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Research Article

Social Media Practices of Small and Medium Enterprises in Masbate Province: Impact on Industry Competitiveness

Rony Saludar Toling*

Dr. Emilio B. Espinosa Sr. Memorial State, College of Agriculture and Technology (DEBESMSCAT), Mandaon, Masbate, Philippines

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*Corresponding author:

E-mail:

rstoling@debesmscat.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) can benefit significantly from social media due to its user-friendly nature, cost-effectiveness, and widespread accessibility. By leveraging social media platforms, SMEs can effectively communicate with customers, market their products, facilitate internal collaboration, and provide customer support at minimal costs.

This research assessed the use of social media among SMEs in the fashion, food, beverages, cosmetics, and clothing industries in Masbate province to enhance competitiveness. It focused on key areas such as customer engagement, social network marketing, website promotion, customer relationship management, and brand management, while also evaluating industry competitiveness based on customer satisfaction, loyalty, operational efficiency, and profitability.

A quantitative descriptive approach was employed to evaluate variables and their relationships. Employees from SMEs were randomly selected as respondents, while industry customers were chosen through purposive sampling. A self-designed Likert-scale survey captured respondents' perspectives on the impact of social media practices on industry competitiveness, combining both quantitative and qualitative insights.

The analysis included descriptive statistics, such as percentages and frequencies, to outline respondent profiles, and means and standard deviations to examine trends in social media practices among SMEs. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the effectiveness of these practices, while a t-test was used to highlight differences in perceptions between respondent groups regarding social media effectiveness and industry competitiveness.

Keywords: *Social Media, Social Media Practices, Industry Competitiveness, Small and Medium Enterprises, SME's*

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Introduction

Social media has been increasingly utilized in small and medium business enterprises as a means of communicating with customers and providing support for internal collaboration and communication (Meske & Stieglitz, 2013). In addition, technologies associated with social media applications are making their way into business organizations, as these technologies improve employee collaboration, knowledge management, and the establishment of networks with business partners. Furthermore, they facilitate the performance of human resource functions and marketing efforts (Parveen, 2012). Given these benefits, small and medium enterprises can leverage social media applications due to their user-friendly nature, cost-effectiveness, and simplicity, which have been made possible by technological advances and widespread diffusion (Kim et al., 2011). Thus, there is a compelling need for small and medium enterprises to embrace social media technologies and redesign core business processes aimed at maximizing efficiency in operations.

Moreover, social media technologies support a wide range of job activities in business organizations, including the dissemination of information, team collaboration, idea generation, technical support, e-learning, resource management, and customer relationship management (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2011). Specifically, social media refers to the utilization of websites and platforms for promoting products or services, as well as providing support and assistance in accessing previously unavailable resources (Jagongo et al., 2013). Consequently, with the power of social media and the internet, bringing products and services to the public has become easier for business owners. As a result, the creation of websites and the use of social media strategies have been developed to effectively communicate with customers online (Kit, 2017). Today, social media is increasingly important to small and medium businesses, as it facilitates the dissemination of a vast range of information to customers, despite the risks of unsecured online transactions and fraud.

Furthermore, while the general benefits of social media for small and medium enterprises are well-documented, the specific impact of

social media practices on industry competitiveness within the context of Masbate province remains underexplored. This oversight presents a significant research gap, as understanding how local SMEs adapt and leverage social media can provide valuable insights into enhancing their competitiveness in a unique socio-economic environment. By addressing this gap, the current study aims to investigate the social media practices of small and medium enterprises in Masbate province and their implications for industry competitiveness.

In addition, social media is effective in differentiating businesses from their competitors, as it plays a crucial role in building communities around brands and maintaining customer relationships (Soininen, 2015). This shift in business strategy has transformed towards a customer-centric approach, emphasizing customer loyalty, which positively impacts industry competitiveness (Taneja & Toombs, 2014). In fact, social media marketing reveals a strong statistical relationship with business competitiveness, particularly around customer orientation (Rambe, 2017). Notably, social media has a positive and significant relationship with a firm's competitiveness, enabling improvements in service provision and sales volume, which ultimately enhances competitiveness through aggressive marketing strategies and counter-marketing against competitors.

In the Philippine context, the small and medium enterprise sector is dominated by the wholesale and retail industry, followed by food processing, materials and manufacturing, arts and culture, and agriculture, with women representing 88% in the top SMEs industry (Asian Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2018). This success can be attributed to entrepreneurial skills taught in the education system, leading the country to excel in entrepreneurship initiatives, particularly in small and medium enterprises (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2017). Thus, an entrepreneur's knowledge of the market context is vital for achieving success in the business landscape. To support this, government intervention should focus on providing assistance to aspiring entrepreneurs in strategic market thinking, leveraging trade shows, utilizing social media technologies, and

accessing online market information in the economy.

Moreover, compelling reasons for the use of social media in Philippine businesses include the country's record of 33 million internet users, making the Philippines the second highest-ranking nation for internet usage in Asia. Notably, social media accounts for 83% of social messages exchanged among friends and acquaintances, with 81% of users regularly updating their social media status (Digital Marketing Philippines, 2013). As a result of recent technological advancements, various social media platforms have been integrated into business operations in the Philippines, aiming to increase brand awareness and customer engagement through well-crafted content across these platforms (Besana, 2020). In addition, other motivations for adopting social media practices in Philippine businesses include customer feedback, increased website traffic, enhanced brand recognition, and improved customer loyalty.

Ultimately, in achieving industry competitiveness and ensuring both short- and long-term success, organizations must develop capabilities and formulate competitive strategies to manage threats and exploit emerging opportunities. This strategy will enable firms to position themselves effectively within the industry, maximizing their unique capabilities that distinguish them from competitors. In today's dynamic global economy, organizations must strive for competitiveness through the development of new competencies, particularly in new technologies and innovations (Chiteli, 2013). According to resource theory, gaining a competitive advantage relies on a firm's capabilities and resources, which are critical for industry competitiveness. This theory posits that competitiveness can be achieved through delivering superior customer value by strategically identifying and utilizing a firm's resources for sustained competitive advantage (Micheka & Ogollah, 2013). Therefore, achieving competitiveness necessitates effective communication channels for transmitting messages from firms to their customers, including social media, word of mouth, phone calls, billboards, print media, postcards, or broadcast media (Edosomwan et al., 2011). Significantly, social

media serves as a new communication medium, offering marketers the opportunity to reach customers where they make decisions and to personalize outreach at critical behavioral decision points (Bernhardt et al., 2012). By engaging customers directly in marketing activities, social media has become a vital area for exploring strategic marketing inputs that link to sustainable competitive advantages for products and services. Thus, the potential for gaining competitive advantage is greatly enhanced with the advent of social media platforms (Atrash et al., 2015).

Objective of the Study

The research investigates the impact of social media practices employed by small and medium enterprises in Masbate Province on industry competitiveness. Specifically, the study evaluates the effectiveness of these practices in areas such as customer engagement, social network marketing, website promotion, customer relationship management, and brand management. Furthermore, it assesses the level of industry competitiveness among these enterprises by examining factors including customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, operational efficiency, and profitability.

The research identifies the significant effects of social media practices on achieving industry competitiveness among small and medium enterprises. Additionally, the study determines potential differences in perceptions regarding the effectiveness of social media practices among managers, employees, and customers of these enterprises.

Moreover, it pinpoints which specific social media practices—such as customer engagement, social network marketing, website promotion, customer relationship management, and brand management—significantly contribute to enhancing industry competitiveness.

