








Research Article

Assessing Frontrow International Members' Intention to Use Facebook as a Digital Marketing Tool: A Correlational Study

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Abstract

Digital business, specifically digital marketing, has become necessary due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this light, this study aims to determine the effectiveness of Facebook as a digital marketing tool measured through the Technology Acceptance Model-Theory of Planned Behavior (TAM-TPB) factors: perceived ease of use (PEOU), perceived usefulness (PU), attitude (AT), subjective norm (SN), perceived behavioral control (PBC), and behavioral intention (BI). To accomplish this goal, a correlational research design was employed. Questionnaires were given to 377 Frontrow International members in Luzon. The results show that all TAM-TPB factors have positive and significant effects on the behavioral intention of Frontrow International members to use Facebook as a digital marketing tool. Hence, this study concludes that as long as online sellers consider Facebook a convenient, effective, and valuable marketing strategy for doing business, the usage of this digital platform will benefit them.

Keywords

digital marketing, Facebook, Frontrow International, networking, TAM-TPB

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In the early months of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic surprised many nations. Due to this, economies have experienced a significant decline, which has consequences for working conditions (Beland et al., 2020). In the Philippines, various forms of community quarantine were put into effect. According to Shinozaki and Rao (2021), with this social and economic immobility, businesses were forced to adapt to digital marketing to survive and prosper. Consequently, the world faces an economic crisis in adopting digital technology in all sectors of human activity.

In recent years, the Philippines has made significant progress in embracing various digital marketing advancements. Its most important aspect is that there are no signs of this trend slowing down. When a supplier can respond quickly to customer inquiries, Damasén and Guidang (2020) claimed that digital marketing is most effective in converting marketing into sales and revenue. The same authors stated that entrepreneurs should use social media to their advantage. In so doing, the following were suggested in their study: (1) a live video-selling of the products on YouTube and Facebook; (2) video presentations on YouTube; and lastly, (3) the usage of a chatbot as it allows an autonomous response to a prospective consumer's predefined question.

In connection with the first suggestion of the study by Damasén and Guidang (2020), Facebook is an online social media and social networking website that can be accessed across the globe with the use of the internet. Facebook does not just connect families and friends from anywhere; it has also affected and changed marketing for businesses and organizations. Accordingly, this social media platform offers businesses the capability to either reach their segmented target customers or attract new ones. Additionally, Facebook's popularity and rapid expansion made it possible for companies to connect with their customers through integrated communications for marketing (Kang & Yang, 2020). According to Ramsaran-Fowdar and Fowdar (2013), marketing practices, tools, benefits, and success factors centered on Facebook come with issues and risks. Their study found out how social media has changed how organizations do business, even to the point of hiring their own social media analyst.

Facebook has become a powerful means for businesses considering the tools that can be used to achieve marketing objectives, such as business or fan pages where everyone can obtain updates, social ads, and polls where they can target a specific group of people. As further stated by Ramsaran-Fowdar and Fowdar (2013), Facebook marketing has practical implications that benefit organizations, including efficient communication

cost cutting, personalized and direct advertising, immediate feedback from customers, electronic word-of-mouth referrals, and a positive influence on customers' behavior. Moreover, this social media marketing gives ample opportunities to start businesses because it can attract social media users. Joshi and Kalia (2017) stated that social media helps marketers get more customers and easily spread their business. Facebook allows businesses to target specific numbers of customers when promoting their products or services. Yandug et al. (2020) stated that it enables users to buy any brand in any organization without leaving their homes.

Previous researchers have examined the viewpoint of customers (To et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2021), but to the researchers' knowledge, only a few studies have examined the perspective of sellers. To fill this empirical gap, the current study's purpose is to explore the effectiveness of Facebook marketing through the lens of a retailer, specifically the members of the networking group Frontrow International. This company was established in 2008 and started utilizing Facebook as a marketing tool in 2012.

Theoretical Framework

The study utilized an integrated model of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The mentioned theories best describe the correlation between Facebook marketing and factors influencing the usage intentions of Frontrow International members.

