

The Role of Social Media Analytics in Integrated Marketing Communication and Understanding Consumer Behaviour: The Pathway to Optimal Customer Relationship Management

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Abstract

This study explores the role of social media analytics in understanding consumer behaviour within the context of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). Businesses now have access to a lot of data thanks to the spread of social media platforms, which can give them important insights into consumer preferences, attitudes, and behaviours. This study discusses the methodologies and tools used in social media analytics and how they can be leveraged to enhance IMC strategies and better understand consumer behaviour. The study communicates the main topics of the research: social media analytics, integrated marketing communication, consumer behaviour, and customer relationship management. It also suggests a connection between these topics, which is that social media analytics can enhance integrated marketing communication efforts, leading to a better understanding of consumer behaviour and, ultimately, improved customer relationship management.

Keywords: Social media analytics, consumer behaviour, digital marketing, data analysis, business strategy, integrated marketing communications, customer relationship management

INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have become ubiquitous, with billions of users worldwide. They generate vast data, giving businesses unprecedented opportunities to understand their consumers. Social media analytics need the collection and analysis of data from social media networks. It enables businesses to monitor consumer sentiment, track trends, and make data-driven decisions [1].

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Received Date: July 04, 2023

Accepted Date: July 24, 2023

Published Date: August 16, 2023

Citation: Valentin Kuleto, Mladen Radaković, Vladimir Matović, Biljana Ilić, Svetlana Jokić. The Role of Social Media Analytics in Integrated Marketing Communication and Understanding Consumer Behaviour: The Pathway to Optimal Customer Relationship Management. International Journal of Electronics Automation. 2023; 1(1): 22–29p.

Data from social media platforms are gathered, analysed, and interpreted in social media analytics. It provides insights into consumer preferences, attitudes, and behaviours. Businesses can use these insights to understand what content resonates with their audience when their audience is most active, and how their audience responds to different marketing strategies.

A strategy method for ensuring that all communication initiatives are consistent across all platforms and are centred on the client is known as integrated marketing communication (IMC). The goal of IMC is to use messaging that is consistent

and complementary across all channels to help reinforce the brand's core message and promote customer engagement. By supplying information that enables organisations to customise their messaging to their audience's tastes and behaviour, social media analytics can play a significant part in IMC.

Understanding consumer behaviour entails researching the choices people make when deciding how to spend their time, money, and effort on things connected to consuming. It comprises an investigation into what they purchase, why they do so, when they do so, where they do it, how frequently they purchase it, and how frequently they use it. By monitoring and studying consumers' online activity, social media analytics can offer insightful data about consumer behaviour.

Customer relationship management (CRM) is the process of controlling how a business interacts with its clients. The objective is to strengthen business ties with clients, raise client retention rates, and spur revenue growth. Social media analytics can help organisations better understand their consumers' requirements and preferences so they can customise their interactions. This can aid CRM tactics. Social media analytics can provide valuable data that can inform integrated marketing communication strategies, leading to a better understanding of consumer behaviour. In turn, this can assist organisations in managing their consumer relationships better, resulting in raised client happiness and loyalty.

Therefore, it does not have a traditional “methods” section where the authors would describe data collection and analysis procedures. Instead, the authors discuss various aspects of consumer behaviour and the role of social media analytics in understanding it.

Here is an explanation of the study's key ideas:

1. *Introduction:* The authors introduce the topic, explaining the importance of understanding consumer behaviour and the role of social media analytics in this endeavour.
2. *Review of literature:* The writers examine the body of knowledge on consumer behaviour and the variables that influence it. This includes internal and external factors, and the author cites several sources to support these points.
3. *Social media analytics:* The authors discuss the role of social media analytics in understanding consumer behaviour. This includes tracking user-generated content, analysing patterns and trends, monitoring online reputation, and identifying influencers. The authors also acknowledge the challenges of social media analytics, such as dealing with large volumes of unstructured data.
4. *Case studies:* The authors present several case studies demonstrating the effectiveness of social media analytics in understanding consumer behaviour. These studies show how social media analytics can predict consumer behaviour and inform business decisions.
5. *Conclusion:* The authors conclude by emphasising the importance of social media analytics in understanding consumer behaviour and the need for businesses to have the right tools and expertise to analyse social media data effectively.