The study also analyzes the barriers that impede the adoption of social media practices by small and medium enterprises in Masbate Province. It focuses exclusively on the variables of social media practices and industry competitiveness outlined in the research problem, providing insights into how these practices can be optimized to improve the competitiveness

of small and medium enterprises in the province.

Statement of the Problem

The study will determine the impact of the social media practices of small and medium enterprises in Masbate Province on industry competitiveness. Specifically, it will seek answers to the following:

1. What is the profile of the small and medium enterprise in terms of:
 - 1.1 Years in Business Operation
 - 1.2 Capitalization
 - 1.3 Monthly Sales
 - 1.4 Line of Business
2. What is the profile of the respondent in terms of:
 - 2.1 Age
 - 2.2 Sex
 - 2.3 Company Position
 - 2.4 Educational Attainment
 - 2.5 Civil Status
3. How effective are the social media practices of the small and medium enterprises in Masbate Province in achieving industry competitiveness, in terms of:
 - 3.1 Customer Engagement
 - 3.2 Social Network Marketing
 - 3.3 Website Promotion
 - 3.4 Customer Relationship Management
 - 3.5 Brand Management
4. What is the level of industry competitiveness of the small and medium enterprises in terms of:
 - 4.1 Customer Satisfaction
 - 4.2 Customer Loyalty
 - 4.3 Operations' Efficiency
 - 4.4 Profitability
5. Is there significant impact of the social media practices of the small and medium enterprises in Masbate Province in the achievement of industry competitiveness?
6. Is there significant difference in the perceptions of the respondents, the managers and employees of small and medium enterprises and the customers, on the effectiveness of the social media practices?
7. Which of the social media practices customer engagement, social network marketing, website promotion, customer relationship management, and brand management

of the small and medium enterprises in Masbate Province, significantly achieve high level of industry competitiveness?

8. What are the barriers to the adoption of social media practices of small and medium enterprises in Masbate Province?

Methodology

Research Design

The researcher adopted a descriptive study design that employs both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection. A descriptive study involves an in-depth investigation of a group, institution, or phenomenon to determine the factors and relationships that influence behavior or outcomes (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2013). This design is particularly suited for analyzing the impact of social media practices of small and medium enterprises on industry competitiveness.

Quantitative research focuses on collecting numerical data, which will then be analyzed statistically (Babbie, 2011). This approach allows for measuring variables and testing relationships to reveal causal connections or correlations (Leavy, 2017). In contrast, qualitative research will provide deeper insights to substantiate findings from the quantitative data. It explores the implicit theories individuals hold about their reality and behavior, helping to interpret how they construct and experience their world (Woodman, 2014; Cropley, 2019).

Population and Sample of the Study

The study will involve two sets of respondents: managers and employees of small and medium enterprises in Masbate province, as well as their customers. Respondent organizations will be selected using random sampling, ensuring every member has an equal chance of inclusion (Taherdoost, 2016).

For each firm, a purposive sampling design will be employed to select fifty (50) respondents based on their availability and willingness to participate. Additionally, forty (40) customers will be chosen using the same purposive sampling method, as their opinions are expected to be representative of the total population relevant to the research focus.

Instrumentation

Data collection will utilize a self-made Likert Scale questionnaire, which is effective for measuring respondents' opinions or attitudes towards the subject matter. This tool will facilitate the analysis of responses and aid in drawing conclusions. An interview guide will also be developed to assist in the qualitative aspect of the study.

The questionnaire will include sections addressing the issues outlined in the statement of the problem, ensuring both validity and reliability. The main parts of the questionnaire are as follows:

Part I: Profile of small and medium enterprises.

Part II: Profile of respondent managers, employees, and customers.

Part III: Effectiveness of social media practices.

Part IV: Level of industry competitiveness.

Part V: Barriers to the adoption of social media in small and medium enterprises

Hypotheses of the Study

Ho1: There is no significant impact of the social media practices of the small and medium enterprises in Masbate Province in the achievement of industry competitiveness.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of the respondents, the managers and employees of small and medium enterprises and the customers, on the effectiveness of the social media practices.

Ho3: The social media practices of customer engagement, social network marketing, website promotion, customer relationship management, and brand management of the small and medium enterprises in Masbate Province, will not significantly achieve high level of industry competitiveness.

Results and Discussion

Profile of Respondent SME'S

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents According to Number of Years in Business Operation

Number of Years in Business Operation	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5 years	8	8.9
5 to 10 years	31	34.4
11 years & above	51	56.7
Total	90	100

Table 1, presents the distribution of respondents according to the number of years in business operation. Findings show that majority of the respondents have been in business operation for 11 years and above or 56.7%, followed by the next biggest group, of 31 respondents or 34.4%, with 5 to 10 years in business operations. The smallest group, with 8 respondents or 8.9%, have less than 5 years in business operations.

Findings imply that respondents who participated in the study are in business operation that have been around for longer time, thus, have more expertise and experience in industry operations which are translated into better understanding of the market trends, target audience, and the development of effective social

media strategies, allowing the firms to stay competitive in the industry for long term. Findings show that the respondents, as employees of SMEs have learned from past failures and successes, giving them an edge in the execution and crafting of social media campaigns for achieving more sales and industry competitiveness. Longevity in business of the respondent SMEs correlates with brand presence that is well-established, have loyal customer base, positive reputation, and brand recognition. The firms are found to have the ability to amplify the impact of social media efforts, having a foundation of credibility, established brand, and foundation to build upon.

Long term survival in the industry shows that the firms are established businesses as

SMEs, having more resources at their disposal for investing in social media marketing, which the firms can leverage their resources for the development of more sophisticated strategies for social media, effectively engage with their audience, and create high-quality content (Gli-gor & Bozkurt, 2020). Longevity of businesses

in industry implies stability, showing their acquired adaptability in surviving in a dynamic business environment and changes in technology, extending to social media practices that enable them to stay ahead than competitors, innovate in social media marketing, and experiment in new trends (Amegayibor, 2021).

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents According to Capitalization

Capitalization	Frequency	Percent
Below P 10,000	6	6.7
11,000 to 30,000	13	14.4
31,000 to 70,000	19	21.1
70,000 & Above	52	57.8
Total	90	100

As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents report business capitalization of Php 70,000 and above, accounting for 52 respondents or 57.8%. This is followed by the next larger groups of 19 respondents (21.1%) with capitalization between Php 31,000 and 70,000, and 13 respondents (14.4%) with capitalization between Php 11,000 and 30,000. The smallest group consists of 6 respondents (6.7%) with capitalization below Php 10,000.

The findings reveal that most respondents are employed in firms with capitalizations of Php 70,000 and above or Php 31,000 to 70,000. In these cases, capitalization serves as a crucial financial resource that shapes social media practices and enhances the firms' competitive capabilities in the industry. With adequate capitalization, these firms can allocate resources effectively towards social media marketing efforts, which may include investing in advanced tools and technologies, hiring skilled personnel, and establishing advertising budgets for content creation and analytics platforms.

Sufficient capitalization allows these firms to engage with their audience across multiple channels, implement comprehensive social media strategies, and maintain a competitive edge. Capital-intensive firms can produce high-quality content essential for audience engagement

and retention on social media platforms, enabling them to generate a greater volume of content while ensuring quality is preserved. By delivering valuable content, these firms can attract a larger following and build a strong online presence, thereby enhancing their competitiveness in the industry.