Ajzen (1991) introduced the former theory (TPB) to comprehend human behavior in general. It is anticipated that having a positive attitude and favorable normative and volitional control beliefs will lead to technological acceptance. In this model, perceived behavioral control indirectly affects actual use and directly influences behavioral intention. TPB has been used in various studies and empirical endeavors, mainly in Internet adoption (for instance, Alzahrani et al., 2017; Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Troise et al., 2020). In the case of the current study, this model gives insights into which factors best influence Frontrow International members' behavioral intention to use Facebook as digital marketing: attitude (AT), subjective norm (SN), and perceived behavioral control (PBC). These attitudes and ideas influence what entrepreneurs perceive when selecting an e-commerce platform. Thus, TPB explains the validation of subjective measures and their relationship to system usage and intention, which is essential to the study's theoretical framework.

The latter theory (TAM), introduced by Davis (1989), is explicitly based on studies involving user acceptance and user intention of information systems. TAM postulates that a person's decision to use newly developed technologies and behavior while using these innovations are established by their perceptions of their usefulness.



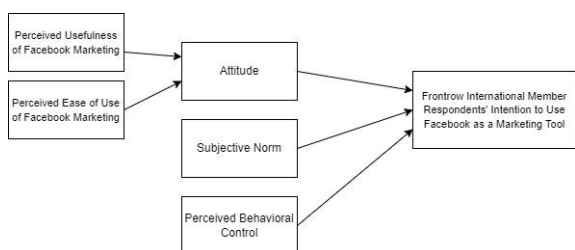
It also states that the users' knowledge and confidence in using technology can lead to better productivity and flexibility in consuming and providing information. Various studies have applied TAM to their studies (such as in the cases of Faisal, 2021; Kamal et al., 2020; Kaur & Malik, 2019). The studies provided information about people's perceptions; thus, this will help people have a positive attitude when navigating e-commerce and gain confidence that could help in providing and consuming information. In the present study, TAM's external factors, which are perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU), are incorporated with TPB's factors in determining the major factors that affect Frontrow International Members' intention to use Facebook as their digital marketing.

Numerous previous works include the integration of TAM and TPB; nevertheless, researchers have different viewpoints on integrating the TAM and TPB models. Safeena et al. (2013) applied all five TAM and TPB components and linked them with behavioral intention. Others have incorporated TAM and TPB by merging the attitude factor from TPB directly into TAM factors instead of the behavioral intention factor (Tseng et al., 2013; Jani et al., 2015; Mustafa, 2021). The current study used the latter since it is a more common and reliable integration method.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 represents the study's TAM-TPB conceptual paradigm. As implied in the study's theoretical framework, both TAM variables (PU and PEOU) are linked to AT. PU pertains to the online sellers' view that utilizing a specific system will improve their job performance. In contrast, PEOU is the degree to which a person believes using a particular plan will be comfortable (Davis, 1989). In the context of Facebook marketing, PU refers to the online sellers' belief that Facebook marketing will improve their sales. In contrast, PEOU refers to the online sellers' view of utilizing Facebook marketing without or with minimal difficulty.

Figure 1
TAM-TPB Conceptual Paradigm



Meanwhile, the study's TPB variables (AT, SN, and PBC) are linked directly to the dependent variable (BI). In the context of Facebook marketing, AT refers to the online sellers' appraisal of utilizing Facebook marketing in their business. Moreover, SN means the degree to which the online sellers' preference for utilizing Facebook

marketing is affected by the opinions of their social circle (friends and colleagues). Furthermore, PBC refers to the online sellers' perception of the level of difficulty in using Facebook marketing.

Statement of the Problem

The study's principal goal is to determine the effectiveness of Facebook as a digital marketing tool, mainly from the viewpoint of the members of Frontrow International. The following questions were sought to meet the aforementioned aim:

1. What is the respondents' demographic profile regarding age and affiliation with Frontrow International?
2. How do perception factors influence attitudes toward the use of Facebook as a digital marketing tool?
 - a. perceived ease of use
 - b. perceived usefulness
3. How does attitude influence the usage intention of Facebook as a digital marketing tool?
4. How does subjective norm influence the usage intention of Facebook as a digital marketing tool?
5. How does perceived behavioral control influence the usage intention of Facebook as a digital marketing tool?

