

## Occidental Mindoro's emerging photography and videography services: The role of social media marketing as a promotional tool

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### ***Abstract***

Photographers and videographers in Occidental Mindoro relied heavily on social media marketing to spread the word about their work. Due to the province's remote location, social media was used as the primary means of promotion. This research, which used a qualitative case study approach, looked into the challenges faced by new photography and videography businesses in the province. The research was conducted with the express objective of learning more about social media marketing and its potential as a promotional tool. Based on the findings of this research, SMM appears to be an indispensable tool for the continued success of these businesses. Small business owners use SMM because it helps them save money, reaches more people, is easier to enter the market, and makes it simpler to offer new products and features. In addition, the study found that there are three main drawbacks connected with SMM: the ease with which businesses can be duplicated; trust, privacy, and security difficulties; and unfavorable feedback. These involve consistency, content marketing, image-centric content, e-WOM, social media storytelling and personal selling, automated response, boosting, optimizing the timing in posting, becoming familiar with community jargon, and not using a personal account in transactions; these are the most effective SMM strategies and practices that participants are using for the business in building brand identity, engaging with customers, and increasing sales productivity. If small businesses in the province can learn to employ logical and effective social media marketing methods, the results of this study could help increase their success rates and contribute to societal change.

***Keywords:*** social media marketing, advertising, small business, marketing, promotion

## **Occidental Mindoro's emerging photography and videography services: The role of social media marketing as a promotional tool**

### **1. Introduction**

Social media are interactive technologies that allow users to create and share content online, including information, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression.<sup>38</sup> Among Southeast Asian nations, the Philippines has one of the most active online communities. With an annual growth rate of 3.4% in 2021–2022, there will be approximately 93.8 million active social media users in our nation on a monthly basis by the end of 2023—equivalent to 82.4% of the entire population. These social media users each have an average of 8.5 accounts and spend 4.1 hours per day on social media (Consumer Research, 2023).

Businesses took this opportunity to use social media platforms as a way to expand their marketing campaigns and reach a wider and more significant consumer base. Numerous businesses have begun figuring out the best ways to use social media in order to forge lasting connections and open lines of communication with users in order to foster warm and intimate relationships and build online brand communities (Ibrahim and Aljarah, 2018). Social media gives businesses a quicker, more direct, and more cost-effective way than more conventional communication methods to interact with customers. Social media marketing (SMM), also referred to as digital marketing, is the online commercial use of social media to advertise products or events and draw in potential customers.

Chi (2011) provides a definition of social media marketing as the interaction between businesses and consumers through the use of a personal channel and currency for user-centered networking and social interaction. It is also a procedure that enables people to advertise their websites, goods, or services through online social networks, as well as to connect with and use a much larger community than would have been possible through conventional advertising channels (Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2011). On a strategic level, social media marketing entails managing a marketing campaign, governance, determining the scope (whether to use social media more actively or passively), and establishing the organization's desired social media culture and tone. When using social media marketing, businesses can use user-generated content, or "earned media," such as online comments and product reviews instead of using prepared advertising copy from marketers (Kornpariphan, 2016). Social media marketing is therefore suitable not only for large organizations but for both small and medium-sized businesses as well (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Photography and videography services is one of the emerging small businesses in Occidental Mindoro. According to Pine and Gillmore (2020), the photography and videography industry is a special one with insights into opportunities aimed at building competitive advantages. The photography and videography service sector are having an increasing direct and indirect economic impact on the nation.<sup>44</sup> Regardless of this, there is less of a demand for photography and videography because there are so many alternatives available. The potential client may choose to purchase their own simple-to-use professional camera or even ask a friend to take their photos for them for free rather than using their services. Anyone can call themselves a professional photographer with some training and a small investment, so the supply is greater than the demand (Kornpariphan, 2016). Due to the high level of competition, many owners of photography and videography businesses lower their prices in an effort to compete with one another. It is safe to say that business opportunities in photography and videography are dwindling. According to a 2011 study by Adler and Sillars, another problem this business sector faces is that it is difficult to become well-known because one's reputation only spreads by word of mouth. As a result, by heavily promoting their products and services online, e-businesses have altered the landscape of the photography and videography industries.

In 2013, Photoshelter and Agency Access surveyed 340 American users who had used photography services

in the country to learn how customers access and evaluate those services. The findings showed that 42.1% of users found photographers via search engines. The survey also found that using social media was the most crucial element that enabled customers to easily and quickly access photography businesses and services (Photoshelter & Agency Access, 2013).

The owners of photography and videography businesses in Occidental Mindoro heavily utilized social media marketing as one of their promotional tools. Due to the province's challenging distance from its customers, social media became their primary means of communication for marketing their business. These businesses employ customer engagement through social media because it is the most cost-effective medium for marketing and suitable for them as small business that may not have a large marketing budget (Hassan et al., 2015). Creating a successful social media marketing strategy was cited by 62% of marketers as one of the biggest challenges facing businesses, according to Oyza and Agwu's (2016) research. Some business owners do not fully grasp how to use social media marketing to further advance the goals of their business. As a result, the researcher was interested in learning about the emerging photography and videography businesses in Occidental Mindoro's experiences using social media marketing as their main promotional tool as well as the SMM techniques they employed to develop their brands, engage with customers, and increase sales.