Capitalization empowers these businesses to invest in promotions on social media platforms and paid advertising, which increases brand visibility, drives traffic to their websites, and reaches a wider audience, ultimately generating more sales and leads. Firms with higher capitalization develop a competitive edge by capturing market share and outperforming competitors with limited advertising budgets.

Additionally, capital-intensive firms can afford advanced analytics platforms and tools for monitoring and analyzing performance. This capability allows them to identify trends, measure campaign effectiveness, and understand audience behavior, leading to data-driven decisions that optimize organizational strategies (The World Bank Group, 2018). Continuous improvement activities are implemented within these firms, enabling them to quickly adapt to changing market conditions and maintain competitiveness in the industry (Ogunyemi, 2020).

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents According to Amount of Sales

Amount of Sales	Frequency	Percent
Below P 20,000	16	17.8
21,000 to 30,000	54	60
31,000 to 50,000	7	7.8
50,000 & Above	13	14.4
Total	90	100

As shown in Table 3, the majority of respondents report monthly sales between Php 21,000 and 30,000, comprising 54 respondents or 60%. This is followed by the next larger groups of 16 respondents (16%) with sales below Php 20,000, and 13 respondents (13%) with sales of Php 50,000 and above. The smallest group consists of 7 respondents (7.8%) with sales between Php 31,000 and 50,000.

The findings indicate that most respondents are employed in SMEs with monthly sales ranging from below Php 20,000 to 30,000. This sales range suggests that these firms can sustain their operations and maintain competitiveness in the industry. Respondents reported that their firms assess the return on investment of social media marketing initiatives by tracking sales generated from social media channels.

This practice allows them to allocate resources more efficiently, refine their social media strategies, and optimize their online presence to drive sales growth and enhance competitiveness.

With higher sales, firms can effectively maintain their social media platforms, creating opportunities to build relationships and engage with their target audience. This engagement generates interest in their products and services, ultimately influencing purchase behavior (Wardati & Mahendrawathi, 2019). By analyzing sales data alongside social media metrics, these firms can identify strategies that have a high impact, enabling them to replicate success and drive further sales (Lawal & Adejumo, 2023).

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents According to Line of Business

Line of Business	Frequency	Percent
Fashion Goods	16	17.8
Food & Beverage	54	60
Cosmetics	7	7.8
Clothing	13	14.4
Total	90	100

As shown in Table 4, the majority of respondents are involved in the food and beverage sector, comprising 54 respondents or 60%. This is followed by the next larger groups of 16 respondents (17.8%) in the fashion goods sector and 13 respondents (14.4%) in the clothing business. The smallest group consists of 7 respondents (7.8%) who sell cosmetics.

The findings imply that most respondents are employed in food and beverage businesses, as well as in the sale of fashion goods, which play a significant role in shaping social media practices and the firms' ability to compete ef-

fectively within their specific markets. Their involvement in these industries indicates the attractiveness of these sectors to diverse audience demographics with varying behaviors, preferences, and interests on social media platforms.

These firms demonstrate effectiveness in understanding the unique characteristics of their target markets, allowing them to focus on food and beverage and fashion goods. As a result, they are able to tailor their social media content and engagement strategies to meet the needs of their audiences. Respondents re-

ported that their firms align social media practices with the behaviors and preferences of industry-specific audiences to enhance competitiveness.

The line of business significantly influences the type of content relevant to the target audience, enabling firms to create rich content that

showcases their product and service offerings (Absah et al., 2018). By aligning their content strategies with the unique characteristics of their industries, they can differentiate themselves from competitors, effectively communicate their brand image, and drive customer engagement on social media platforms.

Profile of Respondents

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents According to Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
31 to 35 years	7	7.8
36 to 40 years	63	70
41 years & above	20	22.2
Total	90	100

The distribution of respondents according to age is presented in Table 5. Findings indicate that the majority of respondents in the survey on social media practices of small and medium enterprises are in the age range of 36 to 40 years old, accounting for 70%. This is followed by respondents aged 41 years and above, representing 22.2%. The smallest group consists of respondents aged 31 to 35 years old, comprising 7.8%.

The findings highlight that most respondents are in the 36 to 40 age range, which significantly impacts social media practices and the firms' ability to compete in the industry. This age group tends to have a natural affinity for using social media in both professional and personal contexts, making them valuable assets to SMEs in enhancing social media presence and maintaining competitiveness.

Firms leverage the digital expertise of these employees, who contribute to the development of social media strategies, stay abreast of emerging trends, and effectively engage with younger demographics to enhance competitiveness in the digital era.

The age of employees influences their understanding of the target market and their ability to communicate effectively across various social media platforms with different demographic groups. This facilitates a better grasp of market behaviors, preferences, and communication styles (Hendrawijaya, 2019). Age can impact social media practices by shaping creativity, digital proficiency, understanding of the target audience, and opportunities for generational collaboration (Amegayibor, 2021).

Table 6. Distribution of Respondents According to Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	26	28.9
Female	64	71.1
Total	90	100

Table 6 presents the distribution of respondents according to sex. Findings indicate that the majority of study respondents em-

ployed in SMEs are female, with 64 respondents, corresponding to 71.1%, followed by 26 male respondents, or 28.9%.

The findings reveal that the predominance of female respondents in SMEs influences social media practices and the firms' ability to compete effectively in the industry. Female employees contribute to a more representative social media presence, ensuring that content and imagery resonate with a broad range of audiences. This inclusivity allows SMEs to increase customer engagement, connect with diverse demographic groups, and enhance industry competitiveness by fostering relevance and a sense of belonging among the target audience.

The gender of employees brings varied insights and perspectives into the behaviors, preferences, and communication styles of different demographics, which are crucial for developing social media content and messaging that resonates with the target audience (Hendrawijaya, 2019). Diverse perspectives from employees of different genders enable firms to tailor their social media strategies to appeal to a wider range of customer segments, driving engagement and enhancing competitiveness in the industry (Amegayibor, 2021).

Table 7. Distribution of Respondents According to Company Position

Job Position	Frequency	Percent
Manager	26	28.9
Employee	64	71.1
Total	90	100

The distribution of respondents according to company position is shown in Table 7. Findings indicate that there are 64 employees, accounting for 71.1%, and 64 officers, representing 28.9% of the respondents in the study.

Employees in SMEs, being the larger group, significantly contribute to the effectiveness of social media practices in achieving industry competitiveness. They serve as brand ambassadors, successfully promoting company products or services on social media platforms through genuine and authentic endorsements. Their roles enable them to engage in content creation that showcases their expertise and provides valuable content that resonates with the target audience. Employees actively engage with prospects and customers on social media, fostering positive relationships and enhancing customer loyalty and satisfaction, which ultimately contributes to the competitiveness of firms in the industry.

Managers also play a crucial role in effectively leveraging social media practices to enhance the firm's industry competitiveness. They are responsible for developing social media strategies aligned with the overall

organizational objectives and competitive positioning. This involves analyzing competitor activities, market trends, and customer preferences to identify opportunities for the firm. Managers ensure that the firm's investments in essential technologies and the allocation of resources support social media initiatives that achieve strategic goals.

