mixed With Social Media

Traditional marketing strategies for small business leaders are more successful when business leaders mix them with a social media plan (Todor, 2016). My data analysis resulted in the following subtheme: traditional marketing strategies representing the mixed strategies that business leaders were implementing to promote their organizations (Figure 4). A mixture of social media and traditional marketing strategies helps business leaders develop a more sustainable and diverse plan to increase visibility (Odoom et al., 2017). Business leaders reported using social media with traditional marketing strategies for their marketing mixed method.

Traditional marketing strategies include radio, magazines, and newspapers, among other options (Todor, 2016). Small business leaders who operated before social media initiated their marketing strategies with traditional networking, email, WOM, and radio.

Figure 4

Subtheme: Traditional Marketing Strategies Mixed With Social Media



P-3, a business leader with many years' experience providing services, stated, "In the very beginning, when we started our business, it was more networking, then we started really getting into social media." Networking at face-to-face events such as lunch-and-learn programs allows business leaders to engage in personalized relationships with other business leaders and consumers as a marketing strategy. Business relationships are the main goal for P-3, who stated, "I like to network because I like to build that relationship." The lunch-and-learn opportunities seem to be an option as a networking opportunity for some business leaders; as P-5 stated, "Something that's very helpful in our industry is a lunch-and-learn." Email campaigns as a marketing strategy allow business leaders to connect with others with current information to increase their

knowledge with a blog or reduce their costs with sales and promotions on the email advertisement. For P-1, emails are a form of marketing:

> You never know who a potential customer could be; I always try to lead them back to my Instagram; from there, if I can lead them into my email list for my monthly newsletter, I try to get them in.

Email lists for business leaders provide another line of communication with their followers. P-8 said, “For Facebook, we pay for an advertisement promoting our blog, and the concept of that is to actually make people go to our website and subscribe to our blog so that we can have an email marketing strategy.” Email listing is essential for business leaders who want to keep direct contact with followers. As P-9 stated, referring to the importance of emails:

> When I am talking to one new blogger and new influencer, I always suggest and recommend that they start a website such as WordPress, wherever they want to start it. But that is their domain, that is their home, and they cannot lose theirs; they can create email lists and all that stuff in there. Whereas in the social media platform, it does not belong to you; it can be shut down; your content can be deleted.

A strategy available for both social media and traditional marketing is the WOM mentioned by four of the participants. For example, P-3 three relies on WOM to get referrals:

> I do not really need to get a job or a sale directly from the network connections, but they refer me to people whom they know, saying, 'Hey, I know someone who does that,' and bang. For me, a lot is on referrals and in building relationships.

P-6, a millennial business leader, considers WOM part of her marketing mixture with social media:

> WOM is a strategy that is still current for business leaders. I love traditional marketing strategies. I use word of mouth a lot. So, like family, friends—I talk about my stuff. I share my stuff with my neighbors, with anybody really—my therapist. There is nothing wrong with old-school marketing.

For P-9, WOM on social media through influencers is efficient to promote a brand compared with a company direct marketing campaign: "The brands realize that they need influencers out there putting their content out because people rather hear it from an influencer than from the company directly."

As a marketing strategy mix with social media, two participants mentioned radio during their interviews. For P-10, radio continues to be a marketing strategy: "I have done traditional radio mixing with live videos at the same time." In contrast, P-2 reported radio as an unsuccessful traditional marketing strategy: "I tried radio once. It did absolutely nothing for us. We have tried other methods of marketing, and nothing seems to be as effective as social media." A review of their business social media pages sustained the business leaders' statements; P-9 posts promoting their baked good brand on social media, and P-7 reposts photos from customers in stories on their business page.

Traditional marketing strategies before social media continue to be an option for business leaders. Conventional marketing strategies allow business leaders to reach customers that are not on social media (Vynogradova & Drokina, 2020). Traditional marketing strategies have limitations with consumers not sharing information with others; however, social media platforms provide consumers the opportunity to share their experiences regarding a product or service with others (Kumar et al., 2017). Social media's exclusive use as a marketing strategy does not generate substantial customer face-to-face value when compared with traditional marketing strategies. Incorporating social networks with a social media marketing strategy fosters a more valuable relationship with customers (Li et al., 2021). Business leaders increasing the number of customers can benefit from having a mix of traditional and social media marketing strategies (Kumar et al., 2017). This first theme, increasing engagement, included business leaders' approaches to join forces with other businesses.

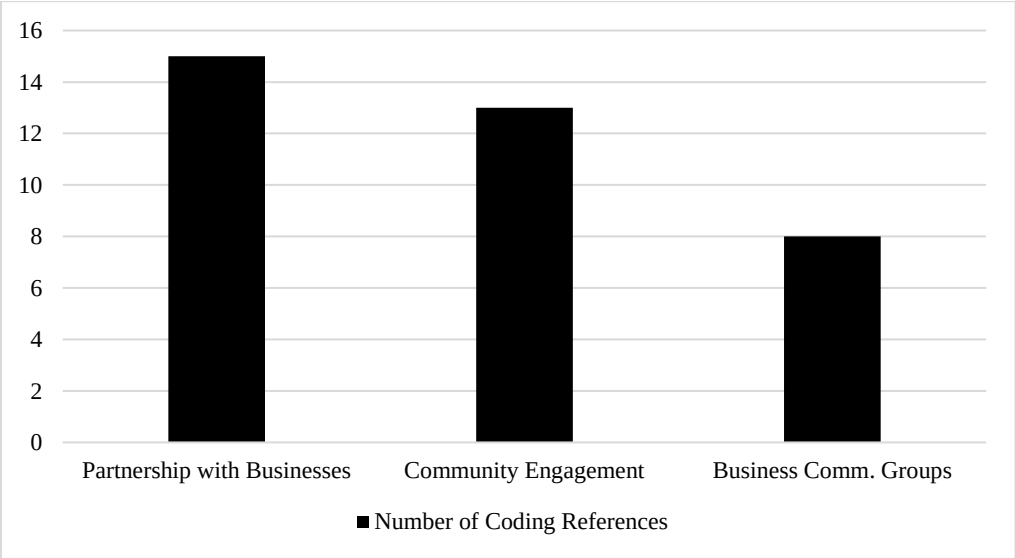
Support Other Businesses

Business leaders support other businesses with their social media posts using tags and hashtags, joining other like-minded leaders in social media groups and traditional marketing engagements. Nine of the 13 participants mentioned supporting other business leaders and their organizations with their marketing strategies. The goal of promoting other businesses is to encourage other companies, partner with them to create marketing campaigns to join their conversations. Business leaders, increasing their engagement with social media marketing strategies, reported their support to other businesses with their

partnership, community engagement, and joining forces in social media groups (Figure 5).

Figure 5

Subtheme: Support Other Businesses



During the promotion of other organizations, business leaders such as P-7 concentrated on using their social media business page to create posts tagging the other businesses, getting their followers' attention. As P-7 stated, "every Saturday, I try to do a community post; the post is about Orlando saying, come out and shop at your favorite small retailers go drink at your favorite brewery or go eat at your favorite small restaurant." While joining forces with other businesses, some business leaders take advantage of organizations with many followers to increase their visibility. Participant four commented, "Orlando Jobs had 25,000 followers, East Orlando chamber has about 10,000, by doing it with them, and then doing a cross post-event, so we host the event." Online educational events on social media with the partnership of other business allows

the host of the event to be in all the other business social media pages at once while they launch the online program. The process of engaging with other businesses sometimes is initiated by joining the conversation with other companies social media pages; as P-13 stated, “we started targeting small businesses, through chamber of commerce through different things and started posting and commenting on their blogs and their posts and opening up conversations.” Business leaders experience growth on their network when joining forces with other business leaders (Hernández-Carrión et al., 2017). During a review of the social media pages, I confirmed P-7 promoting other businesses and congratulating them for their anniversaries. At the same time, P-4 social media contained pre-recorded live videos on various small businesses’ social media pages.

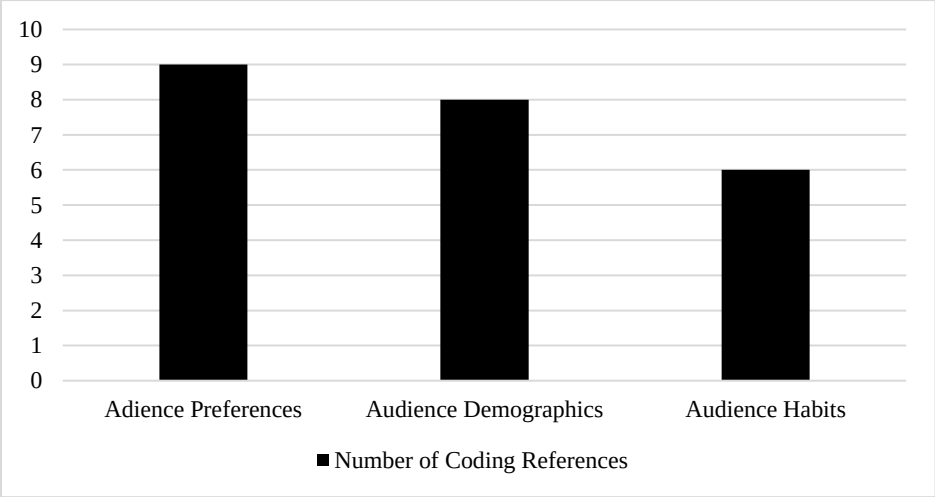
Nine of the 13 participants experienced the benefits of collaborating with other business leaders to promote their organization on social media platforms while supporting other business goals to engage with consumers. I did not discuss the topics of connection and support in a business-to-business environment as a marketing strategy in the literature revision extensively; however, it became a subtheme as part of the engagement increase. Business leaders connecting with other business leaders can increase their network to sustain their brands in a collaborative effort (Hernández-Carrión et al., 2017). Some business leaders experience the benefits of collaborating with other business leaders, increasing follower’s knowledge, and communication with them (Ho et al., 2020). Business leaders can collaborate using social media when sharing information and expertise with the network (Saridakis et al., 2018). Business leaders increasing engagement with consumers must understand their target market.

Understand the Audience

Business leaders understanding their audience in social media have concise ideas of their target market demographics with their preferences and habits to create a more appealing message with their posts. Social media campaigns directed by business leaders can be more successful with a targeted campaign considering the follower's demographics, needs, and preferences (Yost et al., 2021). During the interview, ten participants mentioned that understanding their audience was one of their most effective social media marketing strategies. Some business leaders said their priority is first establishing a targeted market as part of their marketing strategy to understand their preferences. The concept of understanding their audience in social media was related to the attraction of their market, considering their preferences, demographics, and habits (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Subtheme: Understand the Audience



Once a target audience is identified, and understood business leaders could direct the message to them; as P-6 mentioned, “my strategy was just understanding my audience and knowing where to find them using the correct hashtags.” For some business leaders to understand their audience is one of the most crucial strategies for their marketing campaigns, as P-9 reported during the interview:

> For me, that is one of the most important social media strategies that you can create when you are creating content for your own business, or somebody else’s business is understanding what is attracting the audience that you already have and how to gain more of that audience and grow your numbers. When you are pitching another company or another company is looking into you, you can tell them; I grew this much because I understand my audience.