Given the inferential questions, the following null hypotheses are postulated:

- a. H₀₁: There is no significant association between the perception factors (perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness) and the attitude towards the usage intention of Facebook as a digital marketing tool.
- b. H₀₂: There is no significant association between attitude and the intention to use Facebook as a digital marketing tool.
- c. H₀₃: There is no significant association between the subjective norm and the usage intention of Facebook as a digital marketing tool.
- d. H₀₄: There is no significant association between perceived behavioral control and the intention to use Facebook as a digital marketing tool.

METHODS

Research Design

The study utilized a correlational research approach. According to Curtis et al. (2015), such a research design aims at accurately identifying the association between changes in one variable and changes in one or more other variables. For the correlation design, the study sought to determine the significant effects of select factors on Frontrow International members' intention to use Facebook as a digital marketing tool by analyzing the TAM-TPB factors.



Sample and Sampling Technique

To gather the necessary data for the quantitative aspect, a total of 377 members from Frontrow International were asked to participate in a survey. Due to the organization's undisclosed number of members, the study utilized the default settings of Raosoft, with a margin of error of 5 percent and a confidence level of 95%. A snowball sampling approach was employed to complete the survey sample size.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a 5-point Likert scale survey questionnaire that asked respondents to rate their level of agreement on a scale of 1 to 5, which are 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). Moreover, this survey was divided into two (2) parts. The first part consisted of the respondents' personal information, such as their name, age, and affiliation with Frontrow International, to get the initial data or the demographic profile of the respondents.

The second part of the survey gathered detailed information about the study to analyze the data required for the result, which included answering questions on a five-point Likert scale. This part of the questionnaire was divided into six categories based on the influence of the following on the utilization of Facebook marketing: (I) PEOU, (II) PU, (III) AT, (IV) SN, (V) PBC, and (VI) BI. These categories under the second part of the questionnaire contained four (4) questions each. All in all, there were 27 questions in the survey questionnaire.

In checking the tool's validity, two experts in the field pertinent to the study's topic evaluated the measurability of the tool's content. After validation, the tool was used in a pilot study where 30 respondents were asked to answer the questionnaire. Moreover, the Likert scales' internal consistencies were tested by computing Cronbach's alpha using the collected pilot data. Since all scales yielded 0.7 coefficients, the tool's Likert scales are deemed reliable.

Data Gathering Procedure

Since the pandemic was still at its peak and many of the survey's target respondents lived in different places, the proponents conducted data collection through Google Forms. As a snowball sampling technique was utilized, the first respondent from Frontrow International was requested to distribute the Google Form link to other members of the organization. Similarly, those new respondents were also asked to distribute the link to other members until the determined sample size was met.

Data Analysis

The quantitative analysis was based mainly on the conceptual paradigm of the current study, the TAM-TPB model. The responses to the survey questionnaire about the factors influencing the intention to use Facebook as a marketing tool were gathered and tabulated. Due to the data being from a Likert-scale questionnaire, the study used Spearman's rank correlation coefficient as the statistical tool to analyze the association between the study's independent and dependent variables.

Ethical Considerations

The study's proponents ensured that the respondents were not put in an uncomfortable environment, putting their safety and comfort first. They guaranteed that the survey respondents gave their informed consent by informing them that they were participating in a study and were willing to supply the information needed for data collection. Also, the participants in the study were free to withdraw and were not forced to participate. Their privacy was secured after they completed the survey. Moreover, the researchers ensured that the findings from the data remained private and uncompromised and that there was no data manipulation in the study. Furthermore, the previous authors' contributions were acknowledged and mentioned appropriately in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 summarizes the survey respondents' demographic profile, including their age group and affiliation with Frontrow International. The same table shows that most respondents are 21 to 30 years old ($n = 250$) and work as distributors for Frontrow International ($n = 272$).

