

DIMENSIONS AND IMPACT IN BUSINESS OF THE NEW APPROACHE IN MARKETING – DIGITALISATION AND VIRTUAL MARKET

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ABSTRACT

Digital marketing is of particular importance to all enterprises whether small or large and to any sector. In this period where drastic changes in lifestyle have taken place, it is difficult to find an enterprise or organization that does not apply digital marketing, in particular social media as a tool of digital marketing, in its daily activity. In Kosovo as well as in other countries of the Western Balkans, digital marketing and its elements are applied in various enterprises. Therefore, the impact of the application of digital marketing on sales growth, consumer behavior and many issues of business nature, are the main goals which are elaborated in this paper. These issues have aroused the curiosity of many scholars in this field as there is very little research on the application and effects of digital marketing and its elements in enterprises of developing countries such as Kosovo.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Social Media, Consumer, Kosovo, Sales Growth.

INTRODUCTION

There are two different types of market, able to more or less interact with each other, depending on the business being considered: physical market and online market. The communication techniques that have traditionally been used in marketing in the physical market are multiple, ranging from media such as radio, TV, newspapers (which are ideal for raising brand awareness), to elements of communication such as direct marketing and store promotion. On the other hand are internet based medias from websites to social media. Although traditional tools have been used to attract potential customers in the buying process, online communication and e-commerce strategies are multiple and increasingly used in business. Therefore, digital marketing presents opportunities for companies, especially in developing countries because it can be used by companies to increase business performance (Ukaj & Bibuljica, 2019).

Digital channel in marketing has become essential part of strategy of many companies. Nowadays, even for small business owner there is a very cheap and efficient way to market his/her products or services. Digital marketing has no boundaries. Company can use any devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, televisions, game consoles, digital billboards, and media such as social media, search engine optimization, videos, content, e-mail and lot more to promote company and its products and services. Digital marketing may succeed more if it considers user

needs as a top priority. Companies should create innovative customer experiences and specific strategies for media to identify the best path for driving up digital marketing performance (Yasmin et al., 2015; Mahmutović, 2021). Also Bretton (2015) estimates that for marketing as a business function, it is extremely important to adequately understand the concept of consumer experience, which is a consequence of high interaction between companies and consumers in the global market.

In modern world, companies have realized the importance of digital marketing. According to Gáti et al. (2018); Bazrkar et al. (2021), in order for businesses to be successful they will have to merge online with traditional methods for meeting the needs of customers more precisely. Introduction of new technologies has creating new business opportunities for marketers to manage their websites and achieve their business objectives. So, digital marketing is the use of technologies to help marketing activities in order to improve customer knowledge by matching their needs (Khan & Siddiqui, 2013).

According to Bloch & Segev (1996), the impact of digital economy on business can be improving direct marketing, transformation of organizations, redefining organizations. Improving direct marketing include: Product promotion, new sales channels, direct savings, customer service, corporate brand or image, personalization, advertising, ordering systems, markets. Example, the delivery of digitized products and services can be reduced in seconds. Distribution across international borders can also be significantly reduced. The transformation of organizations is based on the premise that rapid progress in the era of digital economy, forces companies to adapt quickly to new technologies and offers them an opportunity to experiment with new products, services and business models. People in organizations are forced to learn and adapt immediately. This adaptation process is followed by strategic and structural changes. At the same time, the very nature of the work needs to be transformed. In the digital economy workers need to be very flexible and very few will have secure jobs in the traditional sense.

There are many changes that will redefine organizations. Completely create new products and personalize existing ones. Such changes redefine the missions of organizations and how they function. Mass customization enables manufacturers to create products specific to each customer. Using the Web, customers can design or reconfigure products for themselves (t-shirts, furniture, jewelry, and even cars). The digital economy affects entire industries. This leads to the use of new business models based on the wide availability of information, such as electronic intermediaries. Other impacts include impact on manufacturing, finance and accounting, and on human resource management, training, and education. An interesting concept is that of virtual production. Cisco System operates 34 plants globally, 32 of which are owned by other companies (Cisco, 2001).

In this paper we will analyze the impact of digital marketing on the success of the organization. It should be noted that similar studies by researchers in this field have been considered. The main objective of this research is to analyze the use of digital marketing by organizations in Kosovo, especially social media as a marketing tool, and how much it has influenced the decision to buy online or when consumers have seen the product on social media and have made purchases at a nearby point of sale.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature related to the field of digital marketing includes many dimensions that are associated with this term. Terms such as e-marketing, online marketing, e-business or e-commerce are terms that fall within the scope of digital marketing. Digital marketing is about

marketing products and services through the use of digital technology, or the internet, but also other digital tools. There are various ways that companies use digital marketing to sell their products/services and meet customer needs and requirements (Ryu, 2013; Mostafa, 2014; Mazurek et al., 2019; Bartosik-Purgat, 2019; Ukaj et al., 2020).