METHOD

The author's approach in this study is synthesising and discussing existing research on the topic rather than conducting new empirical research. Therefore, the “method” of the study is a comprehensive review and discussion of the literature on social media analytics and consumer behaviour.

LITERATURE REVIEW

We are experiencing a period of radical change. The COVID-19 epidemic, wars, natural disasters, technical advancements, and financial crises have altered the whole planet and our thinking. Consumption eventually becomes critical to assuring an individual's pleasure [2]. Consumer habits evolve daily due to a complex interplay of technological, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and health and safety considerations. Businesses that grasp these elements and respond to changing

consumer preferences have a better chance of long-term success and growth. Consumer behaviour research is critical for generating effective marketing tactics, improving business performance, informing public policy, expanding consumer welfare, and advancing academic research. Understanding consumer behaviour allows firms and politicians to make educated decisions that benefit customers and encourage economic progress.

The nature of customer behaviour varies as technology advances, individual consciousness evolves, and societal changes occur, complicating marketing planning [3]. Individual perception differs, and not all consumers have the same views towards the same product; thus, they behave differently [4].

Internal and external variables both influence consumer behaviour. Internal aspects include economic and psychological situations, whereas external factors include social and cultural factors [5]. External factors constantly influence consumer habits. Daily influences on buying decisions include family, friends, the Internet, social networks, notable public figures, and the media. Even minor details influence consumer perception, ranging from how products are purchased and delivered to insurance and grievances, after-sales services, and everything else that falls under the heading of the marketing mix (product, price, distribution, and promotion) [6].

While predicting how customers will act in every situation is complex, consumer behaviour research can provide insights into their decision-making processes, requirements, and motivations. Marketers must constantly research consumer behaviour to meet consumers' requirements while assuring mutual happiness. It is crucial to remember that not all customers are the same and that individual variations can influence their behaviour.

Understanding consumer behaviour is crucial for businesses to create effective marketing strategies. Analytics from social media can reveal important information about consumer preferences, attitudes, and actions. For example, sentiment analysis can gauge consumer attitudes towards a brand or product, while network analysis can reveal how information spread and influence within a consumer network [3].

RESULTS

The analysis outcomes are being discussed in this section with reference to the various analytics tools.

Social Media Analytics

Social media analytics is a potent tool for figuring out how people behave. It involves collecting data from social media sites and analysing it to make business decisions [7]. To comprehend consumer emotions and preferences, it can also study patterns and trends.

Social media analytics can offer insightful information about customer behaviour. For instance, it can show what kinds of information customers find engaging, when they are most active on social media, and how they react to certain marketing tactics. According to Stieglitz *et al.*, this knowledge can assist firms in customising their social media tactics to better engage with their target market [8].

Social media analytics not only reveal consumer behaviour but also assist companies in keeping an eye on their online reputation. Businesses may track positive and negative feedback about their brand on social media and instantly respond to both. According to He *et al.*, this can assist firms in managing their online reputation and developing stronger client relationships [9].

Additionally, social media analytics can assist companies in locating influential figures and significant thought leaders in their sector. By tracking who is talking about their brand and what they

are saying, businesses can identify individuals who significantly influence their target audience. Businesses can reach a wider audience and become more visible on social media by interacting with these influencers [10].

While social media analytics can provide valuable insights, it also presents challenges. It can be difficult to sort through the enormous amount of material available on social media to find what is important and relevant. To assess social media data and derive actionable insights, businesses need the appropriate tools and knowledge [8].

Therefore, social media analytics is essential for comprehending consumer behaviour. It offers useful information that firms can use to customise their marketing plans, keep an eye on their online reputation, and interact with influencers. However, companies need to be equipped with the know-how and tools necessary to evaluate social media data efficiently and derive actionable insights.