Table 1
Frontrow International Member Respondents' Demographic Profile

Demographic Indicators	Frequency (N = 377)	Percentage (%)
Age		
17 to 20 years old	38	10.1
21 to 30 years old	250	66.3
31 to 40 years old	78	20.7
41 to 50 years old	11	2.9
Affiliation to Frontrow International		
Distributor	272	72.1
Reseller	105	27.9

Intention to Use Facebook as a Digital Marketing Tool

Table 2 depicts the survey data results on the influence of TAM-TPB factors on the respondents' intention to use Facebook as a tool for marketing. The results imply that all TAM factors involved (including PEOU and PU) positively and significantly influence the select Frontrow





International member respondents' AT towards adopting Facebook as a marketing medium. Moreover, all TPB factors (AT, SN, and PBC) positively and significantly influence the same respondents' intention to use Facebook marketing.

Regarding PEOU, the correlation test results show that the coefficient is 0.368, with a p-value of <0.001. Since this p-value is lower than the 0.01 level of significance, it indicates a significant association between the two variables under study. Furthermore, with a correlation coefficient of 0.368, it can be construed that the PEOU correlates with the AT's usage intention of Facebook as a digital marketing tool. Hence, any increase in perceived ease of use will result in an increase in the attitude

toward using Facebook as a digital marketing tool in a weak manner. Given this finding, the null hypothesis is rejected, which is similar to the findings of Yasmin (2015).

As the factor PEOU refers to the online seller's view of the actual utilization of Facebook (Ajzen, 1991), it is similar to the finding of Yasmin (2015), which mentioned that the accessibility and usability of digital marketing are among the factors that contribute to all sales growth. The study revealed that the sellers' optimistic perception of the ease of use of Facebook led to an increase in their Facebook usage intentions. Theoretically, according to Yasmin (2015), this also enhances their sales.

Table 2

Factors Influencing the Intention of Frontrow International Member Respondents to Use Facebook as a Digital Marketing Tool

Independent Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation	p-value	Decision	Remark
1. Perceived Ease of Use (to Attitude)	0.368	Weak Positive	<0.001**	Reject Ho	Significant
2. Perceived Usefulness (to Attitude)	0.402	Weak Positive	<0.001**	Reject Ho	Significant
3. Attitude (to Behavioral Intention)	0.378	Weak Positive	<0.001**	Reject Ho	Significant
4. Subjective Norm (to Behavioral Intention)	0.427	Moderate Positive	<0.001**	Reject Ho	Significant
5. Perceived Behavioral Control (to Behavioral Intention)	0.348	Weak Positive	<0.001**	Reject Ho	Significant

Note. The symbol ** means that the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The interpretation of the correlation coefficient is based on the following: 1 - Perfect Relationship; ± 0.81 to ± 0.99 - Very Strong Positive/Negative; ± 0.61 to ± 0.80 - Strong Positive/Negative; ± 0.41 to ± 0.60 - Moderate Positive/Negative; ± 0.21 to ± 0.40 - Weak Positive/Negative; ± 0.01 to ± 0.20 - Negligible Positive/Negative; 0 - No relationship (Prion & Haerling, 2014).

In terms of PU, the correlation test results show that the coefficient is 0.402 with a p-value of <0.001. Since this p-value is less than the 0.01 level of significance, it implies that the variables under study have a significant correlation. Additionally, with a coefficient of 0.402, the PU has a weak positive correlation with AT and the usage intention of Facebook as a digital marketing tool. As a result, any increase in perceived usefulness will influence an increase in the attitude toward the use of Facebook as a digital marketing tool. This finding supports the results of Dwivedi et al. (2021), who observed that many firms today adopt social media as a marketing tool to both conduct their marketing efforts and extend their traditional marketing to maximize the growing number of users on the internet.

On AT-BI correlation, the resulting coefficient is 0.378, with a p-value of <0.001. Since the latter value is less than the 0.01 level of significance, it proves that the two variables under investigation have a significant relationship. Moreover, with a correlation coefficient of 0.378, AT has a weak positive relationship with the usage intention of Facebook as a digital marketing tool. In light of this finding, the null hypothesis is rejected and is consistent with the findings of Dahiya & Gayatri (2017). This finding implies that any improvement in the attitude of the respondents will lead to a weak improvement in the usage intention of Facebook as a digital marketing tool. Similar to the study by Harris and Dennis (2011) that highlighted the significance of shopping motivation, businesses must offer a way to inspire and connect with customers if they want to attract more consumers.