Through their interactions on social media, employees gather valuable feedback and market insights, allowing them to monitor competitor activities, observe trends, and identify emerging threats and opportunities that inform strategic decision-making. This helps the firm stay ahead in the industry (Cetinkaya & Rashid, 2018). During instances of negative publicity or crisis, employees play a vital role in managing the situation on social media, mitigating damage to the firm's reputation and maintaining trust among stakeholders (Uchhas, 2022). Managers drive the effectiveness of social media practices for industry competitiveness through strategy development, resource allocation, policy establishment, performance monitoring, and integration with overall marketing efforts (Centeno et al., 2019).

Table 8. Distribution of Respondents According to Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percent
High School	15	16.7
Undergraduate	46	51.1
College Graduate	29	32.2
Total	90	100

As depicted in the distribution of respondents according to educational attainment in Table 8, the majority of study respondents are undergraduates, with 46 respondents, accounting for 51.1%. This is followed by 29 respondents who are college graduates, representing 32.5%. The smallest group consists of high school graduates, with 15 respondents or 16.7%.

Findings indicate that both undergraduate and college graduate employees possess a high level of digital skills, expertise, and proficiency in using digital marketing tools and social media platforms. These skills can be leveraged in the development and execution of social media practices, contributing to the overall effectiveness of the organization's social media efforts. The educational attainment of SME employees enables them to develop social media campaigns and create high-quality content that res-

onates with the target audience. Both employees and managers demonstrate analytical skills and strategic thinking essential for developing social media strategies aligned with organizational objectives, thereby driving industry competitiveness.

Firms can enhance their employees' capabilities by investing in professional development and education, which can improve their skills in social media marketing and empower them to stay current with best practices and industry trends (Hendrawijaya, 2019). The educational attainment of employees influences their abilities in content creation, digital skills, data analysis, and professional development opportunities, all of which are critical factors shaping the firm's social media practices and achieving industry competitiveness (Omori & Bassey, 2019).

Table 9. Distribution of Respondents According to Civil Status

Civil Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	34	37.8
Married	56	62.2
Total	60	100

Table 9 presents the distribution of respondents according to civil status, revealing that the majority of respondents are married, with 56 individuals or 62.2%, followed by 34 single respondents, accounting for 37.8%.

Findings indicate that employees of SMEs are predominantly married, which correlates with their understanding of the demographics of the target audience. This understanding enables them to develop content and customer engagement strategies, as well as social media communications tailored to the needs of the market based on demographics and preferences. Married employees tend to have a better

grasp of customers' purchasing priorities and interests in products and services, which assists firms in tailoring social media content and messaging to suit specific market segments.

Married employees are knowledgeable in developing audience segmentation strategies, enhancing the effectiveness of social media practices for engaging and reaching the target market. In contrast, single employees may focus more on personal development, lifestyle trends, or social activities that address the needs and interests of single customers, ultimately enhancing customer engagement and industry competitiveness.

The civil status of employees can significantly contribute to the development of social media content that resonates with customers on social media platforms. This understanding helps address the varied interests, needs, and aspirations of different market segments. It is particularly relevant for community building,

fostering support and connection among individuals sharing similar life circumstances, such as creating social media groups for married couples or initiatives focused on personal growth for single individuals (Amani et al., 2020).

Effectiveness of the Social Media Practices of Small and Medium Enterprises in Achieving Industry Competitiveness

Effectiveness of the Social Media Practices: Customer Engagement

Table 10. Effectiveness of the Social Media Practices: Customer Engagement

No.	Customer Engagement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1	Allows the formation of buyers and sellers' relations offering possibilities of their participation that develop goodwill, trust, loyalty, and commitment.	90	4.34	0.689	Effective
2	Builds personal two-way relationships with customer fostering interactions and to establish emotional connection between the company and customers.	90	3.98	0.6445	Effective
3	Provides mechanisms by which customer loyalty is maintained for repeat purchases of customers.	90	4.09	0.593	Effective
4	Provides intensity of customer participation and connection with activities and organizational product offers.	90	4.44	0.638	Effective
5	Creates customer commitment to an active relationship with the brand and the firm, personified by the company website designed to communicate brand value.	90	4.36	0.708	Effective
Grand Mean		90	4.24	0.655	Effective

Table 10 presents the effectiveness of social media practices in the dimension of customer engagement. The social media practices of SMEs in "Customer Engagement" are deemed "Effective," with a mean score of 4.44, indicating strong customer participation and connection with organizational offerings. Specific practices include fostering buyer-seller relationships, which promote goodwill, trust, loyalty, and commitment (mean of 4.34), and establishing personal, two-way relationships with customers (mean of 3.98). Additionally, mechanisms are in place to maintain customer loyalty for repeat purchases (mean of 4.09), and to create commitment to an active relationship with the brand, as reflected in a well-designed company website (mean of 4.30).

The grand mean of 4.24 indicates overall effectiveness in customer engagement, supported by a standard deviation of 0.655, suggesting homogeneity in responses. These findings imply that SMEs effectively engage customers through messages, comments, and idea sharing, enhancing brand awareness and visibility within their target audience.

Effective customer engagement enables firms to build relationships and foster loyalty by promptly responding to inquiries, addressing concerns, and acknowledging feedback, which demonstrates a commitment to customer support and satisfaction. Positive interactions during customer engagement cultivate a loyal customer base, leading to repeat purchases and brand advocacy, ultimately enhancing industry competitiveness.

Engaged customers are more likely to share positive experiences on social media, generating endorsements and word-of-mouth referrals that influence their networks (Jibril et al., 2019). These referrals significantly impact purchasing decisions and the organization's

reputation (Cao et al., 2021). By leveraging social media for product offers, promotions, and personalized recommendations, firms can drive conversions and increase revenue (Jin & Hurd, 2018).

Table 11. Effectiveness of the Social Media Practices: Social Network Marketing

No.	Social Network Marketing	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1	Social networking allows the enterprise to connect to customers and reinforce a sense of community around the firm's offerings.	90	4.22	0.884	Effective
2	The practice provides effective communication to target customers, acquire new customers, and retain existing customers.	90	4.58	0.703	Highly Effective
3	Social networking enables the firm to engage with the audience on a personal level.	90	4.59	0.717	Highly Effective
4	The practice enables the firm to build online groups where customers can interact with the online community, providing useful insights and feedback.	90	4.03	0.549	Effective
5	Social media enables SMEs to build, seek, and sustain direct communication line with customers and the general public.	90	4.48	0.722	Effective
Grand Mean		90	4.38	0.716	Effective

The effectiveness of social media practices in the dimension of "Social Media Marketing" is rated as "Effective," with social networking enabling firms to engage with their audience on a personal level, achieving a mean score of 4.59. This practice also facilitates effective communication to target customers, acquiring new customers and retaining existing ones, with a mean of 4.58, both interpreted as "Highly Effective," as shown in Table 11. Additionally, social media networking fosters community around the firm's offerings (mean of 4.22), allows for the creation of online groups for customer interaction (mean of 4.03), and sustains direct communication with customers and the public (mean of 4.48).

The grand mean of 4.38 indicates overall effectiveness in SMEs' social media marketing practices, supported by a low standard deviation of 0.176, suggesting homogeneity in responses.

These findings imply that SMEs effectively enhance brand visibility, build relationships and trust, expand customer engagement, monitor industry trends, facilitate word-of-mouth marketing, and drive conversions and website traffic. By establishing a strong online pres-

ence, firms connect effectively with target customers, leading to success in industry competition.