Social Media Analytics Tools

The gathering, examination, and interpretation of data from social media platforms is referred to as social media analytics. It is a strong instrument that can give organisations insightful information about consumer behaviours. The methodologies and tools used in social media analytics can vary widely, but they generally involve the following steps:

1. *Data collection*: This is the first step in social media analytics. Data from many social media networks are gathered in this process. This can be done manually, but it is often automated using software tools that can scrape data from social media sites. Posts, comments, likes, shares, and other types of user-generated content may be included in the data gathered.
2. *Data preprocessing and cleaning*: After the data has been gathered, it needs to be cleaned and processed. This can involve removing irrelevant data, correcting errors, and transforming the data into a format that can be easily analysed. This stage is essential for guaranteeing the reliability and correctness of the analysis.
3. *Data analysis*: Data analysis can be done after the data has been cleansed and preprocessed. Numerous methods, such as statistical analysis, sentiment analysis, network analysis, and machine learning, may be used to do this. This step aims to draw valuable conclusions from the data.
4. *Interpretation and reporting*: The final step in social media analytics is interpreting the results of the analysis and reporting them in a way that is understandable and actionable. This may entail producing visuals, creating reports, and presenting the findings to interested parties.

Social media analytics can be done with a wide range of instruments. Among the most well-liked are:

- Hootsuite is a tool for managing social media that enables companies to schedule postings, keep tabs on online discussions, and evaluate social media effectiveness [11].
- Brandwatch is a form of social listening technology that enables companies to track brand mentions on social media, evaluate sentiment, and spot trends.
- Sprout Social is a social media management and analytics platform that offers companies information on the effectiveness of their social media efforts and the level of audience involvement [12].
- *BuzzSumo*: This tool allows businesses to find the most shared content and trending influencers in their industry [13].
- *Google analytics*: Although not a social media tool precisely, Google Analytics may track social media referrals to a website, offering useful details about how social media is influencing traffic and conversions [14].

The Figure 1 shows Brandwatch different use cases.

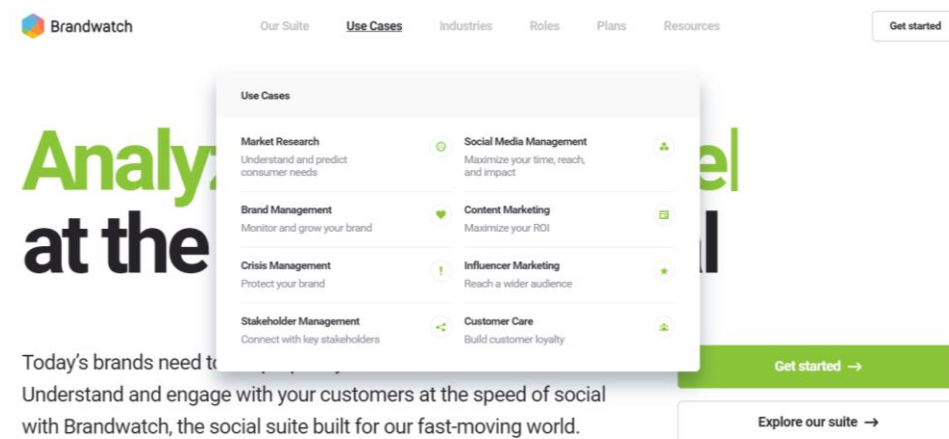


Figure 1. Brandwatch use case.
(Source: www.brandwatch.com [15].)

These tools and methodologies can be leveraged to gain a deeper understanding of consumer behaviour. For example, sentiment analysis can be used to gauge consumer attitudes towards a brand or product, while network analysis can reveal how information and influence spread within a consumer network. By understanding these patterns [16], businesses can tailor their social media strategies to better engage with their audience and achieve their marketing goals [17].

CASE STUDIES

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of social media analytics in understanding consumer behaviour. For instance, an article presented by Rishika *et al.* found that businesses that use social media analytics better understand their consumers and are more successful in their marketing efforts [18]. Similarly, a study by Taecharungroj found that social media analytics can help businesses understand consumer sentiment and predict future behaviour [19].

Here are some more examples of case studies where social media analytics were utilised to analyse consumer behaviour:

Based on the AISAS Model Approach, online consumer behaviour on using social media for e-commerce will reflect.

Case Study: I. K. Sumerta's Bukalapak, Tokopedia, and Blibli.com [20]

In this study, online customer behaviour in the marketplaces of Bukalapak, Tokopedia, and Blibli.com was measured using the AISAS model. According to the study, certain interactions, such as attention to interests, excitement about search, search for behaviours, movements towards shares, and the sharing search, had a beneficial and important effect on customer behaviour on the internet [20].