The main motivation behind the researcher's decision to carry out the study is inquisitiveness. The researcher believes that Occidental Mindoro is a competitive market for small photography and videography businesses. These businesses can contribute to a potential rise in the success rate of existing and future small businesses in the province that could have an impact on social change if these businesses learn how to use sensible and effective social media marketing strategies.

**Research Objectives** - This marketing study was done to find out how small photography and videography business owners in Occidental Mindoro experienced using social media marketing (SMM) as their main means for promoting their products and services. The following are more specifically the study's research objectives: To be aware of the challenges that are faced by owners of photography and videography businesses when promoting their goods and services. To highlight the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing social media marketing as a viable promotional strategy for emerging photography and videography enterprises to identify the various social media marketing techniques that the business employs in terms of; brand identity, customer relationships, and sales productivity.

**Significance of the Study** - Although there have been few studies on this business sector, photography and videography businesses are crucial to the expanding economy of Occidental Mindoro. The purpose of the study was to learn about the experiences of business owners in the photography and videography industries with social media marketing. This study could be an important step in distributing knowledge about potential opportunities for small businesses to use social media marketing as a successful marketing tool. The following industries stand to gain the most from this study; the Government of Occidental Mindoro – referring to that will give them a more comprehensive understanding of the potential courses of action that could be taken to support the province's small photography and videography businesses. Small business owners – the most significant outcome of this study will probably be a thorough understanding of how to use SMM. They will learn more through this study about the opportunities and potential problems they may run into when using SMM to market their business.

Start-up enthusiasts – this study will be useful to those who intend to start small businesses of any kind, including those in the photography and videography industries. This study might help them establish goals for their startups and help them comprehend the value of social media in business. Researcher – this study is a requirement for the researcher's subject, Management of Small Business, in the Master of Business Administration program at Divine Word College of San Jose Graduate School. By completing this study, the researcher was able to fully explore the topic. The conduct of the research gave the researcher the chance to utilize his knowledge in marketing and advertising management to use and impart it to others. Future

researchers – for those researching related topics across various business industries, the information from this study will be helpful. Additionally, this can serve as a resource on the subject of starting a small photography and videography business as well as a guide for creating a comprehensive and in-depth social media marketing strategy.

**Scope and Delimitation of the Study** - The experiences of photography and videography business owners using social media marketing as their main promotional tool and its importance to the business were the primary focus of this study. The researcher recognized the various social media marketing strategies employed by the business in order to develop its brand identity, customer relationships, and sales productivity. The research was qualitative utilizing a case study approach. Participants in the study had to be residents of Occidental Mindoro and have a small photography or videography business that has been operating for no more than ten years. Following the guidelines provided by the National Government Portal, gov. ph, PSA classifies a business as small if it has 10-99 employees. In addition, the Magna Carta for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) classifies a business as small if its asset size is between Php 3,000,001 and Php 15,000,000. In-depth interviews, general observations, and library research were also used as data collection tools. The study's findings were evaluated and supported by a review of relevant research, dissertations, and related literature. The study did not provide a solution for the issues encountered by business owners, but it did aim to conduct interviews and provide suggestions on how to enhance their social media marketing strategies. All of the research's conclusions were valid at the time it was conducted, and recommendations will be based on the conclusive study findings..

## 2. Methodology

**Research Design** - In order to conduct a thorough, in-depth study and analysis of the experiences of photography and videography business owners, this study applied the qualitative research method and a case study approach. A researcher can carefully examine the data within a particular context using the case study method. A case study method typically chooses a small geographic area or a very small group of people as the study's subjects. In their purest form, case studies explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomena through in-depth contextual analysis of a small number of circumstances or events and their connections (Zainal, 2017). Specifically, the researcher used a combination of interpretative and evaluative case studies. The researcher aimed to interpret data by developing conceptual categories to support and/or challenge the assumptions made about the topic with the help of secondary resources such as reviewing available literature and studies. In addition, the researcher went further by adding judgment to the phenomena found in the data.

**Respondents of the Study** - Through in-depth interviews, this study used the interpretative and evaluative case study approach to learn about the experiences of business owners in the photography and videography industries who use social media marketing as a promotional tool. Five participants who ran small photography and videography businesses and took part in in-depth interviews made up the study's sample. The researcher chose three digital marketing experts and conducted in-depth interviews with them in order to test the validity of the information gathered from the five business owners. The researcher's expert judgment was used to select each participant.

**Sampling Technique** - The study employed a non-probability sampling method that combined criterion and purposive sampling techniques. Based on the expert opinion of the researcher regarding a suitable sample characteristic, samples were chosen. In a nutshell, research samples are people who were willing to participate in the data collection process and were chosen based on the researcher's predetermined criteria; Criteria in the selection of participants: (1) Business Owners, Residents of Occidental Mindoro; Male and/or female; Owner of small photography and videography business with accordance to Magna Carta for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs); Operating the business no more than 10 years; (2) Digital marketing specialists; Male and/or female; Bachelor's degree holder in marketing, or any other related field; 2+ years of direct hands-on experience executing, running, and managing digital display campaigns and SEM campaigns. Residing

anywhere in the Philippines

**Research Instrument** - To develop a thorough understanding of phenomena, triangulation is the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research (Carter et al., 2014). Triangulation has also been considered a qualitative research technique to test validity by bringing together data from various sources. To acquire data for this study, in-depth interviews with business owners and digital marketing specialists were conducted. A planned face-to-face dialogue between two persons, one of whom, the interviewer, asks questions to elicit information, and the other, the interviewee or responders, gives the information requested, is what Abdul (2017) defines as an interview. More crucially, an interview-type instrument's adaptability enables on-the-spot change in order to get the needed data. The researcher will use a semi-standardized interview for this study (Abdul, 2017), a style of interview in which the interviewer is permitted to go into minor details as they see fit while being obligated to ask a set of particular major topics.