According to Girchenko & Ovsianikova (2016); Ovčak Kos (2019) internet usage continues to explode worldwide, becoming an increasingly important source of competitive advantage in both B2C and B2B marketing, but of other forms anyway. Digital marketing has a much wider space because it also covers the offline audience, using for this audience different digital channels from the everyday environment of people. Ranging from mobile phones and downloaded applications, tablets and personal computers, digital television, outdoor advertising on LCD screens, POS and self-service terminals, and a wide variety of other digital tools, which can be used for sharing of marketing information. Authors such as Watson et al. (2002), Sheth & Sharma (2005) claims that the main advantages of digital marketing in today's conditions are: interactivity, lack of territorial boundaries, easy access to resources, attracting the target audience to the processes, and the possibility of operational evaluation of the promotional campaign and its administration in real time.

On the other hand according to Floredu & Cabiddu (2016); Gvili & Levy (2018); Podvorica & Ukaj (2019) social media can be a great tool for companies as they are platforms that can directly address existing and potential customers, share content, engage in conversations, build trust, reach more people, increase impact and understand good customers. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010); Chaffey (2011) claim that these media are being used for online shopping, to promote services or products or even to inform customers about the innovations of the organization/ business.

Also Kovač & Žabkar (2020) claim that the Social Media (MS) concept has been at the top of the agenda for many business executives. Decision makers, as well as consultants, try to identify ways in which firms can take advantage of applications such as Wikipedia, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc. Mohammadian & Mohammadreza (2010) emphasise that the use of social networks more and more is a growing trend, facing their advantages and disadvantages. Therefore the most important key in today's competitive world is the use of social media by customers and businesses. Among the most popular tools to show the cost effectiveness of using digital media in business are: Google Analytics, HootSuite, Socialbakers Analytics, LocalResponse, Advanced Web Ranking, Buffer, Facebook Insights, SERPS, Screaming Frog SEO Spider Tool, Open Site Explorer, Searchmetrics. (Jones, 2009).

Also, mobile marketing is a new marketing channel which was created during the evolution of e-commerce. Therefore, mobile promotion is a part of mobile marketing and is one of its most important activities (Ninčević et al., 2012). With the advent of smartphones the way of buying goods online (e-commerce) has changed. Muriuki (2006) claims that such devices also strongly influence the management of the business process. These devices include various applications that offer different services, promoting mobility, efficiency and flexibility for device users in both areas of life and business.. Different theorists define different types of social media, and one of the fundamental divisions is: Social networking services, Blogs, Microblogs, Media sharing sites, Social bookmarking and voting sites, Internet forums, Review sites, Virtual worlds (Zarrella, 2009; Erkan & Evans, 2016).

Widespread adoption of wireless and mobile networks creates an opportunity to use new applications on the internet. The way e-commerce through wireless devices is called mobile commerce, m-commerce, m-business and pervasive computing. According to Turban et al.

(2002) the main characteristics of trade m are: mobility, wide reach, ubiquity, convenience, localization of products and services. The most representative trade m applications include: online stocks, trading, online banking, micropayments, online gambling, ordering and service, online auctions, messaging systems, B2B.

Bala & Verma (2018) claim that the most important aspect of Digital Marketing is Web Analytics. Essentially, Web Analytics helps enterprises to collect, measure, understand, analyze, plan, report and predict the web activities for business. Web Analytics should not be confused with Web Statistics. As opposed to simple reporting, Web Analytics gives enterprises analyses and different angles to ponder vis-a-vis business. Some of the important Web Analytics tools are Google Analytics, Spring Metrics, Woopra, Clicky, Mint and Chartbeat. It should be noted that there is little literature on digital marketing and its impact on enterprises in developing countries. Therefore the literature and findings of this paper will contribute tremendously to this so important field of business.

EMPIRICAL DATA AND ANALYSIS

Kosovo has a small number of enterprises, due to its underdeveloped economy. Therefore the number of Kosovar enterprises is limited, especially the manufacturing ones (Jusufi et al. 2020). To achieve empirical and measurable results, a quantitative approach has been used in this paper. We used the Kosova Ministry of Trade database to select enterprises through the random method. The enterprises are from the city of Prishtina, Peja, Gjilan and Ferizaj. There is a strong disparity among SMEs, so we used a stratified sampling method, setting the enterprise size as the stratum. The survey for this study was carried out in the three-month period June 2021-August 2021. The software for analysing the data was the statistical program SPSS, which is widely used in social science.