SMEs leverage social media platforms to engage their target audiences, which is crucial for achieving industry competitiveness. Effective social networking marketing allows firms to increase visibility and amplify brand presence through active participation in content sharing and conversations with customers. This engagement extends their reach, attracting customer attention and fostering brand recognition, thereby gaining a competitive advantage.

Through social networking marketing, firms build trust, encouraging repeat business and enhancing customer loyalty, which differentiates them from competitors that prioritize relationship building less (Qalati et al., 2021). Social media platforms offer vast networks of users with diverse interests, providing opportunities for expanding engagement and reach, contributing to industry competitiveness (Li et al., 2020). Furthermore, social networking marketing enables firms to stay informed about industry trends, customer preferences, and competitor activities in real-time (Al-Masharafi & Khan, 2022).

Table 12. Effectiveness of the Social Media Practices: Website Promotion

No.	Website Promotion	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1	Social media attracts prospective customer through social media channels.	90	4.27	0.804	Effective
2	Website promotion practice creates, initiates, & circulates online information about the enterprise products, brands, and services.	90	4.08	0.604	Effective
3	The practice allows the firm to reach targeted audiences.	90	3.93	0.684	Effective
4	Website promotion increases number of followers positively, affecting new customer acquisitions.	90	4.17	0.64	Effective
5	The practice improves online presence of the firm in the customer environment.	90	3.8	0.686	Effective
Grand Mean		90	4.05	0.684	Effective

The effectiveness of social media practices in the dimension of web promotion is illustrated in Table 12. Findings indicate that SMEs' overall "Website Promotion" is rated as "Effective," with social media attracting prospective customers through various channels, achieving a mean score of 4.27. Key practices include creating and circulating online information about products, brands, and services (mean of 4.08), reaching targeted audiences (mean of 3.93), and increasing followers positively, which aids new customer acquisition (mean of 4.17). Additionally, this practice improves the firm's online presence (mean of 3.80).

The grand mean of 4.05 reflects the overall effectiveness of SMEs in their web promotion practices, supported by a standard deviation of 0.684, indicating homogeneity in responses.

These findings imply that SMEs effectively drive website traffic, expand audience engagement, increase conversion opportunities, and enhance search engine visibility. The successful

promotion of web content through social media channels positions firms for success in industry competitiveness.

SMEs leverage social media as a powerful driver of website traffic by sharing links to their webpages, encouraging users to explore their content, products, and services. This increases website traffic and brand visibility, creating opportunities for customer engagement and lead generation, which are vital for competitiveness in the industry. Effective web promotion on social media facilitates product purchases through compelling offers, contributing to customer acquisition and revenue generation (Ravi & Kumar, 2021). Furthermore, firms can engage and expand their reach to broader audiences through social media platforms, driving brand awareness, fostering interaction, and facilitating relationship building, all of which contribute to industry competitiveness (Amoah & Jibril, 2021).

Table 13. Effectiveness of the Social Media Practices: Customer Relationship Management

No.	Customer Relationship Management	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1	Social media practices are effective in strengthening relationship of the firm with customers.	90	4.06	0.568	Effective
2	Social media practice allows firms to listen to customers and engage with them, encouraging them to become advocates of the firm's products.	90	4.19	0.652	Effective
3	Social media is effective in reaching out to wide and diverse range of customers.	90	4.62	0.815	Highly Effective
4	Effectiveness of the social media allows speed, volume, ease of customer contact, and varied customer interactions.	90	4.81	0.421	Highly Effective
5	Social media practice results in relationships established that boost organizational sales.	90	4.44	0.751	Effective
Grand Mean		90	4.42	0.641	Effective

The effectiveness of social media practices in the dimension of customer relationship marketing is presented in Table 13. Findings indicate that SMEs' overall "Customer Relationship Marketing" is rated as "Effective," with social media enabling firms to reach a wide and diverse range of customers. This is reflected in high mean values of 4.51 for speed of contact and 4.62 for volume of interactions. Additionally, social media strengthens relationships with customers (mean of 4.06), facilitates listening and engagement that encourage customer advocacy (mean of 4.19), and fosters relationships that boost organizational sales (mean of 4.44).

The grand mean of 4.42 indicates the overall effectiveness of SMEs in their social media customer relationship marketing practices, supported by a standard deviation of 0.641, which suggests homogeneity in responses.

These findings imply that SMEs effectively build stronger customer relationships through their social media practices, enhancing

customer retention, gathering feedback, managing advocacy, personalizing content, and measuring customer satisfaction. By prioritizing effective customer relationship management, SMEs can differentiate themselves from competitors and drive customer loyalty, ultimately achieving industry competitiveness.

Effective customer relationship management allows for real-time customer engagement, enabling firms to actively listen to feedback, respond promptly to inquiries, and engage in meaningful conversations. These interactions foster trust, loyalty, and advocacy, which are crucial for gaining a competitive edge in the industry.

Social media customer relationship management also empowers firms to personalize content based on individual behaviors and preferences (Bai & Yan, 2021). By segmenting their audience and leveraging data analytics, firms can deliver targeted messages and offers through social media platforms (Al-Mashrafi & Khan, 2022).

Table 14. Effectiveness of the Social Media Practices: Brand Management

No.	Brand Management	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1	Gaining brand awareness through social media allows creates positive word of mouth resulting in familiarity of the brand.	90	4.24	0.825	Effective
2	Social media tools are effectively used to introduce the brand to customers.	90	4.22	0.667	Effective
3	Social media tools are effective in increasing brand exposure and awareness to the public.	90	4.26	0.906	Effective
4	Social media provides cheap solutions to brand promotions.	90	4.29	0.864	Effective
5	Social media provides an effective brand page visits creating traffic on website that make more sales.	90	4.13	0.902	Effective
Grand Mean		90	4.23	0.833	Effective

The effectiveness of social media practices in the dimension of brand management is detailed in Table 14. Findings show that SMEs' overall "Brand Management" is rated as "Effective," with social media providing cost-effective solutions for brand promotion, achieving a mean score of 4.29. Customers gain brand awareness through social media, which fosters positive word-of-mouth and brand familiarity (mean of 4.24). Additionally, social media tools

effectively introduce brands to customers (mean of 4.22), increase brand exposure (mean of 4.26), and drive traffic to brand pages, enhancing sales (mean of 4.13).

The grand mean of 4.23 indicates the overall effectiveness of SMEs in their brand management practices, supported by a standard deviation of 0.833, suggesting homogeneity in responses.

These findings imply that SMEs are effective in building brand awareness, fostering advocacy and customer loyalty, and managing their reputation, thereby establishing a strong brand presence and maintaining connections with customers in a competitive small business environment. Effective brand management also enables firms to monitor market perceptions and optimize brand performance.

Social media platforms offer SMEs extensive capabilities for reaching and targeting customers, making them powerful tools for building brand visibility. Firms consistently communicate their value propositions and brand

messaging across various social media channels, enhancing brand recognition and differentiation from competitors.

By creating compelling content, engaging with followers, and participating in relevant conversations, firms can further increase brand recognition and competitiveness in the industry (Basri & Siam, 2019). Effective brand management on social media requires nurturing positive customer interactions, rewarding loyalty, and addressing customer inquiries, which together provide exceptional customer experiences and deliver value-added content (de Oliveira et al., 2020).