Once the business owners selected their target audience and understood their needs and preferences, they reported tailoring posts as a crucial goal using social media. Seven of the 13 participants mentioned tailoring messages to their audience as part of their most effective marketing strategies. As P-13 stated, “we started targeting our social media to the demographic that we are looking at, which is a small business, instead of the larger businesses then really tailoring a story and using the content that we have built for other companies.” Tailored post engages the targeted audience at higher levels; P-2 reviewing the social media platform analytics data to tailor their posts said:

> I can see what age groups are looking at my posts, whether it is male or female, what time of the day they are interacting most with the post. That way, I can tailor my content to those people who are engaging more and who sees my posts more.

During the interviews, four participants identified traffic redirection to a website as an effective social media strategy. One of the participants was P-8, who said, “what we do is we use social media to let you know to get people to go to our website and subscribe to our blog, so they can find out more information about what we’re doing.” While some business leaders have the goal to redirect their traffic to their website, some find it more beneficial to have a direct message button on their Facebook for questions. As P-4 stated, “having that messaging button, as opposed to trying to send them to your website and convert them on your website, the messaging works ten times better.” Consumer’s demographics was identified by some business leaders as essential data to produce tailored posts; P-13 sustained this concept stating,

> I’m targeting small businesses; I’m not targeting the general masses. So we kind of have a very specific demographic that we go after. So, we started targeting our social media to the demographic that we’re looking at, which is a small business, instead of the larger businesses, and then really tailoring a story.

Business leaders directing their social media marketing efforts to a targeted audience benefit from knowing the audience’s specifics, including their habits. Some of the participants obtain the data for the audience’s practices on the social media platforms as P-13 mentioned during the interview,

> Facebook, they can tell, well, this person is of this age, likes these hobbies, is looking for this it’s marrying, or whatever it is, by basic demographics, they can create like a like a profile, or somebody who may be very likable to like your page.

A review of the business leaders' social media businesses pages such as P-7 confirms the interview data depicting tailored posts with curated photos for specific audiences and a cohesive message between the image, words, and hashtags. Knowing the audience allows the business leader to join their causes and support their social responsibility goals as P-1 social media pages indicate support of their follower's community campaigns. Plans using social media as a marketing strategy can incorporate the promotion of business services and products to integrate social responsibility initiatives (Chu & Chen, 2019).

A targeted campaign with a clear understanding of the customers' needs helps the business leader develop posts with higher engagement levels (Soedarsono et al., 2020). Business leaders clearly defining social media campaigns with a target audience will positively impact them according to their preferences (Yost et al., 2021). Posts can be tailor for the audience according to the platform (Soedarsono et al., 2020). Once the business leader know where to find the audience and has attracted them, they can implement the next step to engage them on their website. A social media marketing strategy to redirect traffic to the website is imperative once business leaders have a coordinated plan with their posts (Keikha & Sargolzaei, 2017). During the interviews, business leaders demonstrated how they practiced strategies sustained by the literature with their reports of posts incorporating visuals highly tailored for a specific audience. If customers feel connected with the business leader, they might inquire for more information at their website. The next theme, educational content, will expand the

discussion of successful social media marketing strategies used by the small business leaders interviewed.

Theme 2: Educational Content

Social media marketing strategies can incorporate educational plans to increase the knowledge of the followers. A small portion of individuals engaging in social media aims to increase their understanding while using the platforms (de Vries et al., 2017). Some business leaders educate their followers directly with their products as a marketing strategy. In contrast, others might create a general educational campaign to attract their target market with their topics of interest. Business leaders use different strategies to educate their followers using (a) videos and photos, (b) business news for awareness, and (c) posts with value of products as a marketing goal to educate their followers, as shown in the excerpts of the table two.

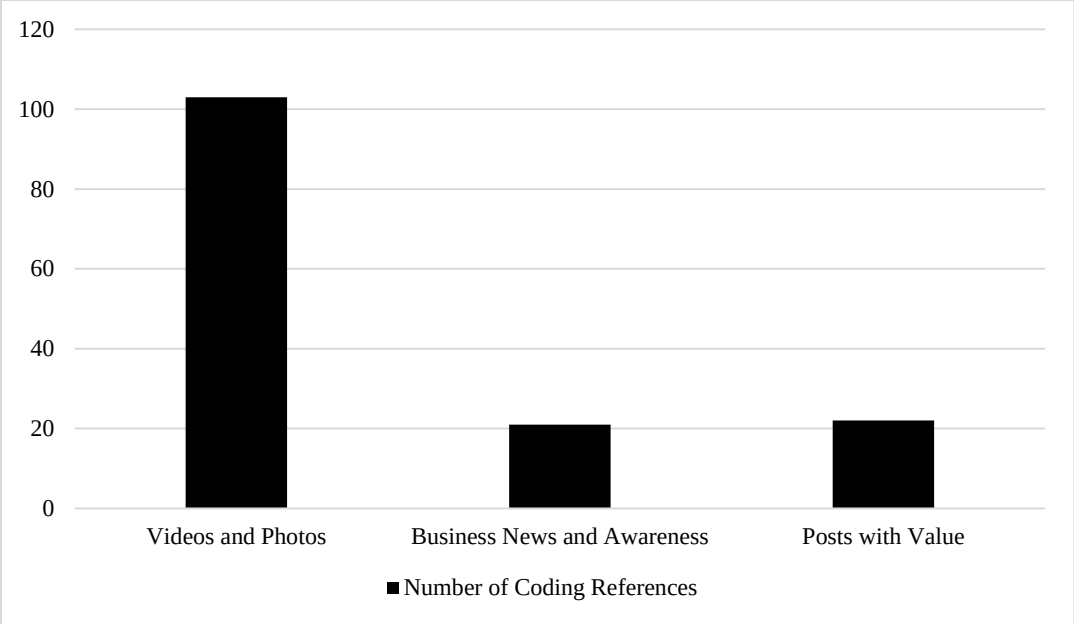
Table 2

Theme 2: Educational Content

Codes	Participants	Excerpts
Education	P-5	"I try to hopefully make them all educational, something I try to keep everybody up to date as to the marketplace."
Videos	P-3	"What I would do is I would bring a teaser video and saying, Hey guys, I'm going to talk about the top five strategies of how to use Instagram."
Photos	P-5	"a picture of a house might be a picture of a family that just sold their home. And then I try to hopefully make them all educational."
Business news awareness	P-8	"When we're doing a photoshoot, if we're on-site and we are filming and were behind the scenes, we use more of that Instagram appeal since it is more of like a visual. So we use that to let people know that we're coming up with something new; for more information can go visit our website."
Posts with value, products	P-11	"So let's say that I owned a running shoe store, and my target market are athletes; what are the top five shoe brands for runners right now? That's the type of value that I think that you should bring."

Figure 7

Theme 2: Educational Content

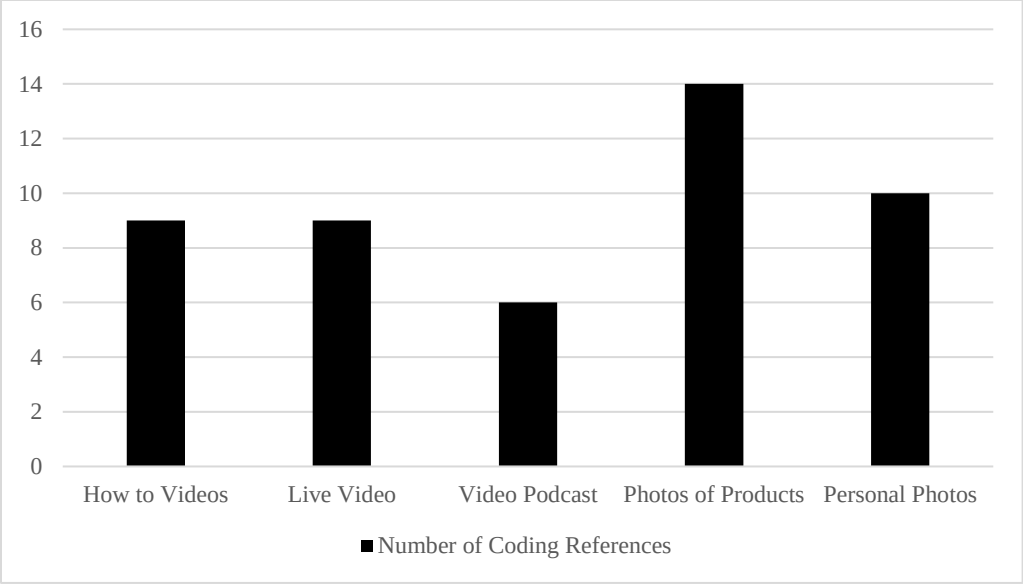


Videos and Photos

Videos and photos in social media are an essential part of posts to increase the interaction with followers. According to the social media platform, strategies used by business leaders for their marketing plans once they have selected their target market and the best design incorporate videos and photos. According to Agung and Darma (2019), some business leaders concentrate their marketing effort using pictures and videos to promote their organization.

Figure 8

Subtheme: Educational Content With Videos and Photos



During the interviews, business leaders mentioned videos and photos as their two primary marketing strategies. Twelve participants said video use, while 10 participants mentioned pictures as their most effective social media marketing strategy. Photos and videos as visual sources can relate to social media engagement (Dolan et al., 2019). P-7 reported videos as the most effective marketing strategy for their posts, with one video specifically, “It’s like a 10-second video of my husband opening up one of our product boxes and showing a product.” Photos was another effective strategy reported by business leaders; P-5 stated, “most of the time I do pictures, and then links to important information that has to do with our industry.”

Videos and pictures are tools that business leaders use with social media platforms to connect with their followers (Soedarsono et al., 2020). Videos for business leaders can be produced professionally by an agency or semi-professionally by a business

leader who can edit them after recording or post a live video. Videos can be entertaining and impersonal with an educational objective focused on sales. Timing with videos also varies according to the platform and the purpose. For P-10 videos have different engagement according to the topic, “When I do motivational and spiritual videos, I have a higher number of likes. When I do video cooking or when I’m doing videos as a hairstylist, I don’t see the same level of engagement.” Live videos allow the presenter to communicate with followers, increasing the interactions with followers (Huertas, 2018). P-11 reported supporting video over photos as a marketing tool, “videos rank higher by algorithm, depending on how you use the video if I’m using Instagram, what is the latest they’re using. There’s something called reels; the algorithm plays in your favor if you upload a reel video.” While pictures of business leaders promoting their image can be a successful strategy, as P-10 mentioned, “Another effective strategy is pictures of me as a model, people engage with me, and I have many comments.” P-2 reported the opposite with the use of photos of clients and products; “The least effective post that I can put on social media is just a photo of a product, a photo of a quote, or a photo of somebody holding up one of their finished products, which is odd in my market because people enjoy seeing the photos of the products themselves.”

Some educational strategies might be general indirect or direct education of products and services. Business leaders using the how-to-video or the tutorials with an indirect approach as P-3 report “On Pinterest, I’ll go in there, and talk about color mixtures and do videos creating color combinations or sharing about my color theory book.” The indirect approach with video to mix colors attracts followers to engage with

the business leader to obtain more information about this process and learn more about the products. P-11 reported posts with value using blogs:

> You give them tips, or like many blogs of what are the best type of shoes for your running, what's going to make you faster, so giving them the value that they need. Again, just telling them, what are the top five shoe brands for runners right now. That is the type of value that I think that you should bring. Suppose I am googling something, and you can give that to me without asking everybody else. In that case, you're giving them value for their time.