The respondents were the owners or managers of Kosovo enterprises, who were engaged in the digital marketing activities of these enterprises. The number of enterprises analyzed is 67. The structured questionnaire was used in this study for data collection. The reason for using the questionnaire in research is that the questionnaires are used quite a lot in business analysis and marketing ones (Hox & Boeije, 2005; Saunders et al., 2009; Berisha-Qehaja & Kutllovci, 2020).

In our paper, we will test the following hypothesis:

H1: Digital marketing has an impact on increasing sales and the number of customers of Kosovar enterprises

H2: The components of digital marketing have a positive impact on the business of Kosovar enterprises

H3: There is a significant difference between small, medium and large enterprises in the use of social media as a marketing tool.

H4: There is no significant difference between trade, production and service sectors in the use of social media as a marketing tool.

H5: There is a significant difference in the use of social media as a marketing tools based on the educational background of managers/owners.

Following descriptive statistics related to enterprise characteristics, the vast majority of surveyed enterprises responded that they make extensive use of digital marketing in their business activities. Only 4 of the surveyed enterprises responded that they do not use digital

marketing extensively in business activities. Enterprises have been asked about the reasons for using digital marketing. 42 companies responded that they use digital marketing to communicate with customers, 35 companies to sell products, 10 companies to evaluate the company by customers, while 13 companies to do the promotion of their products.

Companies were asked what are the main goals in using digital marketing, and 2 companies stated Understanding customer needs, 2 companies understanding how the brand is perceived, 1 company stated that competition analysis, 23 companies said product delivery and offers, 22 companies Sales growth, 6 companies Advertising and promotion exposure, 1 company stated that the main goal is a broader understanding of customer shopping experiences, 1 company understanding customer loyalty / loyalty, and 2 expansion companies of product development data.

Enterprises were also asked when they started using digital marketing in enterprises, and 3 enterprises responded in more than 5 years, 22 enterprises 5 years, 45 enterprises 2 years, and 0 enterprises responded in less than 1 year. Enterprises were asked how active they are in using Digital Marketing and 18 enterprises answered that they use it at least once a week, 24 enterprises use it every day, 12 enterprises stated that they use it from time to time without planning while 6 enterprises use only when they have innovations. The surveyed companies were asked if they have a person responsible for managing digital marketing in their business, and 38 companies said Yes, while 22 companies said No. The companies were asked if they think that most organizations in Kosovo have problems in recognizing the needs of customers, and 40 companies answered that they agree Yes, while another 20 stated that they do not agree.

Whether it is easier to reach consumers and larger audiences through digital marketing, 41 companies have stated that they fully agree with this, 19 companies agree, 0 do not agree, and 0 companies do not know this. Enterprises have been asked whether consumer behavior is much easier to identify in digital marketing, as consumers have the opportunity to send their comments on the company's products or services, and 41 enterprises have stated they fully agree, 17 enterprises agree, 2 enterprises do not agree, while 0 companies have stated that they do not know. Enterprises were asked whether they have better understood consumer needs / desires or consumer behavior, through digital marketing, and 43 enterprises stated that they fully agree with this, 15 enterprises agree, 2 enterprises disagree, and 0 enterprises are stating that they do not know this in Table 1.

Variables	Mean	S.Deviation	Median
Use of digital marketing	2.24	0.91	4.0
Reasons to use digital marketing	2.46	0.85	4.0
The main goals in the use of digital marketing	2.79	0.96	4.0
When you started using digital marketing for your enterprise	2.03	0.94	4.0
How active are you in using Digital Marketing	2.41	0.83	5.0
Do you have a person responsible for managing digital marketing in your business	2.19	0.89	4.0
Do you agree that most organizations in Kosovo have problems in recognizing the needs of consumers?	2.88	0.36	4.0
Through digital marketing we find it easier to reach larger customers and audiences	2.96	0.58	4.0
Consumer behavior is much easier to identify in digital marketing	2.82	0.55	5.0
Through digital marketing we have come to better understand consumer behavior.	2.09	0.78	4.0