**Data Gathering Procedure** - Five owners of businesses that provide photography and videography services were interviewed in-depth as part of the primary data collection process. The researcher invited business owners to participate in the study by sending them a letter of intent, and they were then scheduled for interviews according to their availability. Because it is difficult for the researcher to interview people in person due to distance, each interview was conducted virtually using Google Meet. The researcher decodes concepts after conducting in-depth interviews with business owners and develops a new set of interview questions. To confirm the primary information gathered, the researcher conducted a second round of interviews with three experts in digital marketing. The same process was carried out virtually. In order to clarify some of the ambiguous findings from the two sets of interviews, research was done into relevant studies and literature. This was done in order to evaluate and/or support the study's concepts by comparing the results of related studies.

**Data Analysis Technique** - This case study-based qualitative study used thematic analysis to break down the data because it tended to show consistent patterns that were related to the time period. The most suitable method for any study that aims to discover using interpretations is thought to be thematic analysis. It adds a methodical component to data analysis. It enables the researcher to link a frequency analysis of a theme to a content analysis of the entire text. This will add precision and complexity and strengthen the overall meaning of the research. Qualitative research necessitates comprehending and gathering various elements and data. The thematic analysis offers a chance to comprehend any issue's potential from a wider perspective (Marks and Yardley 2004). The researcher compared the relationships between concepts with the replicated data using thematic analysis to pinpoint these relationships precisely. By using thematic analysis, it was possible to compare the various concepts and opinions of the participants with the data that was collected in various contexts in the study. Any interpretation is open to possibility. The researcher connected different participant concepts and opinions using thematic analysis, comparing them to data from related studies that had been collected in various situations and at various times. As a result, the process of thematic analysis offers a thorough method for the researcher to find a lot of connections between the developing themes and the entire set of data.

### **3. Results and Discussions**

#### *3.1 Motives for Starting the Business*

The researcher conducted interviews with five individuals who run businesses in the field of photography and videography. Among the participants were three individuals who can be considered pioneers in the industry, having established their businesses for a significant period of time, while the remaining two participants were relatively fresh entrants to the field. The motives of these entrepreneurs are not the same. Each entrepreneur has different needs and, by means of that, different motivations for running a certain business. Nevertheless, according to Desai (2009), entrepreneurs tend to initially perceive opportunities in an informal manner and subsequently formalize them once they have derived substantial benefits from them. This phenomenon is

predominantly observed in developing nations, where the local market experiences rapid expansion, thereby creating favorable conditions for entrepreneurial endeavors and business ventures. There exist multiple rationales underlying the decision of these entrepreneurs to establish enterprises of this nature. The causes can be enumerated as follows:

**Financial Ambition** - The level of competition within the photography and videography sector in Occidental Mindoro is rather low. These entrepreneurs perceived this circumstance as a lucrative opportunity for generating cash with relative ease. Based on the market prediction conducted by Statista Research (2021), it is anticipated that the revenue generated from photography activities in the Philippines would reach an estimated value of around 66.3 million U.S. Dollars by the year 2024. Based on the provided forecast, it is apparent that this particular business demonstrates a favorable investment opportunity.

**Pursue their passion** - The province of Occidental Mindoro provides a comprehensive package of photography and videography services of high quality. These entrepreneurs have a high level of self-assurance and possess distinctive expertise, enabling them to discern the valuable contributions they can make. Their engagement in the business originates from their personal interest and they possess aptitudes that are directly applicable to its operations. The aforementioned motive aligns with the findings of Hefer et al. (2015), which indicated that a majority of small business owners in KwaZulu Natal initiated their enterprises as a result of their aspiration to develop a business idea (85%) and their possession of the necessary business skills (81.58%). Numerous studies have examined the drivers of entrepreneurship and found significant cross-national convergence. In the US, UK, and Australia, entrepreneurial incentives were studied (Smith, 2007). 50% of people were driven by financial desire or a company idea. 44% took advantage of market opportunities. 36% were dissatisfied with huge firms' operations. 15% of business owners said their past employers did not offer enough opportunities. 1% of participants inherited a family business.

**Business Adversities** - Photography and videography of limited-scale small businesses frequently encounter an abundance of challenges in their day-to-day business activities. The data derived from the conducted interviews underwent analysis, leading to the identification of four key challenges encountered by these organizations and the approaches they employed to address them. The aforementioned problems can have a substantial impact on an individual's capacity to flourish and achieve success within a competitive market.