Video blogs with educational shows were the strategy of choice for P-4, who used the video podcasts to attract other business leaders, with topics related to their interests, "our show is business to business, I mean, we're talking about business marketing strategy."

Pictures and videos are a visual strategy for business leaders to implement when promoting their businesses; Instagram is a visual platform that allows users to provide a visually rich experience for followers (Soedarsono et al., 2020). P-9 stated:

> Instagram serves as a portfolio. People go there, and they can see images from your past content, at least in my case, so I curate the images that I put in there, so they look branded, the colors, the lighting, it is like watching a magazine.

Marketing strategies using videos to promote a business can incorporate different variables with the use of this tool.

The literature sustains the research participants' responses with their preferences for videos and photos. Videos and pictures as highly visual post options are the preferred

option for Instagram posts (Soedarsono et al., 2020). Business leaders need to have a clear understanding of their audience demographics and background to communicate a message that resonates (Wong & Yazdanifard, 2015). Social media strategies with the use of videos and photos are a common practice among small business leaders. Photos and videos have become a marketing tool for business leaders to promote their businesses on social media (Agung & Darma, 2019).

The literature corroborates the research result of using videos for storytelling. As a marketing strategy in social media, storytelling creates a bond with followers (González-Romo et al., 2017). Storytelling is an inspiring motivational strategy to connect with followers on social media. Business leaders do not have to sell directly to their followers; an indirect approach to educational purposes can increase customer loyalty (Patrutiu Baltes, 2015).

Individuals using social media have a simple goal to connect with friends and family (Penni, 2017), especially on Facebook platforms. Business leaders have taken this opportunity to communicate with their followers on social media, and some attract them with strategies that increase the level of knowledge of their customers. An increase of knowledge does not necessarily correspond to individuals' main goal when visiting a social media platform (de Vries et al., 2017). If business leaders indirectly and entertainingly present educational strategies, they can experience a positive response from their followers. As experts on their products and services, business leaders are ideal educators to increase the follower's knowledge on topics related to their products and

services (Patrutiu Baltes, 2015). Social media is proven to be an efficient tool to educate individuals about current national issues (Gao et al., 2021).

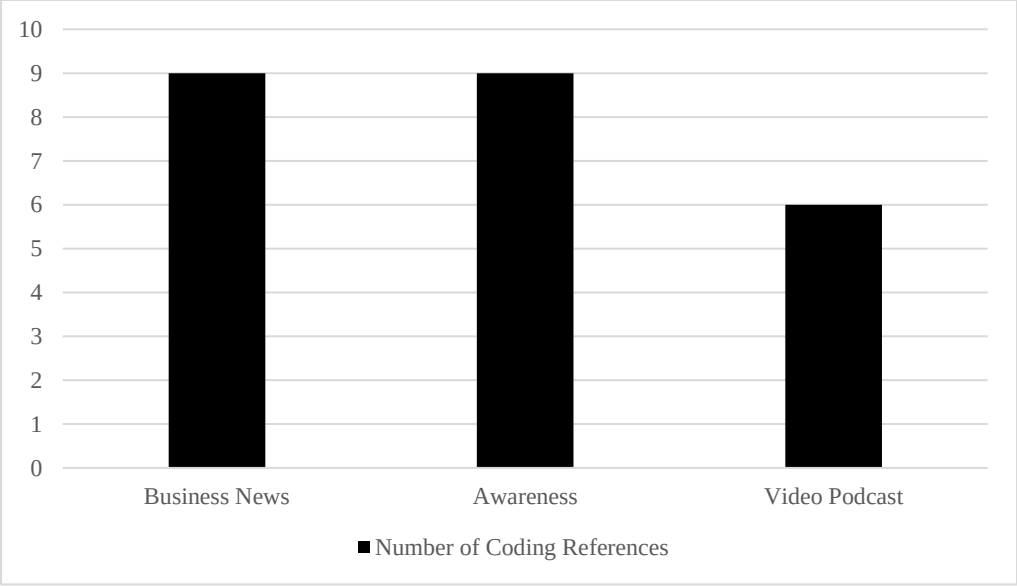
A review of the business leaders' social media businesses pages reveals their high use of videos and photos with P-1 using reels posts on Instagram. A combination of videos and pictures are the strategies observed on social media for P-2 with images of customers and finished products and videos of people working at the studio. A consistent redirection to the website is present for P-9 with a link on the Instagram bio and posts directly asking followers to visit the website for additional information and recipes. During a review of the participant's social media pages, I confirmed their plans to educate their followers, supporting their statements about educating other businesses with marketing strategies and short videos educational videos.

Business News and Awareness

Educational strategies using social media strategies allows business leaders to share information about their business news with their location, hours of operation, and sales. Posts with information from business leaders regarding their business increase their follower's awareness of the products and services available.

Figure 9

Subtheme: Business News and Awareness



Some business leaders use their news of upcoming events to create a sense of expectation and engage the followers with curiosity as P-8 stated,

> When we're doing a photoshoot, if we're on-site and we are filming and were behind the scenes, we use more of that Instagram appeal since it is more of like a visual. So, we use that to let people know that we're coming up with something new, for more information can visit our website.

Newsletters as a monthly email is the format selected for some business leaders to create awareness of their business updates as P-1 mentioned, "For my newsletter, I always include what flavors are coming up for the upcoming month, any events that I'm going to be working, whether it be farmers market, or pop-up event." These business leaders use business news to create a sense of awareness of what is coming up and where they will be available to meet with followers in their community events. For some

business leaders, the awareness of their services and products in social media can be targeted to specific platforms; P-6 established that “I am getting more awareness through Pinterest and more earnings through Instagram.” In informing news and sharing information to create awareness, some business leaders have developed video blogs with other business leaders to increase their audiences’ knowledge of social media. P-4 stated, “This past year with COVID, what we’ve done is we started our own video podcast. And we were interviewing other small businesses and bringing in experts in different fields.” Figure nine presents the participant’s response to the subtheme of business news and awareness, including video podcasts.

A review of the participant’s social media platforms sustains their statements; for P-1, you can be informed of new flavors of her product for the month as she shares the pictures of her newsletter for the month with a link for followers to access more detailed information. For P-4, I observed posts educating participants in an entertainment style of video podcasts with other business leaders supporting their business. P-4 incorporated the community and other business leaders using tagging all the participants while sharing the followers on each page to increase their followers in the process with an indirect approach to attract new consumers. This indirect approach to promote business services and products allows followers to engage with the business leaders casually, increasing the sense of trust and connection.

Business leaders sharing news of their products and services in social media is a strategy studied by Bazi et al. (2020) with 25 semistructured interviews. According to Bazi et al., their research participants reported following the brand news to find out news

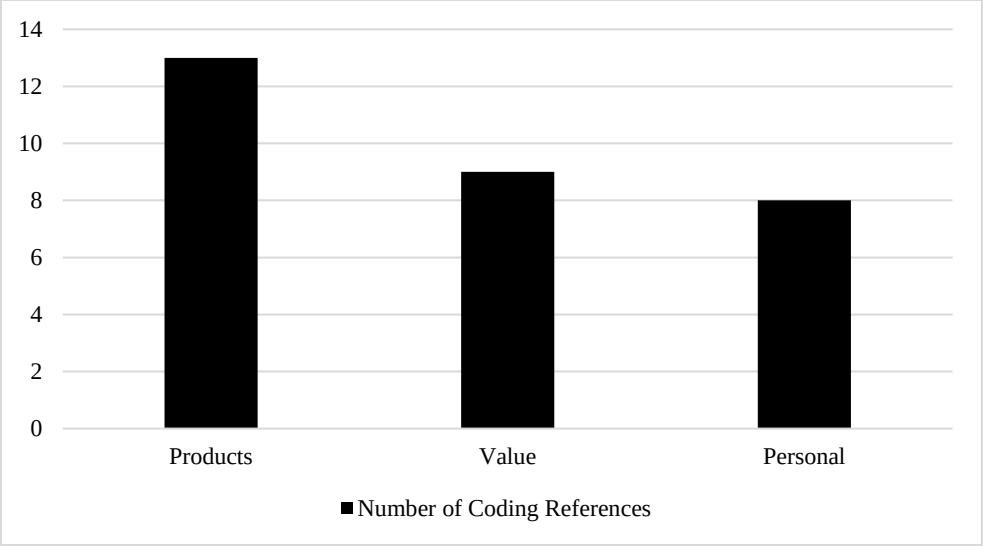
collections, sales, events, and trends. Business leaders promoting their products and services news considering their follower's demographics and preferences needs to target new trends and the latest tendencies remaining current with the market. Business news can have higher levels of impact among followers depending on the innovation of the product or service, creating a sentiment of expectation (Nguyen & Chaudhuri, 2019). Innovation and trends news with highly curated images and videos maintain followers expecting new products and services from their favorite businesses, adding value to their lives.

Posts With Value

What is considered valuable for a group of individuals corresponds to their needs and preferences. Business leaders developing valuable content with their products and services can take this opportunity to educate, creating awareness allowing followers to know them with personals posts too.

Figure 10

Subtheme: Posts With Value



Social media followers expect valuable data from the business leaders engaging with them to obtain something in return as P-11 expresses,

> Bringing value to your customer, that goes in different forms. You have to go with your intuition when it comes to this. It goes back to knowing my audience's value of following me and giving me their likes and giving me their attention. Then when I'm giving something to them, they give me something back. When you do a call to action, I don't usually say, hey, just give me a like, I'm like, Hey, why don't you buy my product. So you put out value, and you get value back.

For some business leaders giving back value with their social media content is a detailed process with considerable planning, as expressed by P-4,

> I create a lot of content to show off the lights, but they also sell them as kits. So it's, you know, DIY showing people how to do it. So the first step that we do in

> planning is to create all the content, write a script, you say, okay, we're going to kick this thing off in six weeks. Now, what is it that we need to do? And we'll write it out, and we'll say, okay, we need to show happy people enjoying their lights, installing their lights. So how do we do that? Okay, we need to take pictures, okay, what kind of pictures, okay, let's get a kid and his mom plugging in the lights. And let's get an older couple enjoying glasses of wine on their patio. So all of this planning, like you start creating your content. At the same time, you look at and say, Okay, we're going to have an event this day. So six weeks ahead of the event, we need to start promoting it. So first, you announce the event, then you announce a highlight from the event. So for us, we're going to give away two sets of lights to free installations of lights for two different homes. Okay, so now you have to create a campaign around that and create a campaign around the event, and you have to start selling. Why do you want to come to the event? Why do you want to buy our lights? Why do you want it's all? It all has to go back to the brand strategy of the company. So I know you spend a lot of stuff out there, but it's this big mess that all comes together in the end. You want to start to get them to sign up.

For P-4, content with value with do-it-yourself (DIY) videos is an opportunity to educate followers about getting an installation done at home. The participant goes beyond discussing the content plan, including curated images and videos with sentiment and news regarding sales and events.