Level of Industry Competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises

Table 15. Level of Industry Competitiveness: Customer Satisfaction

No.	Customer Satisfaction	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1	The brand community developed by social media is personally relevant to customers that directly create customer satisfaction.	90	3.52	0.887	Highly Competitive
2	Competitiveness is achieved through social interaction and collaboration among customers resulting in overall customer satisfaction.	90	3.59	0.851	Highly Competitive
3	Social media encourage building of social ties that allow customers to share knowledge and experience increased customer trust.	90	4.18	0.787	Highly Competitive
4	Social media determine products of interest to customers that escalate customer satisfaction which	90	4.1	0.937	Highly Competitive
5	Social media develops in customers positive attitudinal disposition and display of repeat purchasing behavior towards the firm.	90	4.27	0.897	Highly Competitive
Grand Mean		90	3.89	0.872	Highly Competitive

The level of industry competitiveness in the dimension of customer satisfaction is presented in Table 15. Findings indicate that SMEs' overall level of industry competitiveness in "Customer Satisfaction" is rated as "Highly Competitive." Social media fosters positive customer attitudes and repeat purchasing behavior, achieving a mean score of 4.27. The brand community developed through social media is personally relevant to customers, contributing to satisfaction (mean of 3.52). Competitiveness is enhanced through social interactions and collaboration, leading to overall customer satisfaction (mean of 3.59). Additionally, social media encourages the building of social ties that facilitate knowledge sharing and increase

customer trust (mean of 4.18), while also identifying products of interest that heighten satisfaction (mean of 4.10).

The grand mean of 3.89 reflects a high level of industry competitiveness in customer satisfaction, supported by a standard deviation of 0.872, indicating homogeneity in responses.

These findings imply that SMEs effectively enhance brand perception, increase customer engagement, and drive loyalty and retention through continuous improvement on social media platforms, thereby building long-term customer relationships. Firms are positioned to deliver exceptional customer experiences, providing a strong competitive advantage in the industry.

Social media practices make customers feel content and fulfilled with their interactions, contributing to a favorable perception of the brand. Satisfied customers appreciate timely responses, engaging brand interactions, and helpful assistance with product issues. This enhanced brand perception bolsters loyalty and allows firms to compete favorably against rivals, resulting in high industry competitiveness.

High levels of customer satisfaction achieved through social media practices are vital for enhancing industry competitiveness and increasing customer loyalty and retention (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Satisfied customers are likely to remain with the brand over time, feeling valued through their social media interactions. These strong relationships foster loyalty, reduce churn, and contribute to brand competitiveness in the industry (Khan et al., 2019).

Level of Industry Competitiveness: Customer Loyalty

Table 16. Level of Industry Competitiveness: Customer Loyalty

No.	Customer Loyalty	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1	Social media provides customer rewards that create customer value.	90	3.87	0.782	Highly Competitive
2	Percentage of repeat purchases is increased among existing customers with the use of social media.	90	3.96	1.038	Highly Competitive
3	Positive brand attitude is formed among customers that results in continuous product purchases.	90	4.16	0.873	Highly Competitive
4	Social media practices identify improvements of network performance crucial to brand loyalty to the brand.	90	4.22	0.649	Highly Competitive
5	Existing firm-customer relationships are effectively managed by social media that creates lasting customer relationships.	90	4.1	0.779	Highly Competitive
Grand Mean		90	4.06	0.824	Highly Competitive

The level of industry competitiveness of SMEs in the dimension of customer loyalty is presented in Table 16. Findings indicate that SMEs' overall competitiveness in "Customer Loyalty" is rated as "Highly Competitive." Social media practices significantly enhance network performance, crucial for brand loyalty, with a mean score of 4.22. Social media also provides customer rewards that create value (mean of 3.87), increases the percentage of repeat purchases among existing customers (mean of 3.96), fosters positive brand attitudes leading to continuous product purchases (mean of 4.16), and effectively manages firm-customer relationships to create lasting connections (mean of 4.10).

The grand mean of 4.06 reflects a high level of industry competitiveness in customer loyalty, supported by a standard deviation of 0.824, indicating homogeneity in responses.

These findings imply that SMEs are capable of driving increased customer interaction and engagement, stimulating positive word-of-mouth referrals, enhancing brand trust and perception, and encouraging repeat purchases, all of which contribute to high industry competitiveness. Social media practices allow SMEs to foster personalization and build continuous relationships, prioritizing customer loyalty and establishing a strong competitive advantage in a dynamic market.

Achieving customer loyalty through social media enables firms to develop commitment and attachment, leading to repeat engagement with the brand (Jibril et al., 2019). Exceptional customer loyalty reinforces a unique value proposition, differentiating the brand from competitors and reducing the likelihood of customers switching to alternative products and services (Clay & Maite, 2018).

Level of Industry Competitiveness: Operations Efficiency

Table 17. Level of Industry Competitiveness: Operations Efficiency

No.	Operations Efficiency	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1	Optimized marketing spending and low costs of selling and serving customers through social media lead to operational efficiency.	90	4.44	0.959	Highly Competitive
2	Higher operational efficiency is achieved at low cost through social media resource sharing approach, and the provision of customer services through different channels.	90	4.54	0.523	Highly Competitive
3	Social media optimizes business processes that reduce employees' task.	90	3.54	1.103	Highly Competitive
4	Social media provides firms with the capability to facilitate faster flows of information across social networks.	90	3.97	0.867	Highly Competitive
5	Resource sharing in social media allows provision of services at lower cost.	90	3.74	0.943	Highly Competitive
Grand Mean		90	4.05	0.879	Highly Competitive

The level of industry competitiveness of SMEs in the dimension of operations efficiency is detailed in Table 17. Findings indicate that SMEs' overall competitiveness in "Operations Efficiency" is classified as "Highly Competitive." This is largely due to achieving higher operational efficiency at low costs through social media resource sharing and customer service across various channels, reflected in a mean score of 4.54. Additionally, optimized marketing spending and reduced selling costs through social media contribute to operational efficiency (mean of 4.44). Social media also helps optimize business processes, reducing employee tasks (mean of 3.54), facilitates faster information flow across networks (mean of 3.97), and allows for service provision at lower costs through resource sharing (mean of 3.74).

The grand mean of 4.05 indicates a strong level of competitiveness in operations efficiency, with a standard deviation of 0.877 suggesting homogeneity in responses.

These findings imply that SMEs effectively streamline and optimize processes, resources,

and workflows on social media platforms, enhancing their competitiveness. Achieving high operational efficiency enables SMEs to maximize resource utilization, improve response times, enhance content creation, and remain adaptable.

By prioritizing operational efficiency in their social media practices, SMEs achieve greater productivity and effectiveness. They maintain efficient strategies that maximize time, resources, manpower, and budget for social media activities. Automation of repetitive tasks and streamlined workflows allow SMEs to focus on high-impact activities, increasing output while optimizing resource allocation.

In social media practices, operational efficiency enables firms to respond promptly to feedback, inquiries, and complaints. Efficient processes for managing incoming messages, monitoring channels, and assigning tasks lead to reduced response times and timely customer assistance, thereby strengthening industry competitiveness (Tajudeen et al., 2018; Crammond et al., 2018).