### 3.2 Challenges in Promoting the Business

Based on empirical findings, it has been shown that a significant proportion, specifically 47%, of small business proprietors undertake the responsibility of managing their marketing endeavors independently. These individuals encounter challenges in accurately monitoring their return on investment, hence impeding their ability to ascertain the efficacy of their marketing initiatives. Equipment and material costs are one of the biggest problems of running a photography and videography business. High-quality cameras cost a lot, ensuring high-quality outputs. Reporter (2015) found that entrepreneurs must research and budget intelligently to get the best equipment. You can afford better resources as your company grows. However, a loan or external investment may be wise during startup. This study supports LinkedIn's collaborative photography article, which suggests prudent budgeting, investing in high-quality equipment that matches one's style and needs, and exploring film and development cost-saving measures. Purchase in bulk or develop at home. During the initial year or two of operation, a business owner may be the only senior-level employee, making management coordination and organization difficult. Occidental Mindoro photographers and videographers have a wide range of artistic talents but limited managerial skills due to their limited experience.

Ineffective management practices make it hard for entrepreneurs to interact with like-minded business owners. This builds solidarity that can help entrepreneurs through tough times. Small entrepreneurs often struggle to connect because of Occidental Mindoro's geography. Pasquale Iovinella, founder of Pasquale Iovinella Neckties, believes networking is important not only for growing a business's customer base but also for

connecting small business owners with other entrepreneurs and discussing various business management topics. Networking helps generate new ideas, solve problems, do market research, and more. Entrepreneurs sometimes face challenges when it comes to educating customers about their pricing models, package options, and products while also promoting their small-scale photography and videography enterprises. The demand for photography services and goods is influenced by customers' price sensitivity. In brief, small business entrepreneurs in the photography and videography industry face several problems. These include the acquisition of necessary equipment and supplies, inadequate management skills, the struggle to create past relationships, and the need to educate customers about pricing, packages, and products.

**Challenges in Building Brand Identity** - The process of establishing small businesses within the competitive landscape of established brands requires a significant investment of time. Moreover, the absence of a well-established brand might lead to a lack of sustainability in your business. The brand instills a sense of trust among customers (Collins, n.d). The primary reason for the failure of numerous small firms is their inability to establish and cultivate trust among their stakeholders. The initial years can be defined by a sense of fear and apprehension. The significance of branding and marketing throughout the early stages is thus underscored. Branding plays a pivotal role in facilitating the growth and expansion of small enterprises. As a small business owner, it is advisable for you to utilize this tool. There are numerous problems that one may encounter in the process. In accordance with the establishment of brand identity, rising photography and videography enterprises in Occidental Mindoro face challenges in maintaining consistency not just in terms of brand elements, but particularly in fulfilling their brand promise. Occasionally, the products generated by the firm exhibit inconsistencies in relation to its operations and cultural aspects. The entrepreneurs demonstrate a lack of awareness regarding market advancements and the current endeavors of their competitors. Additionally, businesses fail to monitor the latest market trends within their specific industry area and the corresponding strategies employed by their competitors in response to these trends. The business now lacks intentions to modify its marketing approach, a circumstance that contributes to the deterioration of its reputation and the subsequent decline in client engagement with the business.

**Challenges in Customer Engagement** - The potential for success of small photography and videography businesses in Occidental Mindoro is directly influenced by the quality of customer experience. Based on the findings of Salesforce's research, a significant majority of customers, specifically 80%, assert that the experiences offered by a business have equal importance to them as its products and services. According to Linney (2022), brands and organizations, irrespective of their size and structure, frequently encounter issues pertaining to customer engagement. This is particularly prevalent in the current marketing landscape, which is characterized by an abundance of digital platforms and strategies. Hence, it becomes increasingly apparent that small photography and videography businesses encounter difficulties in engaging customers, which can be outlined as follows: Business enterprises encounter difficulties when attempting to adapt their offerings to align with the preferences and desires of their clients. Outdated materials and equipment have the potential to adversely impact performance; The domain of specialized equipment is characterized by rapid and dynamic transformations.; Competitors who employ hard selling as a strategic approach and possess a little understanding of corporate law problems.

**Social Media Marketing as Promotional Tool** - Social media marketing plays a crucial role as the lifeblood of small photography and videography enterprises in Occidental Mindoro. Social media platforms facilitate the interaction between businesses and individuals as well as organizations, enabling the establishment of relationships and the formation of online communities. The themes presented below were derived from the data collected during interviews with entrepreneurs and were subsequently validated through interviews conducted with professionals employed in digital marketing firms.

**Advantages of Social Media Marketing** - According to the data that was gathered, the following is a list of the advantages and benefits that are linked to using social media marketing as a promotional approach for businesses that engage in photography and videography:

- a. Reduce costs and increase reach.** When compared to the costs of other marketing channels, such as face-to-face salespeople, middlemen, or distributors, the cost of using a social media platform is often less expensive. In addition, marketing through social media enables businesses to connect with clients who may not otherwise be reachable due to the geographical characteristics of Occidental Mindoro and restrictions imposed by current distribution methods in terms of time. According to Watsons et al. (2002) and Sheth & Sharma (2005), there are three areas of advantage that are offered to clients by social media marketing that help to improve reach while simultaneously lowering costs. The business can provide unlimited information without human intervention. This can convey more information than other methods. Importantly, customers can understand the information. Through the utilization of social media marketing, businesses have the ability to foster meaningful relationships by tailoring content to cater to the unique needs of individual customers. This personalized approach empowers customers to actively participate in the design process of products and services, ensuring that their specific requirements are met. Social media marketing has the capability to facilitate transactions between customers and enterprises that traditionally necessitate direct human interaction, as exemplified by well-established companies like Dell and Amazon.com.
- b. Support the business through electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM).** Based on the conducted interview, it has been observed that exposure to electronic word of mouth (eWOM) messages has the potential to generate a higher level of interest in a certain product category compared to exposure to information disseminated by marketers. The Internet's capacity to connect with billions of individuals worldwide has bestowed online word-of-mouth with a potent influence and extensive reach. Bajpai et. al. (2012) assert that social media platforms function as a sort of word-of-mouth communication, as they disseminate knowledge about products and subsequently generate increased attention and engagement for the respective product or business.
- c. It is more convenient to gain entry into the market.** Based on the findings of a series of interviews, it has been observed that the utilization of social media marketing facilitates a more streamlined process of market penetration. One of the participants successfully accessed the MAPSSA district of Occidental Mindoro, wherein a significant majority of clients, over 80%, avail themselves of their services. In Nishitha's (2023) study, it is suggested that leveraging the continuously expanding social media ecosystem presents an ideal prospect for enhancing market penetration and establishing widespread recognition. According to Kenton (2023), the process of market penetration results in increased visibility of products or services, leading to improved recognition of the potential benefits that a company can provide. The expansion of a firm into new markets typically leads to an enhancement of public perception, so contributing to the growth of the company's brand equity.
- d. It is more convenient to facilitate the introduction of new products and features.** Based on the interview, it is evident that the impact of social media on a product launch can be either advantageous or detrimental, with the potential for significant benefits if employed effectively. The utilization of social media holds significant importance in the context of product launches due to several reasons, hence emphasizing the necessity of using this kind of marketing strategy; Create anticipation. Social media product launches involve anticipation. Hints and product photos can build anticipation on social media. This might gradually build user excitement. Attract early adopters. Most of this market sector uses the internet and engages with social media. You want early adopters and evangelists from your target audience. Previewing your goods to these key individuals before its launch may boost excitement and expectation. Targeting your market. Social media allows market targeting. The sought-after 18–35 age range is the most important social media demographic for a new product's success. Products aimed at older consumers may not succeed on social media, but they can profit from generating excitement and conversation among younger consumers (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2018). Targeting untapped consumers on social media is incredibly effective.



**Disadvantages of Social Media Marketing** - Social media marketing has pros and cons (Watson et al., 2002; Sheth & Sharma, 2005). In social media marketing, the digital landscape offers opportunities, challenges, and huge obstacles. Due to the web's transparency, online marketing communication must be consistent in its strategic creation, design, execution, and management (Hart et al., 2000). Based on the data collected, it is imperative to evaluate three primary drawbacks associated with social media marketing. These downsides include:

**a. Easy to be imitated.** Given the predominantly open nature of social media sites, particularly Facebook, according to gathered data, it is relatively effortless to replicate methods, designs, outputs, and other creative features. Steinman and Hawkins (2010) argue that firms using social media to promote their brands and products must protect their outputs. Business intellectual property and branding are often worth as much as their products or services. Social media's real-time spontaneity can help firms sell their brands and distribute intellectual assets. However, it can allow third parties to misuse a business's trademarks and copyrights. Marketers must monitor their content on social media, whether on external sites or their own channels. Companies must monitor their own and third-party social media channels to protect their intellectual property from content suppliers. Internet tracking and screening services can monitor a company's trademarks and copyrights on external websites. These services also look for social media profiles or usernames that match the company's name or brand (Steinman & Hawkins, 2010).

**b. Trust, privacy, and security issues.** Participants said businesses should be aware of these risks and take steps to reduce their liability for personal data acquisition, usage, and upkeep. Attitudinal loyalty includes trust. Thus, loyalty and brand trust can mitigate some of the Internet's drawbacks, such as the idea that it is an unsafe, dishonest, and unreliable marketplace. These prejudices still prevent some potential customers from doing business online. Third-party approval builds trust (Gommans et al. 2001).

**c. Negative feedback.** Social media turns consumers into marketers and advertisers, and depending on how the company is presented online and the quality of its products and services, consumers can create positive or negative pressure for the company, its products, and its services (Roberts & Kraynak, 2008). Following the rise of Web 2.0 technologies, consumer-generated product reviews, images, and tags have increased on the Internet and had a major impact on electronic commerce (Forman, et al. 2008). According to the professionals interviewed in this study, negative social media posts can hurt promotional efforts. Businesses cannot prohibit unhappy consumers or industry competitors from posting derogatory or insulting photos, posts, or videos. Negative or non-constructive feedback must be addressed. It takes time to adequately respond and neutralize negative posts on social media (Hennig-thurau et al. 2004).

### 3.3 Social Media Marketing Strategies

Social media marketing (SMM) refers to the utilization of online social media platforms for the purpose of promoting products and services, as well as facilitating the dissemination of information and ideas (Dahnil et al., 2014). According to Constantinides (2014), the advent of social media has led to increased sophistication in the field of marketing. According to the findings of Hounhouigan (2014), the use of effective marketing methods yielded positive outcomes for both customers and businesses, resulting in greater profitability. According to the study, as stated by digital marketing professionals, the growing utilization of social media platforms for marketing endeavors provides an opportunity for small company merchants to extend their reach beyond their local vicinity and engage with wider audiences.