P-3 mentioned during the interview how posts for the business have more engagement when the products have individuals working and showing the process of how things are getting done,

> What I found what gets a lot of engagement, and likes, is when I start posting either a picture of myself, or my team, or something that has a physical picture of a person and doing something, I feel that because that attracts people saying, oh, that's what your business is all about.

Eight participants reported personal posts or posts with a personal touch incorporating products and services. The combination of personal content with the innovation of the reels seems to be more efficient for P-6.

> I get a lot more just people who are just like overall the same I completely do the same thing. Oh, I wish I had something like this where it's just more personal engagement rather than my post are talking again, like about products and stuff. And so now my engagement on my stories is just definitely more personal compared to the post on my communication on my post.

Social media platform reels have opened opportunities to business leaders to develop content that is always fresh for only 24 hours of display with light videos and pictures at a personal level and higher engagement.

A review of the P-6 reels on the social media pages reflects a business leader with a relaxed attitude sharing posts from home enjoying skills as an artist while showing others how the products are done. For P-1, the option to post on reels has expanded her creativity with posts reflecting the seasons with coordination of dance, music, home

decorations, and products with colors and flavors representing the current celebrations. The participants' videos and photos are highly engaging, educational, and entertaining with an indirect sales approach.

Business leaders using social media to promote products and services, increasing the follower's knowledge and allowing them an opportunity to inquire and ask questions about the business leaders' products and services. Social media platforms connect business leaders and consumers to clarify the business products and services (Wu et al., 2020). In applying the data from consumers' social media, business leaders can understand their followers' needs and consumers regarding their products and services to improve them (Ordenes et al., 2017). Personal posts with a more casual tone allow business leaders to connect with their audiences in a less formal way on social media (Soedarsono et al., 2020). The literature sustains the practices that business leaders are implementing to promote their businesses while exchanging value. Business leaders' successful social media marketing strategies to indirectly educate followers while adding value with the platform's tools and innovation have positive results.

Theme 3: Diverse Social Media Platforms

According to their market demographics, business leaders use several diverse social media platforms as a marketing strategy. The most used media for the participants of this research were Instagram, followed by Facebook and LinkedIn. The text cloud figure presents the most common words during the discussion of business leaders' social media platforms. The following figure illustrates the research's visual results with Instagram and Facebook, including similar results among the participants. The last of the

three figures for the diverse social media platforms shows the percentage of business leaders' mentions for social media platforms during the interview, including the bottom three: Pinterest, TikTok, and Twitter. Table 3 contains excerpts from some of the interviews representing the theme.

Table 3

Theme 3: Diverse Social Media Platforms

Codes	Participant	Excerpt
Platforms	P-11	"We talked about trends and understanding, the platform that you're working with."
Instagram	P-9	"Instagram serves as a platform as a portfolio."
Facebook	P-10	"According to my previous market, people following me are more matured in age, so Facebook has been efficient. "
LinkedIn	P-3	"what we use right now is Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn are the three main things that we use to increase our business."

Figure 11

Diverse Social Media Platforms Word Cloud

Figure 12

Theme 3: Diverse Social Media Platforms

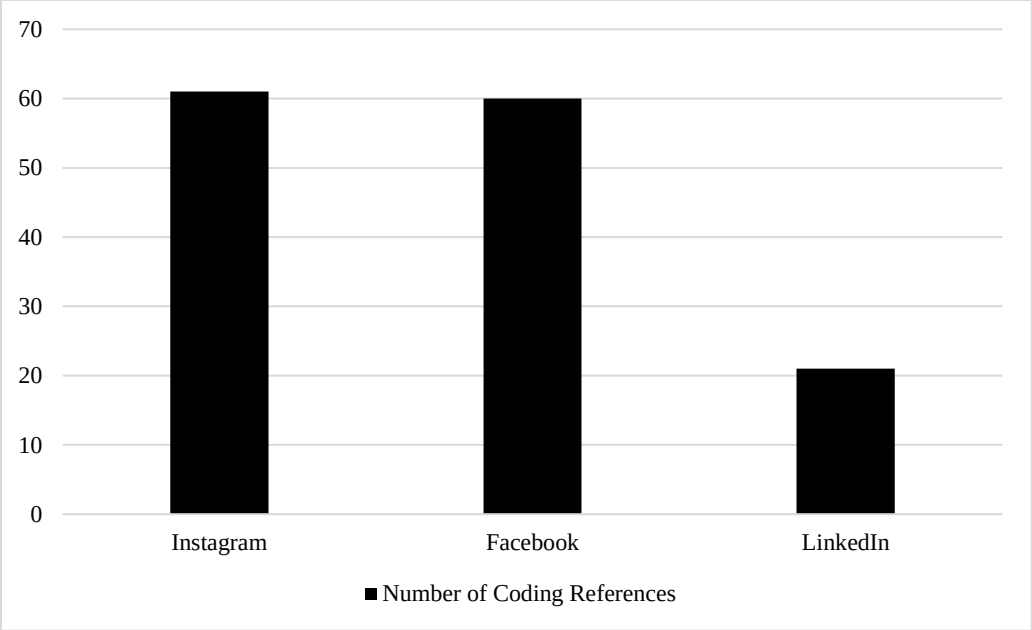
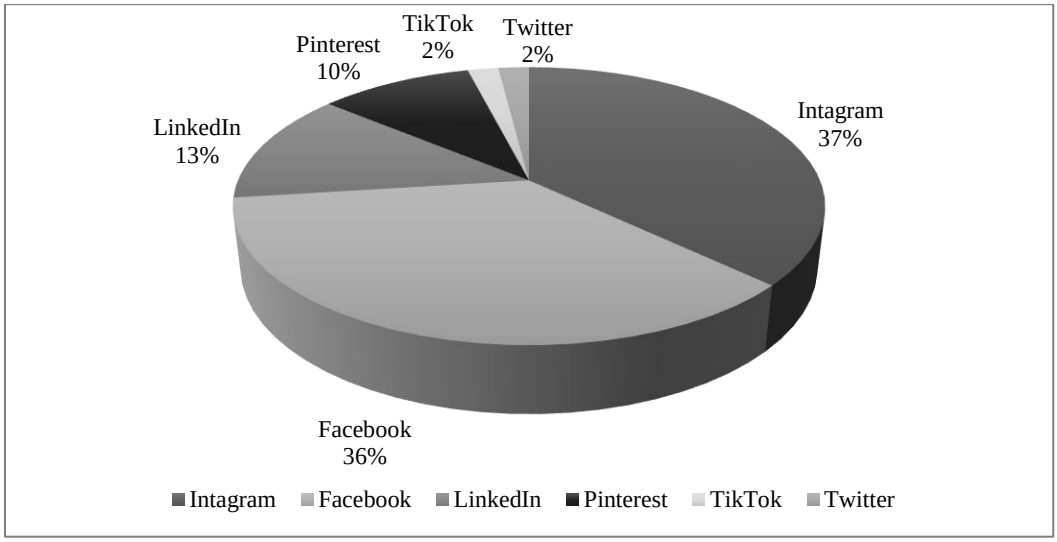


Figure 13

Diverse Social Media Platforms Pie Chart



All participants during the interviews mentioned Facebook, while 12 participants reported Instagram as a platform they have previously use or are currently using. Individuals have widely accepted Facebook as it is a user-friendly platform (Radzi et al., 2018). Participants of the research made a distinction between their use with each platform according to their objectives. Facebook for some business leaders is used to evangelize, motivate, entertain with stories. Business leaders, in general, reported the use of Facebook to engage and connect with their followers even though some mentioned that they mainly have friends, coworkers, and family on the platform. According to the business leaders, the targeted market's demographics and objectives correlate to their social media platform selection. For Facebook, most of the target marketing strategies correspond to a more seasoned population by mainly more matured business leaders. Some business leaders reported having the common practice to post on Facebook through Instagram as their primary social media platform.

For most business leaders, Instagram's as a marketing strategy has the same goal as Facebook to connect and engage with followers. Some business leaders report having more engagement on Instagram with a higher number of comments, likes, and followers. A younger generation of followers and business leaders reported their preference for Instagram. Business leaders focusing on their branding campaign and their posts' aesthetics mentioned Instagram as their primary selection for their marketing strategies. Photos and videos are the preferred option for Instagram posts (Soedarsono et al., 2020). Participants mentioned their experiences with diverse social media platforms during the interviews.

Table three presents some of the participants' experiences with diverse social media platforms; P-3 stated, "I think Instagram is pretty much where I get more engagement," while P-9 mentioned, "Instagram serves as a portfolio." Same platform, different marketing strategies reported by both participants. For some participants, such as P-3, Instagram is the best platform "Instagram gets more engagement versus Facebook for me." In the words of P-6 referring to Instagram, the statement was as follows, "the majority of my audience is on Instagram, I get more sales on Instagram, is more engagement." Instagram is the preferred platform for some business leaders to share the posts to all the followers, while Facebook is saturated, and the algorithm selects who received the posts (Geurin & Burch, 2017).

When you compare the mentions of Facebook; some participants mentioned Facebook to compare it to Instagram and to establish that they were not actively managing their Facebook account but posting automatically from Instagram such as P-3 reported, "just press that button, and it goes on to Facebook," and p-5 stated, "with Instagram, you can integrate Instagram and Facebook at the same time." The third social media platform, most mentioned by seven participants, was LinkedIn. According to some of the business leaders, LinkedIn was one of the platforms that brought the least engagement with followers. For P-4, LinkedIn seems promising and might be a better platform for business-to-business reach, "I think LinkedIn will very quickly overtake now that they have online events." Another participant who stated an increase in LinkedIn interest was P- 9, who said, "I've been liking using LinkedIn for brand awareness." LinkedIn as the third social media platform option for most of the participants that

mentioned it during the interviews is gaining some popularity as they might seem to be supporting a more relaxed approach as P-3 said:

> Now I have picked up LinkedIn again, I have noticed things have changed. When I look at it, it is not just sharing an article or just putting a blog out there about a product, and people are starting to put just a casual conversation of what they are doing; it is getting more personal.

A review of the participants' social media pages represents their statements with automatic pots on Facebook from Instagram and lower engagement levels when you compared the same post across platforms. For P-1, a post had 25 likes on Instagram, while the same post on Facebook had three likes.

Social media platforms serve a purpose for individuals to connect. Business leaders have been taking advantage of social media platforms connecting with customers and increasing their number of followers. Most business leaders are using social media as a marketing strategy (Shabbir et al., 2017). As a highly visual social media platform, Instagram allows business leaders to promote their business with photos and videos of their products and services (Laestadius et al., 2019). As a marketing strategy, Facebook has positive engagement with consumers resulting in a positive financial impact for small businesses (Odoom et al., 2017). Social media platforms provide business leaders a valuable opportunity depending on their knowledge level with advantages and challenges (Cui et al., 2018). Business leaders can improve marketing strategies when using social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn for their digital advertainments (Broeck et al., 2017).

Theme 4: Effectiveness Measurements

The fourth theme that emerged from the research was the effective measurements of social as a marketing strategy. Business leaders can measure the effectiveness of social media posts formally with metrics from the platforms or informally considering the likes, comes, and shares. Subthemes include (a) increase of revenue, (b) formal and informal metrics, and (c) challenges with the effectiveness of social media as a marketing strategy. Table four present some excerpts from the participants interviewed. Table 4 contains excerpts from some of the interviews representing the theme.