Machine Learning-based Mathematical Modelling for Predicting Social Media Consumer Behaviour using Big Data Analytics by Chaudhary *et al.* [21]

This study used big data analytics and machine learning to predict consumer behaviour on social media platforms. To accurately forecast the buying habits of consumers, the study indicated that pre-processing data and using mathematical models were useful [21].

The Study by Majeed *et al.* [22]

Majeed *et al.*, the study discovered that perceived risk influences the association between customers' marketing discomfort and how ethical social media analytics are regarded to be [22].

The Study by Shahidzadeh and Shokouhyar [23]

A social media analytics investigation into the electronics sector in developing nations vs. developed countries by Shahidzadeh and Shokouhyar is illuminating the decision-making process in reverse logistics. This study used social media analytics to make decisions for returning products in reverse logistics, focusing on sustainability and circular economy concerns. The study found that the model is general enough to be used in various industries' supply chains and provides managers and policymakers with deep insight into reverse logistics' decision-making [23].

These studies provide a deeper understanding of how social media analytics can be used to understand and predict consumer behaviour.

INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS

The term “integrated marketing communication” (IMC) refers to a strategic planning method for marketing communications in which various communication tools, such as public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, and social media, are intended to work in concert to create a cogent, consistent message. IMC seeks to make sure that each marketing tool functions as a cohesive whole rather than separately.

In the context of social media analytics, IMC can play a crucial role. Social media platforms are a key part of the marketing communications mix, and social media analytics can provide valuable insights that can inform the overall IMC strategy.

For example, social media analytics can reveal which types of content resonate with consumers, when consumers are most active on social media, and how consumers respond to different marketing strategies. Businesses can use this information to customise their IMC strategy for greater audience engagement and marketing objectives.

Furthermore, social media analytics can help businesses monitor their online reputation, which is a key aspect of public relations, one of the components of IMC. By tracking mentions of their brand on social media, businesses can identify and respond to positive and negative feedback in real-time, helping manage their online reputation and build stronger customer relationships.

An efficient integrated marketing communication plan can be shaped and informed by media analytics. By providing valuable insights into consumer behaviour, social media analytics can help businesses create a coherent, consistent, and effective marketing message across all communication channels.

DISCUSSION

In the discussion of the results, it is important to note that while social media analytics can provide valuable insights into consumer behaviour, it is just one piece of the puzzle. A comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour requires a multi-faceted approach considering various factors, from socioeconomic status to personal preferences. Social media analytics is a powerful tool, but it should be used in conjunction with other methods and data sources to gain a holistic understanding of consumer behaviour.

As technology continues to advance and social media becomes even more integrated into our daily lives, the role of social media analytics in understanding consumer behaviour is likely to become even more critical. To stay ahead of the curve, businesses must continue to be adaptive and receptive to new ideas.

CONCLUSION

Social media analytics plays a vital role in understanding consumer behaviour. Businesses can better understand their customers and develop more successful marketing strategies by utilising the amount

of data present on social media sites. The significance of social media analytics in comprehending customer behaviour is projected to grow as social media continues to expand.

In conclusion, the role of social media analytics in understanding consumer behaviour is significant and multifaceted. Businesses can use the amount of information it gives them to better understand the preferences, attitudes, and activities of their customers. This understanding can tailor marketing strategies, monitor online reputation, and engage with influencers.

However, the use of social media analytics has its challenges. It can be difficult to sort through the enormous amount of material available on social media to find what is important and relevant. Additionally, social media data is often unstructured and difficult to analyse. Therefore, businesses must spend money on the correct equipment and training to evaluate social media data efficiently and get valuable insights.

Moreover, as social media continues to evolve, so will the methods and techniques used in social media analytics. To stay ahead of the curve, businesses must continue to be adaptive and receptive to new ideas.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that social media analytics is only one piece of the equation, even though it might offer insightful information about customer behaviour. A comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour requires a multi-faceted approach considering various factors, from socioeconomic status to personal preferences. Social media analytics is a powerful tool, but it should be used with other methods and data sources to gain a holistic understanding of consumer behaviour.

In the future, as technology continues to advance and social media becomes even more integrated into our daily lives, the role of social media analytics in understanding consumer behaviour is likely to become even more critical. Businesses that can effectively harness the power of social media analytics will be well-positioned to understand and respond to the needs and wants of their consumers, ultimately leading to tremendous business success, based on crisis of optimal integrated marketing communications and customer relationships.

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