Entrepreneurs may opt to employ social media marketing (SMM) methods as a means to enhance client interactions, augment revenue figures, and enhance their overall reputation. The significance of social media's functionality and variety necessitates businesses to contemplate the development of social media marketing (SMM) strategies (Tiago & Verrissimo, 2014). Yadav and Tripathi (2016) assert that successful social media marketing (SMM) strategies involve reaching a wider audience and increasing brand visibility, a viewpoint that

was corroborated by the study participants. The cost-effective and highly efficient attributes of social media make it a viable and alternative avenue for entrepreneurs in Occidental Mindoro who are engaged in photography and videography. This enables them to develop and implement various social media marketing strategies to effectively promote their businesses.

**Building Brand Identity** - The process of establishing a brand can incur significant costs; nonetheless, social media platforms have emerged as a cost-effective alternative for small firms operating within constrained marketing budgets (Herman, 2015). Based on the data collected from the participants, the subsequent SMM strategies that proved beneficial for small photography and videography businesses in establishing brand identity are as follows:

- a. **Consistency:** The brand of a business holds significant value as it represents the embodiment of the business itself, making it the most crucial asset for any organization. The visual, auditory, and behavioral aspects of the business have a direct influence on the perception of its business among current as well as potential customers. According to the data gathered, in order to establish a solid foundation for a brand, it is imperative for businesses to ensure that their messaging is consistent and unified. In essence, the establishment of consistency plays a pivotal role in fostering brand identification, hence strengthening customer retention. Based on the findings of Simpson (2019), brands that maintain consistency in their messaging are valued at a 20% higher level compared to those that exhibit discrepancies. Simpson (2019) added that the task of generating content that is both consistent and of high quality gets increasingly complex when incorporating a team of numerous writers, each possessing distinct writing styles and editorial preferences. Nevertheless, it is imperative for the firm to formulate and adhere to a strategic framework that will ultimately establish a routine procedure that is consistently followed by all members of the team.
- b. **Content Marketing.** Based on the insights provided by digital marketing professionals who participated in the study, it can be concluded that content marketing currently occupies a prominent position in the field of marketing. All marketers are currently focused on developing a content strategy in order to effectively utilize the potential of content in engaging with consumers. According to Ariel (2022), the emergence of content marketing in the corporate landscape presents a significant opportunity for small enterprises. This phenomenon has the potential to equalize the competitive field to some extent, enabling astute small firms to achieve a disproportionately high level of visibility. The utilization of content marketing is of utmost importance in the development of brand recognition for entrepreneurs who manage small-scale photography and videography enterprises. One of the content marketing tools employed by individuals is the creation of stories that not only cater to the practical requirements of clients but also address their underlying emotional demands. Despite the fact that these entrepreneurs have a significant number of clients booked on a monthly basis, they exercise a high degree of selectivity in determining whose clients and outputs will be shared online. The guiding notion of "more is not always better" aided these entrepreneurs in avoiding excessive content overload. According to Ariel (2022), there is a growing trend among marketers to prioritize quality over quantity. By reducing the frequency of providing pertinent and captivating material, there is a higher probability that consumers will exhibit greater levels of engagement. The current era presents unprecedented ease in the creation and dissemination of content, rendering it an opportune moment for small businesses to actively produce content and effectively attract novel clients.
- c. **Image-centric Content:** There is an increasing trend among social media users to actively participate in the sharing and liking of photographs. The participants perceived this as a favorable chance to enhance the social signals that would contribute to an improved search ranking for their brand. The presence of visually appealing material on social media platforms can greatly attract viewers and provide valuable online visibility for a brand. As per digital marketing experts, image-centric content has emerged as a prominent social media marketing trend adopted by various companies engaged in social media

marketing. These companies have also incorporated this trend into their search engine optimization campaigns, based on the belief that images have the potential to enhance a brand's visibility among search engine users.

- d. **Electronic Word-of-Mouth Communication.** eWOM refers to the transmission of information between individuals using social media platforms or the Internet. Social media platforms have facilitated customer interactions, resulting in the generation of eWOM and the promotion of business, product, or service awareness (Djurdjevic (2019). According to the data collected from professionals, customers have shared favorable experiences when sharing information about new products or services with their family and friends. This positive word-of-mouth communication has the potential to drive the adoption of innovations and subsequently result in greater sales. Businesses have the potential to utilize eWOM by employing efficient communication strategies with their intended audience and directing consumer conversations in alignment with the business' purpose and marketing objectives. According to the study participants who are entrepreneurs, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is distinguished from traditional word-of-mouth (WOM) by its incorporation of innovation and more adaptability. Furthermore, individuals are increasingly impacted by information disseminated through internet-based platforms. Creating brand recognition is more efficient when utilizing electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) as opposed to traditional methods. However, the utilization of eWOM in establishing a brand for emerging and younger small-scale businesses in the field of photography and videography presents notable difficulties.
- e. **Customer Engagement.** Social media marketing (SMM) is a strategic approach that has the potential to enhance the quality of products and services. Consequently, it is imperative for company leaders to proficiently utilize social media platforms in order to effectively communicate with clients (Constantinides, 2014). The implementation of customer engagement strategies encompasses efforts aimed at fostering a sense of significance and belongingness for the consumer within the organizational framework (Moreno-Munoz et al., 2016). The enhancement of customer involvement has been found to have a positive impact on brand loyalty and is considered a crucial factor for the long-term viability of businesses (Dessart et al., 2015; Hibbler-Britt & Sussan, 2015). As to digital marketing experts, clients that express satisfaction are inclined to hold a favorable perception of a business, engage in word-of-mouth communication, and engage in repeated transactions with the business. A beneficial relationship between customer involvement on social media platforms leads to several business outcomes, including higher sales, return on investment, profitability, perceived reputation, and customer retention. Furthermore, active customer involvement serves to mitigate the potential negative impact that adverse events may have on the image of a business. Moreover, direct and intimate interaction with customers empowers small businesses to enhance their market position with greater flexibility. This is particularly facilitated by the utilization of social media platforms.