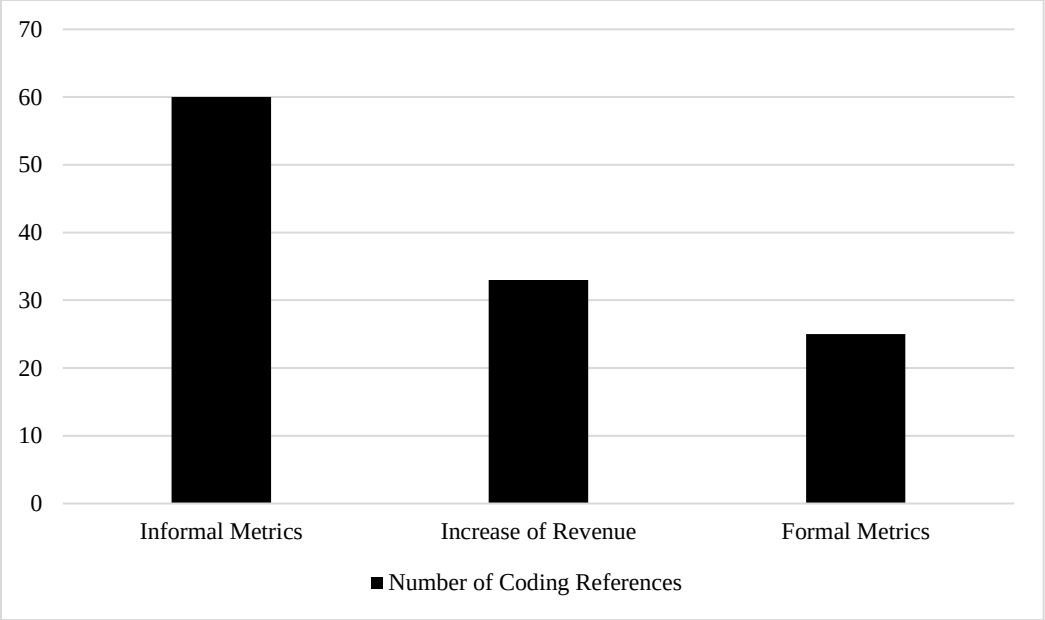
Table 4

Theme 4: Effectiveness Measurements

Codes	Participant	Excerpt
Increase of revenue	P-11	"So the way that we measure our insights is our return on investment from money to time to how much revenue we were bringing in."
Formal metrics	P-4	"We would definitely look at the analytics provided by Facebook or YouTube and LinkedIn."
Informal metrics	P-8	"It's more of like receiving likes, and people commenting on it, relevant share."
Challenges with the effectiveness of social media	P-10	"Now, I have been looking for experts so I can get more knowledge about social media strategies."

Figure 14

Theme 4: Effectiveness Measurements



Effectiveness Measurements

Business leaders can measure effective social media marketing strategies with platform analytics and the number of comments, likes, messages. It is challenging for business leaders to measure social media's effectiveness (Tajudeen et al., 2018). Social media is a continuous learning process for small business owners with simple metrics to measure the efficacy. As P-6 reported, during the interview, "If I post something and I get 39 comments, that means my audience was super engaged." Comments in social media might have a negative tone at times like P-10 mentioned, "when I look at my comments about what I am doing, I might have five negative comments." A more structured process was followed by P-4, stating, "we would definitely look at the analytics provided by Facebook or YouTube and LinkedIn." Ten participants during the interview said they use

social media analytics to understand the effectiveness of their posts. Social media analytics is the main structure that the platforms provide to measure the effectiveness of the post. Some business leaders lack higher knowledge and time, preferring simple metrics. By simple metrics, we can consider social media platforms' comments, likes, and messages even though 10 business leaders report using the formal analytics, too, in addition to the comments, likes, and messages. Posts with higher numbers of engagement might be considered by business leaders their most effective ones. Social media business leaders stated during the interview that they increase engagement by reposting their most effective posts.

Increase of Revenue

Small business leaders expect an increase in revenue with their direct or indirect social media marketing strategies measuring their formal or informal metrics efforts. The increase of revenue for business leaders is an effective measurement when using social media as their marketing strategy. In a study by Apenteng et al. (2020), the authors showed a correlation between urban hospital customers' engagement in Facebook and a slight increase in revenue. Social media as a marketing strategy can increase business revenue (Saridakis et al., 2018). Business leaders with a consistent social media marketing plan can benefit from having their income increased (Fika et al., 2018).

An increase in revenue becomes an objective way to measure the effectiveness of business leaders' social media marketing efforts. Revenue represents the final goal for business leaders interviewed during the research. It was the case for P-11 measuring their strategies' effectiveness with their revenue increase. According to P-11, "the way that we

measure our insights, our return on investment is, from money to time, to how much revenue we were bringing in." The goal to have the business revenue as the final corresponds to the P-12, too, with the statement, "to measure the effectiveness, you truly need to look at global gross revenue." Ten out of the 13 participants talked about revenue as part of their social media marketing strategies, even though this was the main goal for some business leaders. The correlation between P-11 and P-12 with an increase of revenue as the primary goal with social media might be related to their business as marketing specialists oriented in revenue.

Due to the lack of knowledge to correlate social media marketing strategies with direct sales, some business leaders cannot report an immediate increase in revenue with some of their social media marketing strategies. Some social media campaigns directly impact sales, allowing business leaders to measure the effects on their social media marketing strategies; in contrast, other social media strategies focus more on developing areas, such as engagement (Popp et al., 2017). Some business leader's plans to increase sales and revenue are indirect and oriented to engagement. P-9 reported an indirect approach to direct sales in accomplishing the goal to increase engagement, sales, and revenue, "I was creating content that was great, that did not sound salesy or pushy." According to their expertise, some business leaders might use formal and informal metrics to analyze and implement the data.

Formal & Informal Metrics

Formal metrics are insights or analytics from social media platforms or programs. Social media pages provide users data related to demographics and habits of followers

reacting to the posts. Knowledgeable business leaders can interpret social media platforms' data to create targeted messages for their specific audience. According to programs' suggestions, some business leaders considered experts in social media use social media metrics from third-party applications to schedule posts as reported by P-11,

> So, I use a tool called later.com. And depending on my client, I just upload their stuff on there. So, I schedule it on there, but I'll see what the best time is or where my users are more active. And they'll tell me like, hey, try posting at 3 pm. So I'll schedule it at 3 pm. And then I'll see what's working and what's not working.

While some business leader's experts in social media rely on data from the insights, others use it as a base to complement and to measure the effectiveness of their posts, as reported by P-4,

> We would definitely look at the analytics provided by Facebook or YouTube, and LinkedIn. But mostly, it was the phone calls and emails coming in afterward, hey, I saw your show. We need a photo shoot. Or, hey, I saw your show, we need a new website.

Knowledge to manage a social media campaign can be increased using the social media metrics and applying the selected market according to the audience reflected in the insights; P-7 expands on the topic,

> So, we started really watching where the likes were going, and we started looking at our insights on Instagram primarily on, you know, who was looking at it? Was it female or male and out of our followers? What were the age ranges, so we really started digging into that, we weren't really getting a lot of clear data.

Some business leaders reported using analytics with their suggested post with higher engagement to create advertisements targeted to their audience, as presented by P-8,

> We use the statistics. It's important for us, especially it seems okay, even if we pay for media, like if you pay for the advertisement, I need to know that we may be doing an ad test. So, we may put like a picture, let's say we're using it for our orthodontist client, we will put a picture in there, we'll put one call to action. And they will choose the picture to say a different call to action, which now the systems tend to do before it was all done manually.

If a business leader lacks the knowledge to develop a successful social media campaign, they can hire a data analytics company. P-11 agreed that time is too valuable and prefers to build content, allowing experts in data to analyze the business insights providing feedback and direct recommendations to create targeted content. P-1 stated,

> I do have a marketing agency in Miami that they're measuring how my account it's moving, how people perceive me, and what things I should do according to the analytics. They are looking at the numbers the analytics that I have on my pages and giving me recommendations.

If the business leaders have the time and interest in learning social media trends and develop a clear understanding of the online platforms' insights, they can implement the knowledge to promote their business products and services. A review of the participants' social media pages reflects their statements during the interview with P-7 with highly curated images corresponding to a specific audience with hashtags attracting

them consistently. P-1's social media posts and reels for the last month present a consistent topic for a particular audience with music and food-related to a generation, reflecting metrics' use.

Informal Metrics

Social media provides formal metrics with the platform's insights; sometimes, this information is not clear for business leaders who decide on using informal metrics such as likes, comments, direct messages, and shares to measure their posts' effectiveness. Likes for P-8 can be an effective measurement tool, especially if they are promoting a sale, "So it will be a more of like, how many people like it, how many people shared how many was going to say, we also do the same if we were to do like a special offer." During the interview, P-11 clarified the term vanity metrics; according to the participant, "vanity metrics means how many likes how many views, likes, and views are not going to does not equal revenue." Some business leaders using the non-formal metrics might end up a victim of vanity metrics with likes and comments from friends, family, or followers that are not necessarily increasing their revenue. For some business leaders, comments are an efficient metric to interpret that the post was a success; as reported by P-10, "Another effective strategy is pictures of me as a model, people engage with me, and I have a lot of comments."

Direct messages can be considered by some business leaders as non-formal metrics, with P-4 stating, "Instagram is pretty much where I get more engagement. And I get a lot of direct internal messages from there, from businesses asking about a certain product that I posted; hey, how much is this?" The measurement of post effectiveness can

incorporate the number of shares by followers, especially when there is a sale or a competition as P-8 discussed,

> You get then, and you're like, okay, thank you for participating in the enter to win. If you go and share this on Facebook, then you have two entries, and you have more opportunities to win. So, we try to use that as a soundboard.

Business leaders who have studied their demographics and posted curated content targeted to them understand the difference between a reaction to a post that can turn into a sale versus one that might be just for support as P-6 stated:

> So, it's two different types of approaches. One is looking at engagement. And if I post something, is my audience asking genuine questions? Are they curious? Are they engaging in a post, so if I post something and I get, say, like 39 comments, that means my audience was super engaged; I'm connecting with them.

A review of the participant's social media pages revealed highly engaged business leaders connecting with followers. P-6 personal pictures in social media with their products have high engagement levels from followers. The same participant's social media posts have an elevated connection with followers when responding to their comments. For the P-1 social media page, consistency with reels and incorporating short videos with direct messages and hashtags to attract their audience resulted in higher engagement levels with likes and comments from followers.

Formal metrics with social media provide business leaders data to measure the effectiveness of their posts. Some business leaders use social media platforms to delineate a plan of action with their social media marketing strategies. Social media

analytics assist business leaders with data that defines a tailored marketing campaign's target market (Shanshan, 2017). Analytics as a quantifiable measure increase business leaders' success with specific data regarding the individuals interacting with the business social media platform (He et al., 2017).