Level of Industry Competitiveness: Profitability**Table 18. Level of Industry Competitiveness: Profitability**

No.	Profitability	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1	Enables the company to promote products to large segments of customers, not only in the Philippines, but to other countries as well.	90	3.94	0.625	Highly Competitive
2	Effective communication process with customers provided by social media technology results in enhanced customer service that drives customer satisfaction leading to increased sales volume.	90	3.81	0.538	Highly Competitive
3	Provides wide audience for a small portion of budget allowing cost savings in advertising budget.	90	4.36	0.912	Highly Competitive
4	Provides increased reach of target audience which is directly translated to meaningful key financial performance indicators.	90	4.28	0.687	Highly Competitive
5	Allows more visitors to the website for minimal cost of social media work with more income resulting in achievement of bigger return on investment.	90	3.81	0.538	Highly Competitive
Grand Mean		90	4.04	0.64	Highly Competitive

The level of industry competitiveness of SMEs in the dimension of profitability is detailed in Table 18. Findings indicate that SMEs' overall competitiveness in "Profitability" is rated as "Highly Competitive." Social media practices provide access to a wide audience at a low cost, achieving a mean score of 4.36. These practices enable firms to promote products to large customer segments, both locally and internationally, with a mean value of 3.94. Enhanced communication through social media results in improved customer service and increased sales volume (mean of 3.81). Additionally, practices extend the reach to target audiences, translating into key financial performance indicators (mean of 4.28), and drive more website visitors at minimal costs, leading to greater returns on investment (mean of 3.81).

The grand mean of 4.04 reflects a strong level of industry competitiveness in profitability, supported by a standard deviation of 0.640, indicating homogeneity in responses.

These findings suggest that the social media practices of SMEs effectively generate positive financial returns and sustainable growth, achieving high levels of profitability. SMEs maximize revenue generation and optimize return on investment, enhancing customer lifetime value, reducing marketing costs, and improving market positioning and brand equity.

Firms prioritizing profitability in their social media strategies are more likely to outperform competitors and achieve sustainable growth. By utilizing lead generation, direct sales, and affiliate marketing on social media, SMEs effectively promote their products and services to drive sales, conversions, and revenue growth.

Social media platforms offer cost-effective channels for acquiring new customers and driving revenue growth (Grover & Kar, 2020). Leveraging targeted advertising, engagement strategies, and content marketing allows firms to reach a larger potential market, thereby improving profitability and industry competitiveness (Amoah et al., 2021).

Significant Impact of the Social Media Practices of Small and Medium Enterprises in Masbate Province in the Achievement of Industry Competitiveness

Table 19. Significant Impact of the Social Media Practices of Small and Medium Enterprises in Masbate Province in the Achievement of Industry Competitiveness

Social Media Practices Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Description	Interpretation
Customer Engagement	90	4.28	0.281	0.662**	0.000	High Positive Correlation	High Positive Significant Impact
Social Network Marketing	90	4.36	0.533	0.528**	0.000	High Positive Correlation	High Positive Significant Impact
Website Promotion	90	4.18	0.474	0.585**	0.000	High Positive Correlation	High Positive Significant Impact
Customer Relationship Marketing	90	4.3	0.469	0.762**	0.000	High Positive Correlation	High Positive Significant Impact
Brand Management	90	4.29	0.511	0.871**	0.000	High Positive Correlation	High Positive Significant Impact

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

The significant impact of social media practices of SMEs on industry competitiveness is summarized in Table 19. Findings reveal that customer engagement has a Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.662 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a "High Positive Correlation" with industry competitiveness at the 0.05 significance level. The null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that improvements in customer engagement practices positively affect the firm's competitiveness. This practice enhances brand awareness, customer loyalty, and lifetime value, leading to greater competitiveness.

Similarly, social network marketing shows a Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.528 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a "High Positive Correlation." This suggests that effective social network marketing significantly impacts industry competitiveness, enabling SMEs to increase brand visibility and build authority and trust.

Website promotion also demonstrates a Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.585 and a

p-value of 0.000, indicating a "High Positive Correlation." This underscores SMEs' effectiveness in leveraging web promotion to boost website traffic, enhance brand recognition, and facilitate lead generation, all crucial for competitiveness.

Customer relationship marketing has a Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.762 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a "High Positive Correlation" with industry competitiveness. This finding highlights SMEs' effectiveness in enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty while facilitating effective targeting and segmentation.

Lastly, brand management exhibits a Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.871 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a "High Positive Correlation." This suggests that effective brand management practices enhance brand recognition, establish brand identity, and build credibility, positioning SMEs competitively in the market.

Table 20. Overall Significant Impact of the Social Media Practices of Small and Medium Enterprises in Masbate Province in the Achievement of Industry Competitiveness

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Description	Interpretation
Social Media Practices Variables	90	4.28	0.36	0.859**	0.000	High Positive Correlation	High Positive Significant Impact

Table 20 presents the overall significant impact of social media practices of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) on industry competitiveness. The results indicate a strong positive correlation, with a Correlation Coefficient of 0.859 and a p-value of 0.000, significant at both the 1% and 5% levels. The null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that social media practices significantly impact industry competitiveness. A change in the effectiveness of these practices will directly influence the competitiveness of SMEs.

SMEs effectively implement social media practices, contributing to their high level of industry competitiveness. This is largely due to their ability to develop platforms with robust targeting options, allowing them to reach spe-

cific audience segments with tailored marketing messages. By leveraging geographic, demographic, and interest-based targeting, SMEs create marketing efforts that resonate with the right audiences, driving higher engagement and conversions.

The effective use of social media also provides valuable insights into customer needs and preferences through audience feedback and data analytics, which are vital for achieving organizational goals (Bruce et al., 2023). By monitoring customer conversations on social media, firms can gather feedback, analyze engagement metrics, and gain a deeper understanding of competitors and the target market, all crucial for enhancing competitiveness (Sompolgrunk et al., 2022).

Significant Difference in the Perceptions of Respondents on the Effectiveness of the Social Media Practices

Table 21. Significant Difference in the Perceptions of Respondents on the Effectiveness of the Social Media Practices

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Effectiveness of Social Media Practices	Equal variances assumed	0.713	0.401	-0.309	88	0.758	-0.026	0.842	-0.193	0.141
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.275	37.2	0.785	-0.026	0.095	-0.217	0.166

Table 21 presents Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, which assesses the perceptions of officers and employees regarding the effectiveness of social media practices. The test indicates equal variances, with a significance value of 0.758 and a test statistic of -0.309, con-

firmed that the null hypothesis of equal variances holds true. Thus, there is no significant difference in the opinions of the two groups concerning the effectiveness of social media practices.

When calculating statistics with equal variances not assumed, the test statistic is -0.275 with 37.2 degrees of freedom, yielding a p-value of 0.785, which is above both the 1% and 5% significance levels. This result supports the null hypothesis, indicating no significant difference in perceptions between officers and employees regarding the effectiveness of social media practices.

These findings suggest that both groups share similar views on the effectiveness and importance of social media practices in achieving industry competitiveness, despite their differing roles within the organization. The alignment in their opinions may stem from effective communication of organizational goals related to social media practices, fostering a common understanding.

Both managers and employees, involved in the development of social media initiatives, are likely to recognize the significance of these practices for competitiveness. Collaborative decision-making processes can further align their perspectives and promote shared ownership of social media strategies.

Training and education on social media practices can enhance alignment among organizational members by providing a uniform level of knowledge, enabling employees to share similar opinions (Absah et al., 2018). Additionally, effective feedback mechanisms allow all members to contribute to discussions about social media practices, reflecting shared perceptions and facilitating convergence of opinions.