There are noteworthy SMM strategies employed by participants to cultivate relationships with their clients and customers; Social Media Storytelling: It is the process of using social media platforms to tell stories about brands, products, or whatever to captivate the target audience. Based on the accounts provided by the participants in the market of Occidental Mindoro, it can be concluded that Facebook storytelling is perceived as an effective communication strategy. Given that Facebook does not impose any restrictions on the length of a post, users have the opportunity to compose a comprehensive narrative. In lieu of providing concise summaries or merely highlighting key aspects, it is more advantageous to compose lengthier messages on the Facebook platform. Engaging audiences through the presentation of remarkable narratives seems to be more effective than directing attention toward product promotion or website traffic generation.

**Social Media Personal Selling.** According to a study conducted by Chengg.com (n.d), The advent of the internet and its expanding user population has led to the widespread practice of online selling through many platforms, including social media. In the contemporary business landscape, characterized by intense competition,

the utilization of social media and personal selling has emerged as a crucial strategy for small businesses seeking to effectively engage clients and shape their purchasing decisions, chengg.com added. Digital marketing experts view this strategy as a mode of transaction that offers the added advantage of convenience and efficiency, as it eliminates the need for physical presence and minimizes time constraints. Social media platforms serve as a means of communication and interaction, facilitating the engagement between manufacturers and consumers, and enabling mutual benefits to be derived from this interaction.

**Instant/Automated Response.** Facebook is the mostly used social media platform in Occidental Mindoro. According to Swashlabs (2022), the utilization of automated responses inside the Meta Business Suite facilitates the efficient management of messages pertaining to one's business on both Facebook and Instagram platforms. This functionality has the ability to enhance organizational efficiency, expand the scope of customer outreach, and foster robust connections with those engaging with your business's Facebook Page and Instagram profile. By enabling an automated response, individuals will receive an automatic reply from the business when they engage with your Facebook Page or Instagram account during a designated occurrence or if their message includes particular keywords. Based on the input provided by participants, the utilization of automated responses enables businesses to maintain a state of immediate and continuous engagement with customers. This approach allows for the efficient handling of numerous inquiries with no effort, while also conveying a proactive stance of the business towards social customer service.

### *3.4 Sales Productivity*

The inclusion of cost-benefit analysis and return-on-investment evaluation in the assessment of content production, implementation, content publishing, and customer interaction has enhanced the efficacy of social media marketing tactics. Schaupp and Belanger (2014) conducted a study to determine the efficacy of social media in the domains of sales, marketing, customer support, and internal operations. Their findings revealed a substantial value associated with the utilization of social media in these areas. According to the study, entrepreneurs systematically plan their social media marketing efforts with the assistance of boosting in order to get favorable sales performance. Boosted posts refer to advertisements that are generated from pre-existing postings on a user's Facebook Page. The act of boosting a post has the potential to increase the number of messages, video views, leads, or calls that an individual or organization receives. Additionally, it is possible to expand your reach to individuals who may possess a high likelihood of being interested in your Page or service, but nevertheless do not presently engage with your content. The study participants allocate a range of 500 pesos to 2000 pesos towards their boosting initiatives on a monthly basis.

### *3.5 Best Practices in Implementing Social Media Marketing*

**Optimizing the Timing Aspects of social media Posting.** Based on the collected data, the key determinant of a successful social media post lies in the strategic combination of appropriate content and optimal timing for sharing. The timing of a marketing effort is a critical issue, regardless of its strength. The achievement of intended outcomes may be hindered if one fails to publish postings at optimal times. Entrepreneurs operating within the domain of photography and videography encounter difficulties in effectively managing numerous social media channels simultaneously. According to Sharma (2023), the scheduling of posts on social media platforms is deemed significant in order to facilitate this undertaking. In the event of your unavailability, the scheduler will ensure the timely dissemination of information to maximize engagement by strategically targeting the period when your intended audience is most actively engaged.

**Acquire knowledge of community-specific terminologies.** The province of Occidental Mindoro, characterized by its distinctive geographical features and diverse cultural practices, gives rise to the development of local terminologies within its communities. Based on the data collected, the knowledge of community-specific terminology will facilitate the promotion of a firm inside a particular place and foster the development of a new market. Gaining knowledge in this area will also facilitate the establishment of rapport while engaging with

prospective consumers. Take charge of your social media platform. Negative feedback is an unavoidable aspect of communication, manifesting in various forms such as direct messages or comments on online platforms. One strategy employed by the participants on Facebook involves concealing comments, including customer complaints, instead of permanently deleting them. According to BrandBastion (2023), this approach allows businesses to maintain a relatively comment-free environment for their advertisements, so mitigating the potential negative impact on user perceptions. Simultaneously, this tactic enables brands to address the concerns of dissatisfied customers by replying to their grievances.