According to the literature, social media comments generate a connection to like-minded individuals that join conversations (Fox & Frush, 2018). Business leaders getting involved in discussing their posts' comments can have higher engagement levels with followers. Likes in social media provide a quantifiable measure for business leaders (Ding et al., 2017). Likes for business leaders' posts in social media are a simple metric for post success, even though this might not increase revenue. Results from the research confirm the literature with business leaders using user-generated content. Business leaders have a learning opportunity to understand their followers by analyzing the user-generated content, such as their comments and likes (He et al., 2015a). Business leaders need to be aware of negative comments from followers and address the issue, taking it as a learning experience reducing the negative impact (Yen, 2016). Analytics as a measure of effectiveness helps business leaders understand their market to produce more targeted posts (Shanshan, 2017). Most business leaders participating in this research interview reported having some challenges using social media to measure the marketing strategy's effectiveness.

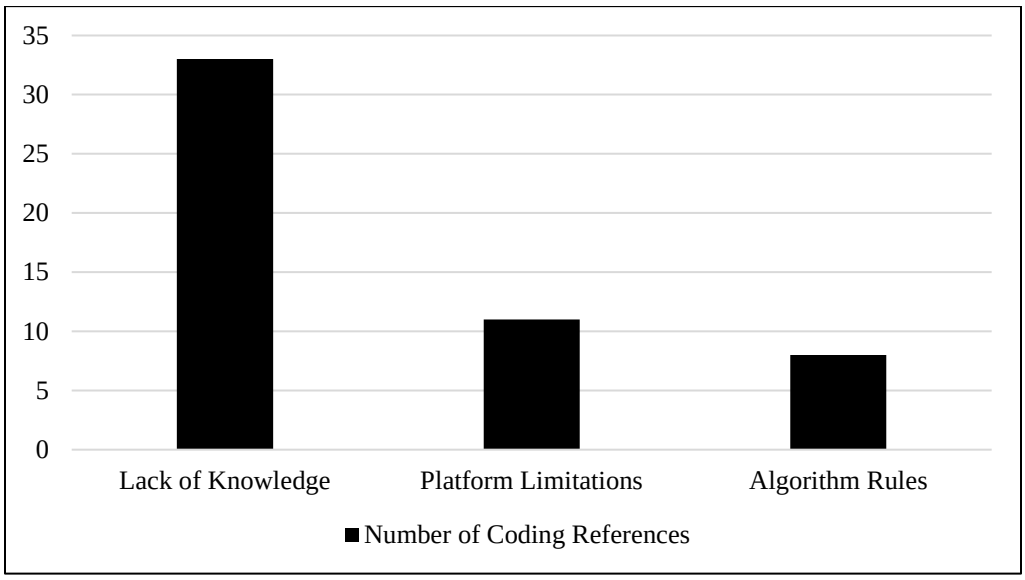
Challenges With the Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing Strategies

During the interviews, some business leaders reported several of their challenges using social media platforms for their marketing strategy. Business leaders defining their

successful marketing strategies benefit from understanding their current or potential challenges with the platforms. Business identifying their strengths and weaknesses can use their opportunities to increase revenue. The research participants mentioned their lack of knowledge, platform limitations, and algorithm rules as their top challenges, as shown in the figure challenges with the effectiveness of social media. Measuring the ROI from social media marketing strategies is one of the most recurrent business leaders' challenges (Tajudeen et al., 2018).

Figure 15

Subtheme: Challenges With Social Media



Throughout the interviews, business leaders presented some of their social media challenges once asked about the least effective social media marketing strategies. The lack of knowledge of social media platforms was the top challenge mentioned by business leaders. Not knowing how to develop an efficient social media marketing campaign with ROI represents a challenge for some business leaders. Social media

analytics is one of the areas that some business leaders struggle. As P-5 reports, “I do not do the analytics, and I think that it’s very important that you should know what it is working or not on what your demographics will be.” Some business leaders have outsourced some parts of their social media marketing strategies. As reported by P-10, “Now, I have been looking for experts so I can get more knowledge about social media strategies.” Some business leaders indirectly mentioned the lack of knowledge and time as a challenge while trying to manage their social media marketing strategy as P-3 mentions:

> To be honest, I was just putting things out there, hoping people will be attracted. In the past, I’ve had marketing assistants that helped me do that because I don’t have time to sit there and see what our likes are, where we are on the ratio, what we’re doing this on, you know, search engine optimization, all that stuff.

Business leaders with a lack of knowledge of social media marketing strategies and outcomes might sabotage their results if they do not engage with followers. As P-1 mentioned, “if you just post something to post, and then you never comment on it, and you never connect with them or, answer their question or anything that will hurt you as well.”

For some business leaders with higher knowledge levels, the limitations of the platform present a challenge. Some business leaders with more experience using social media as a marketing strategy identify the platform limitations as part of their challenges; P-10 mentioned:

> The issue is that a lot of people want to be friends on Facebook, but they have the limitation that they only have 5000 people. I have people waiting to be friends on Facebook; if I want to add more people to my Facebook page, I will have to delete people that are already there.

The same participant mentioned an additional challenge with the Facebook business pages; "I'm planning on deleting the like pages as I have too many to keep only one. I had a Facebook business page in the past with over 6000 followers, and I was locked out, unable to access that." P-4 commented about the Instagram limitations to reproduce live videos:

> Instagram didn't have a live plugin that we could actually do a show. So we would post it after we would do the show; we would just post a link to the show or a preview to the show on Instagram and send them either to Facebook or YouTube.

The same participant mentioned issues with LinkedIn live with a request process taking months for approval:

> And also, if you apply, and it takes a long time, it took us almost four months of back and forth with LinkedIn to get the live stream turned on to our account. So, there's an application process that you go through; you tell them why you're doing it, why you need access to it. And then they give you access to live stream on LinkedIn.

The fact that the social media platforms own the data and might discontinue their services as it has happened with other platforms is a challenge for P-9, who mentioned:

> Instagram can be shut down at any moment. And then where did all your content go to. In the social media platform, the content does not belong to you; it can be shut down, your content can be deleted, which I've seen happen to other influencers. It's a bad story because then you lost everything, you'd lost your content, you lost all the people that you have been creating these relationships with, you lose the positioning that you have for years that you've created and nurtured.

Challenges for business leaders using social media as a marketing strategy sometimes fluctuate from their lack of knowledge to the platform's limitations to the algorithms' controls.

Algorithm continuous changes with the social media platforms create a challenge for some business leaders; as P-9 mentioned, "Pinterest is a good one, and at one point, it was amazing. Then the algorithm started changing, and you had to work twice as hard to get people's attention." For P-6, the algorithm can affect the engagement with followers; "I look at the hashtags that I haven't used in a while, the hashtags I use too much because then the algorithm actually will punish you if you use the same hashtags too many times." Business leaders can solve their social media challenges by outsourcing their marketing and social media marketing strategies. As P-10 stated, "I do have a marketing agency in Miami that they're measuring how my account it's moving, how people perceive me, and what things I should do according to the analytics." Increased knowledge and continuous change can solve some of the business leaders' challenges using social media, adjusting the strategies according to the new algorithm rules. Social media business pages might

sustain some visible challenges with limited use of targeted posts missing the target market hashtags. Some business leaders' challenges might result in missed opportunities for financial growth.

The interviews sustain the literature review supporting the negative impact of business leaders' lack of skills negatively impacting the business. The lack of knowledge to incorporate metrics from social media platforms to the posts can negatively impact the business leaders missing valuable information (He et al., 2017). It might be challenging for business leaders to use technology and social media as a marketing strategy (Lepkowska-White, 2017). Some business leaders do not have the internal resources to sustain a successful social media campaign (Poba-Nzaou et al., 2016). The lack of specific instructions using social media for business leaders incorporating details of content, strategies, and times is a challenge for business leaders. (Lepkowska-White & Parsons, 2019).

As a marketing strategy for business leaders, social media continually evolves with technology changes, providing new business promotion features. The literature review for the proposal explored social media's historical development as a communication tool to allow business leaders to incorporate marketing strategies using social media to engage with other businesses, customers, and potential new clients. A marketing strategy, including social media, can increase the business revenue (Saridakis et al., 2018). Business leaders can be a resource or represent a lack of one depending on social media's approach as a marketing strategy. A business leader's lack of a plan to develop, manage, and sustain a competitive social media presence might affect the

business revenue (Lepkowska-White, 2017). Previous literature focused on using social media as a marketing strategy allowing business leaders to connect and engage with other businesses and customers while promoting their brand to increase their revenue (Saridakis et al., 2018).

Currently, customers are expecting social media content that is relevant and engaging according to their preferences. Current literature identifies some of the business leaders' challenges corresponding to implementing the best strategies when using social media (Gruss et al., 2020). According to the author's research with restaurants using Facebook, posts related to the individuals' feelings and sense of belongingness to a community with language supporting unity had a positive relationship with their engagement with the business. Consumer engagement can be observed when customers like, share, and comment on a brand's social media platform; responses stimulated by the business social media posts (Gruss et al., 2020). As a communication tool, social media connects individuals worldwide in a two-sided communication capacity, allowing business leaders to respond to their customers' comments and concerns directly.

Social media facilitates the two-sided communication between consumers and business leaders, impacting their brand decisions (Alnsour & Al Faour, 2020). Business leaders need to monitor their business's social media two-sided communication with the brand and other consumers to maintain a positive environment oriented to the highest customer care levels. Consumers' opinions and experiences with the brand can positively or negatively impact other customers planning to become clients of the business (Alnsour & Al Faour, 2020). As business leaders plan to remain relevant to the current market,

they might consider using influencers and bloggers as a marketing strategy with content developed by consumers of the brand.

Consumers can be influenced by bloggers, increasing their sense of belongingness, impacting their connection with the brand, and, eventually, their decision-making process to expand the business revenue (Hsu, 2020). According to Hsu (2020), others' influence in the decision-making process continues to be relevant to the current market, using influencers as a trend for the last couple of years. Business leaders following up this strategy can benefit from acknowledging their customer's preferences regarding their products and services with an influencer. The marketing strategy with influencers' use can educate and entertain while direct sales and products can be part of a different approach.

Findings Related to the Conceptual Framework: Resource Based-View

Business leaders recognizing their organization's resources can increase their value (Penrose, 2009). Business resources can be tangible and intangible (Zakery & Afrazeh, 2017). This study's findings fit within the RBV, the conceptual framework, considering social media as an intangible resource. Business leaders can combine social media with tangible resources to strengthen their businesses. Social media is an intangible resource for the organization with tangible strategies such as videos and photos using cameras and phones. The following figure presents the conceptual framework's relation; the RBV with tangible and intangible resources becoming the themes and codes. During the interviews, business leaders discussed their combination of tangible resources while using social media as an intangible resource.

During the interview, business leaders demonstrated their application of the resource concept for their business using social media as a marketing strategy. One of the most resourceful business leaders was P-4, a photographer having to close the business store during the nation's pandemic state reinventing resources to use the photography equipment for a social media podcast as a home-based business. As P-4 stated:

> So, this past year with COVID, what we've done is we started our own video podcast. And we were interviewing other small businesses and also bringing in experts in different fields. So marketing, business strategies, those sorts of things that would help small businesses but also get our production company because we're a video and photography production company, in front of as many small businesses as possible. So, it was a free thing that we could do; we had the equipment to do it. And it put us in front of a lot of people that just happened to be our target market.