Social Media Practices that Significantly Achieve High Level of Industry Competitiveness

Table 22. Regression Model Summary for the Predictors of High Level of Industry Competitiveness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.904	0.817	0.806	0.153	1.712

1. Predictors: Customer Engagement, Social Network Marketing, Website Promotion, Customer Relationship Management, Brand Management
2. Dependent Variable: Industry Competitiveness

Table 22 presents the Regression Model Summary, highlighting the overall fit of the regression model. The R value of 0.904 indicates a strong correlation between the independent variables (social media practices) and the dependent variable (industry competitiveness), suggesting a good level of predictive accuracy.

The Coefficient of Determination (R^2) quantifies the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. An R^2 value of 0.817 indicates that 81.7% of the variability in industry competitiveness can be accounted for by the chosen social media practices. This high value suggests that the regression model effectively captures the relationship between these variables.

The Adjusted R^2 , which accounts for the number of independent variables, is 0.806. This

indicates that the independent variables explain 80.6% of the variance in industry competitiveness, confirming a strong fit for the model. The Adjusted R^2 value is always less than or equal to R^2 , and a value significantly above 0.5 indicates a good fit (Darlington & Hayes, 2016).

The Standard Error of Estimate, which measures the precision of the model's predictions, is 0.153. This value indicates low dispersion of the social media practices around their mean, suggesting high accuracy in predictions. The Durbin-Watson statistic, valued at 1.712, assesses the presence of autocorrelation in the residuals. This value lies between the critical values of 1.5 and 2.5, indicating an absence of first-order autocorrelation in the dataset.

Table 23. Statistical Significance of the Regression Model: Analysis of Variance

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (ANOVA)						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.709	5	1.742	74.76	.000 ^b
	Residual	1.957	84	0.023		
	Total	10.666	89			

a. Dependent Variable: Industry Competitiveness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Engagement, Social Network Marketing, Website Promotion, Customer Relationship Management, Brand Management

Table 23 presents the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), demonstrating the significance of the regression model in explaining deviations in the social media practices' variables. The independent variables are statistically significant predictors of the dependent variable, industry competitiveness. The F-ratio of 74.76 indicates a good fit for the overall regression model.

The p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, confirming that the model is significant at the 95% confidence level, allowing us to reject the null

hypothesis. This indicates that the regression coefficients are not equal to zero, confirming a linear relationship between the social media practices and industry competitiveness.

The F-test value of 74.76 shows the model's predictive capability, signifying that there is a strong linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. This result suggests that the regression model effectively explains variations in industry competitiveness.

Table 24. Regression Coefficients for Social Media Practices

Model		B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig
1	(Constant)	0.733	0.294		2.49	0.015
		0.14	0.087	0.114	1.618	0.009
		0.115	0.036	0.177	3.149	0.002
		-0.086	0.051	-0.117	-1.681	0.007
		0.186	0.059	0.252	3.153	0.002
		0.409	0.059	0.603	6.907	0

Table 24 presents the Regression Coefficients for the social media practices' variables. These coefficients measure the strength of each social media practice in achieving the dependent variable of industry competitiveness.

The coefficients are statistically significant, as indicated by p-values that are not equal to zero. The p-values for customer engagement, social network marketing, website promotion, customer relationship management, and brand management are 0.009, 0.002, 0.007, 0.002,

and 0.000, respectively, all at the 0.05 significance level. This demonstrates that these social media variables are significant predictors of high industry competitiveness. Consequently, the null hypotheses for these variables are rejected, providing strong evidence that these practices significantly contribute to achieving high levels of competitiveness.

The low p-values support the rejection of the null hypotheses, implying that enhancements in the effectiveness of these social media

practices will significantly impact industry competitiveness. Changes in the predictor variables are associated with increased

competitiveness, underscoring the importance of these social media practices.

Barriers to the Adoption of Social Media Practices of Small and Medium Enterprises

Table 25. Barriers to the Adoption of Social Media Practices of Small and Medium Enterprises

No.	Barriers to the Adoption of Social of Social Media Practices	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1	Availability of professionals to operate e-commerce business in the country.	90	3.81	0.538	Agree
2	Lack of support among employees.	90	4.36	0.812	Agree
3	Lack of technological resources.	90	4.28	0.687	Agree
4	Lack of government leaders' actions in the improvement of online industries and technology.	90	4.14	0.815	Agree
5	Infrastructure for increasing internet speed by the telecommunications companies need improvement.	90	4.23	1.006	Agree
Grand Mean		90	4.16	0.772	Agree

Findings indicate a consensus among respondents regarding the barriers to adopting social media practices. Key barriers identified include a lack of support for employees (mean = 4.36), insufficient availability of professionals to operate e-commerce (mean = 3.81), lack of technological resources (mean = 4.28), inadequate government action to improve online industries (mean = 4.14), and the need for enhanced internet infrastructure (mean = 4.23). The grand mean of 4.16 reflects overall agreement on these barriers, supported by a standard deviation of 0.772, indicating homogeneity in responses, as detailed in Table 25.

The shortage of skilled professionals to manage e-commerce operations poses a significant challenge to effective social media practices, as expertise in data analysis, content creation, and advertising is essential. Without adequate personnel, businesses struggle to develop engaging content, optimize advertising campaigns, and analyze performance metrics. Additionally, employees may resist adopting social media practices due to a lack of understanding of their benefits or fear of change, especially if they are accustomed to traditional communication methods. Insufficient support can hinder implementation efforts, as effective social media practices require active participation from employees across departments. If employees do not see the value of social media

in their roles, their disengagement can limit the overall impact of these initiatives.

Moreover, internet infrastructure is crucial for effective social media engagement, encompassing both virtual and physical components. Deficiencies such as frequent outages or slow internet speeds can hinder user interaction and negatively impact user experiences, thus reducing the effectiveness of social media efforts. Addressing these infrastructure shortcomings is vital for ensuring accessibility and reliability. Government investment in infrastructure development, including broadband networks and digital technologies, is essential for overcoming these barriers; a lack of sufficient investment can restrict network reliability and access to digital tools, hampering effective social media practices. To tackle these issues, strategic policy interventions, proactive government leadership, and partnerships among stakeholders are necessary to create a conducive environment for thriving in the digital economy. Telecommunications companies also face challenges with aging infrastructure and supply chain issues, complicating the provision of adequate internet speeds, as noted in Table 25.

Conclusions

This study reveals that SMEs with a longer duration in business and greater capitalization effectively leverage social media to enhance in-

dustry competitiveness. The respondents, primarily from the food and beverage and fashion sectors, indicate that effective social media practices—such as customer engagement, social network marketing, and website promotion—are crucial for increasing brand visibility and customer interaction. The demographic profile, including age, gender, and educational attainment, further supports the strategic implementation of social media, aligning with organizational goals. Overall, the findings underscore the role of social media in fostering SME growth and sustaining competitive advantage.

Recommendations

To enhance social media effectiveness for SMEs, it is crucial to:

1. Utilize Social Media Early: Encourage early adoption to build brand awareness and engage with target markets effectively
2. Allocate Resources Wisely: Invest in high-quality content, social media advertising, and management tools to optimize reach and engagement.
3. Set Clear Goals: Define measurable sales goals and key performance indicators to track and optimize social media strategies.
4. Understand Audience Needs: Tailor content to specific industry niches and audience preferences to build loyalty and trust.
5. Promote Diversity: Foster age and gender diversity within teams to drive innovation and inclusivity in social media practices.
6. Encourage Continuous Learning: Provide training and development opportunities to keep employees updated on social media trends and best practices.

These steps align with the research objectives of leveraging social media to enhance SME competitiveness and growth.

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