Which of the following tools do you use most for digital marketing?	3.11	0.66	5.0
What is the budget allocated by your company for investments in digital marketing during a year?	3.02	0.81	4.0
Are you planning a separate budget for social media marketing activities?	2.99	0.73	2.0
Digital marketing is less costly compared to traditional marketing?	2.79	0.61	2.0
In cases where we use digital marketing we notice that we have increased business sales	2.68	0.81	2.0
Do you think that investing in social media has benefited you?	2.22	0.98	2.0
The transition from traditional to digital marketing has made it easier to achieve the objectives of our company's marketing strategy	2.34	0.37	4.0

Source: Authors

Among other things, companies were asked which of the tools they use the most for digital marketing, where 10 companies claimed to use the website, 5 companies email, 34 companies social platforms, 0 SEO companies, 5 mobile device companies, 6 companies display advertising, 0 enterprises Analytical platforms, 0 enterprises content marketing. The companies were asked how much is the budget allocated for investments in digital marketing during a year, and 31 companies said it is 1000 euros, 14 companies 1000-2000 euros, while 15 companies stated that the budget allocated is over 2000 euros. Enterprises were also asked if they are planning a separate budget for marketing activities on social networks, and 56 enterprises answered that they are planning, while 4 enterprises answered that No.

Enterprises have been asked whether digital marketing is less costly compared to traditional marketing, and 45 companies have stated that they fully agree with this, 15 companies have stated that they agree, 0 companies do not agree, and 0 companies do not have an opinion on this issue. Companies are asked if in the cases when they use digital marketing do they notice that they have increased sales and 45 companies have stated that they fully agree with this, 15 companies have stated that they agree, 0 companies do not agree, and 0 companies do not have an opinion on this issue. Based on these data, it can be said that digital marketing has a positive impact on increasing the sales of Kosovar enterprises and also on the growth and expansion of the customer network in the market. So the first hypothesis is correct.

The enterprises were asked whether they think that investing in social media has brought benefits, and 40 enterprises have stated that the investment has brought profit, 15 enterprises have stated that the investment has brought a good image, 5 enterprises have stated that the investment has enabled increased competition. The companies were asked whether the transition from traditional to digital marketing has made it easier for them to achieve the objectives of the company's marketing strategy and 45 companies fully agreed with this while 15 companies only agreed. It can also be concluded that the components of digital marketing have a positive impact on the aspects of doing business of Kosovar enterprises. The more these components are used digital marketing components the more successful these companies will be in the market. So the second hypothesis can be proved to be correct.

Since social media is one of the key elements of digital marketing, in this part of the analysis we will focus on using social media as a marketing tool. From the table below it can be understood that of all the social media, facebook is mostly used as a marketing tool by analyzed companies in Table 2.

Table 2	
THE USAGE RATE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TYPES AS MARKETING TOOLS IN KOSOVAN ENTERPRISES	
Social media types	Usage rate

Facebook	43
Twitter	11
Instagram	9
LinkedIn	6
Snapchat	2

Source: Authors

This shows that Kosovar companies use a lot of social media in the realization of their marketing activities. These statistics show that Kosovar companies must design their digital marketing strategies in the terms and circumstances of Facebook. While the table below shows the correlation between the types of social media which are used by these enterprises as a digital marketing tool in Table 3.

Social media type	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	LinkedIn	Snapchat
Facebook	1.00				
Twitter	0.313**	1.00			
Instagram	0.342**	0.301**	1.00		
LinkedIn	0.229**	0.273**	0.239**	1.00	
Snapchat	0.081	0.243**	0.125*	0.164**	1.00

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors

The above statistics show that in most cases there is a positive correlation between these media, and this correlation is significant except in the case of Facebook and Snapchat. So the connection between them is not significant. To see if there is a statistical difference in terms of enterprise size in using social media as a marketing tool, the Kruskal Wallis Test was used.

Table 4. Social media types usage by enterprise size

Test Statistic (Kruskal Wallis Test and Grouping Variable: Social media types)			
	Small enterprises	Medium enterprises	Large enterprises
Chi-Square	0.543	3.861	0.061
Asymp. Sig.	0.455	0.049*	0.853
*p < 0.05			

Source: Authors

The results of this test show that there is a statistical difference between medium and large enterprises which has the value $p = 0.049$, whereas there is no difference between other enterprises, namely those small and medium in Table 4. The following table presents statistical results which show the use of social media types by enterprise size which are analyzed in this paper. According to this it can be said that there is a significant difference between small, medium and large enterprises in the use of social media as a marketing tool. So the third hypothesis of this research is supported by the obtained statistics.