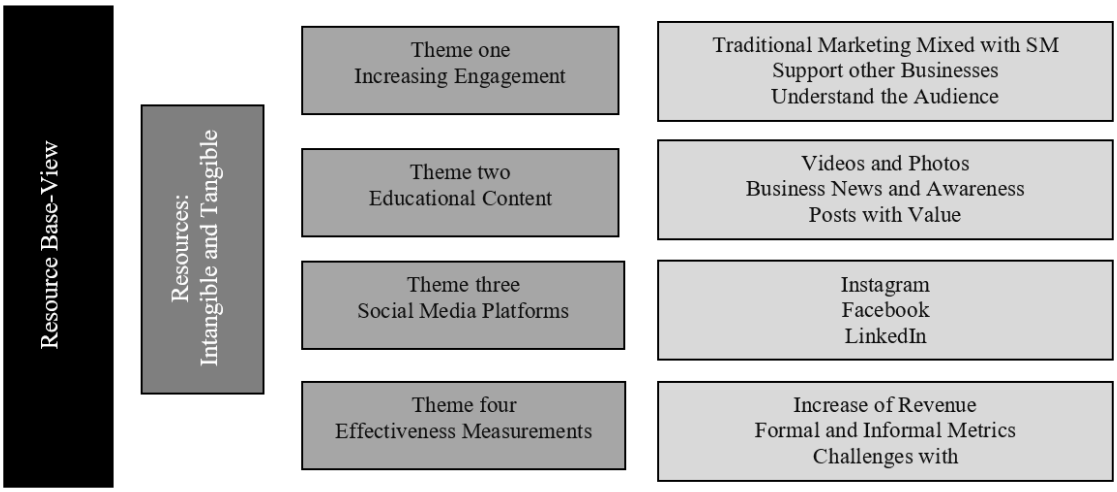
Business leaders implementing the RBV recognize their resources and expand their knowledge to gain market competitiveness (Monios & Bergqvist, 2016). To remain competitive, business leaders need to acknowledge the resources and skills required to achieve their business goals (Gupta et al., 2018). P-4 to stay competitive during a national crisis expanded the search for necessary skills to connect with other business leaders and organizations around the targeted market. Business leaders' connection with other business leaders with complementary resources is another strategy that business leaders implement while reinventing the way they conduct business. Business leaders using the RBV with reviews of their resources can implement the theory's dynamic capabilities

(Arndt & Pierce, 2018). Business leaders need to constantly search for new marketing trends as the market changes due to crises such as the pandemic with the COVID-19 that has impacted the business leaders' revenue. As business leaders concentrate on the resources available, they can remain competitive in challenging times for their business. Business leaders who focus on their missing resources during crisis times might struggle with negative emotions while missing the opportunity to achieve their goals.

The RBV presents resources as unique, rare, and inimitable for business leaders to achieve success (Monios & Bergqvist, 2016). Using social media as a resource for their marketing strategies incorporating their education and experience creates a unique combination for their organization. P-4, with knowledge of photography and video, was able to create a video podcast to engage other business leaders with a similar target market to attract followers while connecting with both of their customers. The unique combination created by P-4 connecting with other business leaders to implement their skills and resources represents the application of the RBV. Unique resources developed by a team with individuals skills create a competitive advantage (Irani et al., 2017). The business leaders' flexibility to change and connect with other business leaders while adapting to the new way of doing business might sustain their companies.

Figure 16

Conceptual Framework Thematic Relationship



Applications to Professional Practice

This research results can assist business leaders in increasing their knowledge regarding social media marketing strategies impacting (a) business brand awareness, (b) customer engagement, and a possible positive impact on (c) business revenue. Business leaders can increase their income while promoting their business services and products using social media as a marketing strategy. Business leaders considering sustainability as part of their goals might benefit from considering social media as part of their necessary skills to remain competitive (Sivarajah et al., 2020). Social media for business leaders can increase brand awareness and consumer purchases (Chen & Lin, 2019). Business leaders recognizing the impact of social media on brand awareness and competitive advantage need to be aware of their resources and limitations considering outsourcing social media development and management. A professionally coordinated social media campaign can increase traffic to the business website (Keikha & Sargolzaei, 2017). Business leaders

recognizing the value of a well-managed social media marketing strategy can increase customer loyalty with a possible impact on them becoming repeating customers (Kasemsap, 2017). The lack of social media marketing strategies from business leaders can harm business goals (Szolnoki et al., 2018). Social media engagement strategies can help business leaders promote their brand to remain competitive against other businesses (Huang et al., 2017).

Business leaders can develop engaging relationships with customers using different social media platforms (Kasemsap, 2017). A social media campaign to increase business engagement with consumers should consider the business resources incorporating posts from employees while motivating them to share the business content. Engaging relationships with consumers encourage communication between business leaders and consumers (Balan & Rege, 2017). Getting to know the customer's needs and receiving feedback from them assist the business leaders in having a better understanding of their customer's lifestyles, needs, and wants. A business partnership can occur with business leaders identifying possible resources with influencers and other businesses targeting similar customers in engagement development. Business leaders need to consistently address negative feedback from consumers as soon as possible to reduce the adverse impact on their brand and sustainability (Sparks & Bradley, 2017). A struggle from business leaders to develop meaningful relationships with consumers while implementing a social media marketing strategy can impact business sustainability in a competitive market (Rasul, 2018). As a marketing strategy, social media can help

business leaders remain competitive when promoting their brand while connecting with consumers (Huang et al., 2017).

Implications for Social Change

When implemented successfully as a marketing strategy by business leaders, social media can increase their revenues and generate jobs in the community, creating a positive social impact. Social media marketing strategies are a cost-efficient plan for small business leaders to promote their business, increasing their sales in a sustainability effort (McCarthy & Mazza, 2019). The research results provide business leaders data from other business leaders implementing social media as a marketing strategy to increase their business performance and thrive in the competitive market. Research results can empower individuals to achieve financial freedom, with businesses remaining competitive and thriving towards their business goals. Communities' enhancement can be achieved with small business success while lowering unemployment rates and increasing job opportunities and salaries. Non-profit organizations receiving the local business leaders' support can improve the residents' quality of life in their communities. Communities receiving taxpayer funds from their small business leaders can develop cultural programs for their citizens' enjoyment and quality of life. Successful small business leaders can improve their living conditions and the community's lives, reducing the level of poverty with job creations (Ribeiro-Soriano, 2017). Small businesses are an essential part of the United States economy with their financial contribution (Turner & Endres, 2017). The research results with social media marketing strategies can enhance small business knowledge of social media strategies that business leaders can implement

to remain competitive. Competitive small businesses can contribute to the economy, resulting in better communities and higher opportunities for their residents.

Recommendations for Action

As a marketing strategy for small business leaders to increase their revenue, social media was the focus of this research. Social media has allowed business leaders to engage with consumers and promote their business with their platforms (Sitta et al., 2018). The research question was: What social media marketing strategies do small business leaders use to increase revenue? I completed 13 video conference interviews with business leaders managing their small business social media platform successfully in the central Florida area. Business leaders worked the business in arts and crafts, baked goods, beauty, real estate, retail, marketing, photo, and video production, representing the service and product sectors. I geared the interview questions to find out the business leaders' strategies implemented to increase their revenue incorporating the most and less efficient approaches according to the business leadership experience and the combination of traditional with social media marketing strategies. Business leaders influence their employees and consumers, impacting the company revenue and organizational culture (Alshamaila, 2018). As influencers of their business, business leaders might benefit from this research's results, increasing their knowledge of social media marketing strategies. Data analysis of the interviews resulted in four themes: (a) increasing engagement, (b) educational content, (c) diverse social media platforms, and (d) effectiveness measurements.

Increasing engagement was the first theme that emerged from the interviews. Options available for business leaders with a limited budget to develop an engaging social media campaign includes data on YouTube and audiobooks to increase their knowledge of the best practices a recommendation of action not discussed previously during the research. Business leaders planning to engage with consumers on a limited budget can also connect with other business leaders with the same target market to share their followers during posts. Suppose the business leader has issues with engagement or increased revenue while promoting the business on social media. In that case, a study of the successful competition on social media might assist them in developing more effective strategies. Most business leaders have limited resources to hire a marketing company to engage with their social media followers as a paid marketing strategy (Balan & Rege, 2017). If the budget is not an issue, business leaders can hire a marketing company as mentors to guide them through the process of planning, development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of a social media campaign.

Traditional marketing strategies formed part of theme one with results, including networking, email, WOM, and radio. During the research, conventional marketing strategies were part of the business leaders' social media marketing plan. Most business leaders report using a combination of social media and traditional marketing strategies, even though none of them mentioned any television or even billboards strategies as part of their campaign. Some business leaders reported the radio as a traditional marketing strategy incorporating social media live videos with a less favorable response when compared with networking efforts. Networking was the only conventional marketing

strategy that business leaders consistently supported to connect with consumers or other business leaders. During networking events, participants mentioned their connection, engaging and redirecting followers to their social media platforms. Business leaders recognizing the value of a face-to-face or online network with other business leaders can join or create events and groups to collaborate. Collaborative efforts of business leaders to connect can be an effective marketing strategy (Hernández-Carrión et al., 2017).

The plan to support other business leaders allows marketers to reach their target market taking advantage of the other business followers. Business leaders can increase their engagement with consumers by connecting and supporting other businesses (Saridakis et al., 2018). Business leaders aware of their target market and knowledge of the consumer's habits can identify their preferences and connect with business leaders serving the same followers to promote each other products and services on social media. Networking events and fairs might bring business leaders the opportunity to connect with business leaders in the same target market. Online business groups are another option for business leaders to communicate and engage with other individuals promoting their business with a similar target audience to support each other.

Understanding the audience as part of theme one becomes an essential part of the social media marketing strategies. Business leaders not aware of their target market might be promoting their business on social media with a minimal return on investment. Social media posts for companies with a lack of focus end up with lower engagement levels as the audience does not relate to the promotions. Business leaders need to invest in increasing their audience's knowledge for targeted strategies increasing engagement and

eventually their income. An engaged audience in social media can support the business by promoting them to others. Some business leaders aware of their audience needs and preferences are using educational content as part of their strategies.

The second theme was educational content. The goal of educating followers in social media must be studied in detail by the business leaders to maintain a balance as social media's first intention is to socialize and not educate. A minimal number of individuals use social media as an education tool (de Vries et al., 2017). Business leaders should balance educational posts with engaging content keeping the follower's participation active. Only one of the participants mentioned having engaging activities during their posts with free services or merchandise while promoting their business content. Effective social media marketing strategies developed by business leaders can engage consumers (Pérez-González et al., 2017). Business leaders reported using video and photos as their marketing strategy to increase their posts' educational content.

Videos and photos generate high engagement levels in social media as visual platforms, especially with Instagram (Soedarsono et al., 2020). Social media platforms change frequently, and business leaders might benefit from reviewing changes with videos and photos to remain current and promoted by the algorithm with their new products. Some business leaders seem to take advantage of new strategies using reels in Instagram to produce small videos on the stories. Business leaders can benefit from having a clear understanding of video according to their audience to convert views into revenue. Business leaders can implement the same recommendation with the use of photos to increase followers' engagement. It might be recommendable for business

leaders to identify their competition and evaluate their social media presence with their videos and pictures to improve their social media strategies. Frustrated business leaders trying to promote their business on social media can end up discontinuing the plan as a marketing strategy (Riley, 2020). Participants during the interviews mentioned using various social media platforms for their marketing strategies according to their target audience.