The utilization of personal social media accounts in conducting business should be avoided. According to experts in the field of digital marketing, it is imperative for businesses to have a professional online presence on social media platforms in order to gain credibility and be regarded seriously in the commercial realm. A business profile has the potential to enhance the legitimacy of your brand, thereby cultivating trust among prospective customers. The participants of the study engage in the practice of maintaining separate personal and business social media accounts in order to ensure the provision of requisite privacy and control. Habib (2021) asserts that business social accounts provide multi-user administration, wherein various individuals own distinct role-based authorization levels, hence enabling the collective promotion of a firm on social media platforms by the entire workforce. According to Habib (2021), personal social media accounts provide information on the number of friends, followers, and shares, whereas business accounts offer comprehensive insights into the audience. The aforementioned insights can be utilized to gain an understanding of audience demographics, ascertain the types of postings that yield optimal performance, and enhance one's social skills in order to achieve more visibility, engagement, and consumer response.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The photography and videography sector has emerged as a prominent industry in Occidental Mindoro. Based on the data, it can be concluded that the establishment of a brand might involve substantial expenses; nevertheless, social media platforms have arisen as a cost-efficient option for small businesses working with limited marketing resources. To develop a robust basis for a brand, it is crucial for businesses to guarantee the consistency and unity of their messaging. The establishment of consistency is crucial in promoting brand recognition, hence enhancing client retention. Furthermore, it can be inferred that content marketing presently holds a key role within the realm of marketing. The incorporation of content marketing holds significant significance in fostering brand recognition for entrepreneurs overseeing small-scale photography and videography ventures. One strategy utilized by the participants in content marketing involves crafting stories that not only fulfill clients' practical needs but also attend to their underlying emotional desires. Although these entrepreneurs have a considerable client on a regular basis, they demonstrate a discerning approach in deciding whose clients and deliverables will be publicly showcased online. Moreover, the inclusion of aesthetically pleasing content on social media platforms has the potential to significantly captivate audiences and offer substantial online exposure for the enterprise. The utilization of image-centric content has become a prevalent trend in social media marketing, with numerous organizations actively incorporating it into their strategies.

It can be inferred that employing social media storytelling as a strategy in social media marketing (SMM) is highly beneficial in fostering robust client interaction. According to experts, there are three approaches that can be employed for good social media storytelling: synecdoche, origins, and spoilers. Furthermore, the use of social media as a platform for personal selling encompasses a method that presents the supplementary benefit of convenience and efficacy. This approach obviates the necessity for physical interaction and diminishes temporal limitations. In order to foster a favorable level of interaction with newly acquired consumers, firms might employ automated responses as a means to sustain a condition of prompt and uninterrupted engagement with customers. This strategy facilitates the effective management of a large volume of questions effortlessly, while also demonstrating the proactive commitment of the firm to social customer care. In conclusion, the study indicates that enhancing the timing aspects of social media posting, familiarizing oneself with community-specific terminologies, assuming control over one's social media platform, and refraining from using

personal social media accounts for business purposes are recommended strategies for achieving greater effectiveness in social media marketing.

## 5. Recommendations

- A. Further Research- There is a scarcity of research studies that specifically examine small photography and videography firms. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of this industry from all angles, it is recommended to conduct further research on the following topics: A quantitative study will be conducted to assess the extent of social media marketing (SMM) activities employed by businesses for promotional purposes. The integration of conventional marketing methods into the realm of social media interaction for businesses. Further investigation of the effects of social media marketing on brand recognition and product identification. The evaluation of consumer satisfaction utilizing social media marketing (SMM) as a promotional instrument. Analysis of social media marketing dilemmas encountered by small businesses. Subsequent research endeavors could go deeper into the comprehensive examination of the advantageous and detrimental consequences of social media marketing on a small-scale enterprise over an extended period. Small retailers sometimes operate with limited financial resources and face many constraints. However, they are known for offering a more personalized retail experience. Consequently, conducting a study to investigate the influence of these factors on the social media strategies employed by small stores will yield valuable insights. The advent of social media has significantly expanded the opportunities available to small shops, offering a wide range of potential interactions with consumers. Consequently, there is a growing demand for research that investigates the effects of this emerging phenomenon on small retailers.
- B. For business- small retailers in the field of photography and videography need to start utilizing nontraditional methods of marketing in creative and engaging ways to make certain that they attract a larger number of consumers. Another way in which entrepreneurs can engage customers is by selling not just products, but an entire experience that – while centered on the products, adds an entirely new exciting layer to the retail setting. In order to maintain their relevance, entrepreneurs should adapt to ongoing changes to secure consumer attention. This underscores the importance of conducting further analysis of the internal and external environment of the business, Entrepreneurs ought to consider investing in various social media analytics and meter tools in order to assess the efficacy of their strategy. Furthermore, entrepreneurs without sufficient knowledge and abilities in social media marketing (SMM) can actively engage in various training programs to enhance their strategic and successful utilization of SMM.

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