Test Statistic (Kruskal Wallis Test and Grouping Variable: Enterprise size)

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	LinkedIn	Snapchat
Chi-Square	8.294	7.062	22.219	5.577	1.467
Asymp. Sig.	0.014*	0.027*	0.000***	0.063	0.476
*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.000					

Source: Authors

As can be understood from the above statistics, only the data related to the use of LinkedIn and Snapchat are not significant, while the data for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are significant in Table 5. So there is a marked difference in the use of these platforms according to the sizes of enterprises.

Table 6			
SOCIAL MEDIA TYPES USAGE CLASSIFIED BY SECTORS			
Test Statistic: Kruskal Wallis Test and Grouping Variable: Social media types			
	Production	Trade	Services
Chi-Square	0.203	1.775	0.923
Asymp. Sig.	0.657	0.186	0.339

*p < 0.05

Source: Authors

The table 6 above shows that there is no statistical difference in the use of social media based on economic sectors. So social media is used almost equally by each enterprise of different economic sectors. The following table presents the statistics of differences in the use of each social media, separately by economic sectors. According to this, it can be said that there is no significant difference between trade, production and service sectors in the use of social media as a marketing tool. So, the fourth hypothesis of this research is supported by the obtained statistics.

Table 7					
THE USE OF EACH SOCIAL MEDIA TYPE CLASSIFIED BY SECTORS					
Test Statistic: Kruskal Wallis Test and Grouping Variable: sectors					
	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	LinkedIn	Snapchat
Chi-Square	3.102	1.867	1.993	1.224	2.046
Asymp. Sig.	0.041*	0.392	0.369	0.542	0.354
*p < 0.05;					

Source: Authors

Statistics show that there is a significant difference in the use of facebook based on economic sectors in Table 7. So the use of facebook differs in terms of economic sectors. The table below shows the use of social media as a digital marketing tool according to the level of education of the managers or owners of the analyzed enterprises.

Table 8			
SOCIAL MEDIA TYPES USAGE CLASSIFIED BY MANAGERS'/OWNERS' EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND			
Test Statistic: Kruskal Wallis Test and Grouping Variable: Social media types			
	Secondary school	Bachelor	Master
Chi-Square	0.405	3.246	2.988
Asymp. Sig.	0.523	0.069	0.079

Source: Authors

Statistical results show that managers with secondary education use social media more as a tool of digital marketing than other managers with different levels of education. Nevertheless, it can be argued that there is no statistical significance in terms of educating managers on the use of social media as a tool of digital marketing in Table 8. Therefore, it can be said that there is no a significant difference in the use of social media as a marketing tools based on the educational background of managers/owners. The fifth hypothesis of this research is not supported by the obtained statistics. The following table provides statistics regarding the use of each social media types according to managers'/owners' educational background.

Test Statistic: Kruskal Wallis Test and Grouping Variable: Educational background					
	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	LinkedIn	Snapchat
Chi-Square	1.513	1.158	0.838	1.603	0.237
Asymp. Sig.	0.472	0.554	0.646	0.449	0.879

Source: Authors

As can be seen from the table 9, none of the figures represent statistical significance. LinkedIn and Facebook are used more compared to other platforms, in terms of the level of education of the managers and owners of these companies.

CONCLUSION

Kosovar companies that conduct their activities in the online environment are still in the initial stage. Despite this, a large number of Kosovar companies from all sectors are developing their activities in the digital environment and they are developing day by day in step with global trends. In particular, the new circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic have forced all companies to plan and conduct all business activities in the digital environment, specifically through digital marketing tools.

From the results of this research it can be concluded that the use of digital marketing tools by Kosovar enterprises is an essential element for their survival in the market because statistics show that a majority of these enterprises use digital marketing tools not only for communication with consumers. online, but also for the sale of their products and services. In addition, these statistics show that most Kosovar enterprises in the long run use digital marketing in the realization of their business activities.

Also, a large number of surveyed enterprises stated that they have a responsible manager engaged in the implementation of digital marketing activities. This is an indication that most Kosovar enterprises have specific strategies for carrying out their marketing activities in the digital environment. Simply all these activities, whether through social media or other means of digital marketing, are carried out in a well-detailed and planned way.

The findings of this research show that a significant number of these enterprises share significant budgets for digital marketing activities, and also a significant number of enterprises create separate budgets for digital marketing activities. Most importantly, a significant number of companies have stated that digital marketing activities have impacted their sales growth. This shows that digital marketing has given the desired results in Kosovo enterprises. This is a significant indicator for all enterprises in Kosovo, especially for those who do not yet apply the elements of digital marketing in their business activities. These results represent important

indicators regarding the use of elements of digital marketing and social media in particular because current circumstances around the world impose the creation of competitive strategies based on digital marketing.

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