The third theme presented the topic of diverse social media platforms. Most business leaders mentioned using Instagram and Facebook as their primary social media platforms, with LinkedIn in third place. Even though Instagram and Facebook had a very close number of mentions during the interviews, some business leaders commented that Facebook was not as efficient as Instagram for their marketing campaigns. As business leaders have a more precise comprehension of their target market and a deeper understanding of the follower's needs, the focus needs to align with the initial social platforms' goals to be social. It might be recommendable for the business leaders to have an indirect approach with marketing strategies. Indirect marketing strategies in social media can include inspirational messages (Patrutiu Baltes, 2015). Business news and awareness as part of the educational content as part of the business leader's strategies.

While I was reviewing the business leader's social media pages, I observed some businesses not updating their data regarding their location while other business leaders took the opportunity to posts about a new place and sales due to the move. Posting news as part of the social media marketing campaign is an indirect approach to creating awareness of the business products and services without selling. Business leaders can

benefit more by increasing awareness and engagement with followers interested in knowing how their lives can be improved with the business products and services. Once a consumer can identify value with the business posts, most likely, they will become followers. Efforts by business leaders with their social media marketing strategies will increase benefits if measurements are in place to understand the impact with followers and the business.

The fourth theme that emerged from the research was the effectiveness measurements of social media marketing strategies. Business leaders reported formal and informal analytics as their strategy to measure the effectiveness of their social media marketing strategies. Some business leaders also said social media analytics is an area in need of improvement for their social media marketing strategies. Social media analytics provide business leaders with feedback from their marketing campaigns. Some business leaders might benefit from increasing their knowledge of social media metrics to incorporate new strategies and eliminate those not connecting with followers. Mentoring from marketing companies can help business leaders learn and practice targeted campaigns using social media analytics reports. Business leaders' can subscribe their business social media pages to data analytics companies available to understand their posts' impact and adjust their strategies accordingly. Business leaders reported comments, likes, and social media messages as a useful informal measure for their social media strategies. For some business leaders, likes and comments are the immediate and most straightforward way to measure their social media campaign's effectiveness. Social media messages targeted have a more positive response from followers' engagement

increasing brand awareness (Pucci et al., 2019). The correct marketing content generates a strong engagement with customers reflecting their business sustainability behavior after their support (Wibowo et al., 2021). Business leaders can follow their successful competitors in social media, observe the posts with more engagement, and follow the business responses to comments with an open mind and creativity to improve their marketing campaign.

During the interviews, business leaders reported diverse challenges that have frustrated them enough to give up on specific social media platforms. The challenges with social media reported by business leaders reflect their least effective social media strategies, with a lack of knowledge of social media strategies as the main challenge. Most business leaders who were reporting challenges with social media as a marketing strategy corresponded to a lack of understanding of the platform and the appropriate approach to engage with their target population. Some business leaders take a trial and error approach with their social media posts until they determine their target population and preferences. In contrast, other business leaders learn from the data available, while others decide to hire a company to take care of their social media marketing strategies or guide them as coaches. According to their resources, business leaders can increase their knowledge of best practices with social media as a marketing strategy.

Individuals can achieve higher education formally achieved with a degree in marketing, seminars, or conferences. Marketing agencies or experts in social media can be a possibility for business leaders to hire their services as a management and monitoring company or coaches. Business leaders with limited resources can increase

their understanding of social media with free data on platforms such as YouTube with videos created by influencers or experts on the topic. Blogs are also an additional option for business leaders to compare other business leaders' strategies while working with social media as a marketing strategy. As a search engine, Google can assist business leaders with their goal to have a better understanding of the best practices using social media.

The research results can positively impact small business leaders planning on incorporating social media as a marketing strategy to increase their business revenue. Social media can be a cost-efficient plan for business leaders with a limited budget to promote their products and services as a marketing strategy. Business leaders who would like to outsource the professional services to develop and monitor their social media marketing campaigns can also benefit from this research's results. Business leaders need to know other business leaders' best practices and have clear expectations of social media management professional services for higher benefits. This research can be used by business leaders managing their social media presence or those in search of hiring a professional agency to manage their social media marketing campaign. Some small business leaders have a limited budget to hire a professional social media management agency to manage their online presence (Balan & Rege, 2017).

This research results can guide business leaders to train their employees to contribute to their social media marketing strategies as part of their business resources. Researchers, chambers of commerce, and small business leaders can use the research results as a point of reference when considering a marketing strategy with social media

and a possible combination with traditional marketing strategies to increase their revenue and knowledge. I will contact the local chambers of commerce to express my interest in providing their members with a summary of the research results. I will contact each participant of the research to present them via Zoom an overview of the results and thank them for their participation.

Recommendations for Further Research

According to the limitations mentioned before in Section 1 of this study, I am making some further research suggestions. This study's limitation was the qualitative design with data that did not consider numerical data for analysis. Future researchers could use the quantitative methodology to study social media business platform posts with the participant's engagement and the direct impact on the business's revenue. A focus on social media data with quantitative methods can provide other researchers with the possibility of quantifying several posts with participants' responses and a correlation with the business revenue.

A second limitation for the research relates to the multiple case design resulting in a limited population and a sample of 13 participants. A future researcher can select a broader community and sample to represent the general population with a more diverse knowledge from participants. Another identified limitation was my reduced knowledge and experience regarding social media as a marketing tool. To improve the researcher's understanding during the study, the investigation population can be exclusively developers of social media content as marketing companies for other businesses instead

of business leaders implementing social media independently. Having experts in social media as participants of the investigation might increase the study's level of knowledge.

Reflections

Completing a doctoral degree has been a lifelong goal after completing my master's degree at 21 years old. Life decisions deviated me from entering a doctoral program when planned; however, once the conditions were the best possible, I did not think about it twice and decided to initiate this journey 5 years ago. I did not consider the financial responsibility that this degree would be placing on my shoulders as I dreamed of becoming a doctor. Now that I have completed my goal, I must work harder to become financially free from this debt. There are no regrets as I have proven to myself and others that I have what it takes to be part of that 3% or less of the population with a doctoral degree.

My initial plan with the doctoral degree is to advance in my career. With a master's degree in Industrial-Organizational Psychology and experience as a mental health and substance abuse counselor, it was challenging to have a Human Resources career opportunity. Not desiring to move laterally and complete another master's degree, specifically in Human Resources, I decided to move forward to complete a doctoral degree. A job transition happened when I initiated this journey changing my desire to concentrate from Human Resources to Marketing. I had the opportunity to talk with fellow students who already graduated from the Walden University program about possible concentrations. I came up with the plan to select a dissertation topic that will

help me generate additional income right away as a side business and, eventually, as a possible primary income source.

As a marketing strategy, social media fits my goal of becoming an expert in the subject matter to help business leaders increase their revenue. Small business leaders with limited budgets to promote their services and products were my research population and possible future partners for our professional and personal growth. My community's contribution as a social impact commitment has been to promote non-profit organizations by visiting them and getting to know their goal to support them in social media promotions. With my degree in Business Administration, a minor in Marketing, and a Social Media specialization as a marketing strategy, I will contribute to developing the small businesses and the community that I enjoy, the place that I call home, central Florida.

Conclusion

This multiple case qualitative study aimed to understand the small business leaders' social media marketing strategies to increase their revenue. The research question was: What social media marketing strategies do small business leaders use to increase revenue? The 13 small business leaders implementing social media as a marketing strategy in the central Florida area responded to the research question during video conference semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. Participants were members of different chambers of commerce with businesses in central Florida in three local counties. Business leaders represented companies that have been in service for at least two years and used social media as a marketing strategy to increase revenue. The

semistructured video conference interview focused on understanding the skills business leaders used to implement social media as a marketing strategy as a sole strategy and in combination with traditional marketing strategies. I reviewed the business's social media main pages and followed up with the participants after the interview with a phone call and the interview transcript. Three themes emerged from the interviews: social media goals, marketing strategies, and effectiveness with social media. The research results impact the business leaders' professional practice increasing their knowledge on social media marketing strategies with results from business leaders experienced in marketing plans that work best for their business to improve their revenue. Business leaders are more successful in promoting their business and services, providing more job opportunities to others, and contributing with their taxes to societal improvement with more benefits and cultural events. As a marketing strategy, social media offer business leaders a cost-efficient plan to increase their revenue.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol	
Interview Schedule	I selected three chambers of commerce in the central Florida area after conducting a Google search as the participant's population. The three chosen chambers of commerce have their list of members and their contact information on their websites. This researcher reviewed the business's social media presence to verify the research criteria before extending an invitation to participate. Once the study criteria were confirmed, I contacted all participants via email. I emailed 45 potential participants from the three chambers of commerce, inviting them to the research, including the consent form and research criteria. This researcher followed up with a phone call to present the study topic, interview questions, the research criteria, and the consent form. Once the participants agree to participate and complete the consent form, I scheduled an interview at the participant's convenience via video conference. I followed up with a phone call for a member checking appointment with the participants at their convenience. The criteria for selecting the study participants included 13 small business leaders from central Florida within three different counties.

	The social media business page to be qualified as current needed to be active. The researcher selected 13 small business leaders using social media as a marketing strategy for the business operating for at least two years. The researcher reviewed all participants' social media accounts, contact them via email, agree to participate, follow up on the phone, and email them the interview protocol with the research questions.
Before the Interview	My name is Damaris Ramos. Thank you for agreeing to be part of the next 45-60 minutes of questions.
The researcher will create a friendly environment with the participant and engage in socialization.	The interviewer will record, transcribe, and confirm the data at a future phone interview. First, I would like to confirm that you have completed the consent form and agreed to participate in the research with no compensation. As presented in the consent form, the researcher will record the interview for transcription and confirm the data during a follow-up phone call. Your participation is confidential, and the researcher will not be using any identifiers of the individual or the business for the protection of privacy.

	Please be aware that you can decline to participate in this research at any time with no consequences. The purpose of this proposed qualitative multiple case study is to explore social media marketing strategies that small business leaders use to increase revenue. The study's research question is: What social media marketing strategies do small business leaders use to increase revenue? Please feel free to ask any clarifying questions during or after the interview.
During the Interview	**Interview Questions**
The interviewer is keeping digital notes of non-verbal gestures while recording the interview.	1. What social media marketing strategies did you use to increase your business revenue?
	2. How did you measure the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies for your business?
	3. What social media marketing strategies were the most effective in increasing revenue for your business?
	4. What social media marketing strategies were the least effective in increasing revenue for your business?
	5. How did you combine social media marketing strategies with traditional marketing strategies to increase business revenue?

	6. What else can you share about the social media marketing strategies that you have used to increase your business revenue?
	After the Interview
Interview Closure	Thank you for your participation. I appreciate your time and the valuable information you have shared with me; this concludes the interview.
Interview Follow-Up	I want to schedule a 15-20 minutes phone interview during the next week to verify the interview information's accuracy after the data transcription. I will be sending you the transcribed interview before our phone meeting. What day and time works best for you?
After the Research	The researcher will save the data collected in a password-protected hard drive, backup in a USB (universal serial bus) flash drive protected with a password, and place it in a locked box. According to Walden University, the researcher will store the data and delete or shred the digital and paper documents related to the research interviews after 5 years.