Moreover, SN and BI have a significant association, as shown by the correlation coefficient of 0.427 and the p-value of <0.001. In addition, with the resulting correlation coefficient, SU has a moderately positive relationship with the usage intention of Facebook as a digital marketing tool. In light of this finding, the null hypothesis is rejected. In summary, any increase in the respondents' subjective norm will only have a marginally positive impact on their desire to use Facebook as a digital marketing tool. The result is similar to the study of Dahiya and Gayatri (2017), which indicated a significant relationship between subjective norm and usage intention.

The results also suggest a significant correlation between PBC and BI, as shown by their correlation coefficient of 0.348 and p-value of less than 0.01 at the significance level. Furthermore, with this correlation coefficient, PBC has a weak positive relationship with the usage intention of Facebook as a digital marketing tool. Given this, the null hypothesis is rejected. These findings reveal that any change in the respondents' PBC will have a positive yet only marginal impact on their intention to use Facebook as a digital marketing tool. These survey results could be attributed to the study of Yasmin (2015), which states that the rise of a company's sales growth from digital marketing considers factors such as usability and accessibility. Thus, successful marketing could be measured through the perception of having good behavioral control over the digital marketing tool being used.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This research study seeks to examine Facebook's effectiveness as a digital marketing tool from the perspective of Frontrow International members. The findings in this study shed light on understanding how members of Frontrow International intend to adopt Facebook as a digital marketing tool for the growth of their businesses using the TAM and TPB frameworks. More specifically, below are the salient findings of the study:

The survey respondents, a preponderance of Frontrow International members, are mostly product distributors in the age group of 21–30 years old. The correlation test results show a positive influence of perception factors (PU and PEOU) regarding the AT of online sellers using Facebook as a digital marketing tool. The AT factor also has a definite influence on the usage intention of Facebook as a digital marketing tool. The SN factor has a moderate influence on the usage intention of businesses' desire to adopt Facebook as a digital marketing tool. There is a positive influence of PBC on businesses regarding the usability and accessibility to the usage intention of Facebook as a digital marketing tool.

Recommendations

Given the study's findings, business owners and sellers could guarantee the success of their business enterprise if they have a good perception of and behavioral control over the digital marketing platform they will be utilizing.

In considering a good digital marketing platform that can be a significant factor in growing a business enterprise, the researchers also recommend that business owners and sellers also consider the usability and accessibility of the platform in order to ensure its competitiveness in the market.

Moreover, based on the research findings, it is recommended that business owners and online sellers alike continue maximizing the use of Facebook marketing to improve their sales. To do that, they must devise a way to motivate and connect with their target consumers to purchase their products and build a sustainable relationship with them. This approach can result in attracting more customers, thereby increasing sales.

Lastly, this study focused only on gathering data from Frontrow International members and select individuals. The results of this study are incomplete representations of the effectiveness of Facebook digital marketing. The researchers suggest that a broader and more diverse sampling population be used in future studies in order to obtain more accurate and universal results.

IMPLICATIONS

In a nutshell, the study determines that all independent variables significantly and positively influence Frontrow International members' intention to adopt Facebook as a tool for marketing and reaching a wider audience for their product. Hence, this study concludes that as long as sellers consider Facebook a convenient, effective, and valuable marketing strategy for doing business, this digital platform will benefit them.

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Author(s)' Statements on Ethics and Conflict of Interest

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American Psychological Association (APA)	Villamor, E. J. S., Varila, K. A. S., Valdez, J. P. E., Guarino, P. A. C., Nucum, L. A. D., and Espinosa, J. P. (2023). Assessing Frontrow International Members' intention to use Facebook as a digital marketing tool: A correlational study. <i>International Journal of Academic and Practical Research</i> , 2(1), 77-84.
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