



Social media marketing and brand recognition: multilevel evidence

Marketing en redes sociales y reconocimiento de marca: evidencia multinivel

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: the article analyzed how social media marketing transformed the way brands built recognition, positioning, and links with consumers. It argued that these platforms were no longer just channels of dissemination but had become interactive spaces where value was co-created between users and companies. It also argued that brand recognition operated as a decisive element for purchase intention, trust, and loyalty, articulating cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions. **Development:** based on international, national, and local evidence, the study described how social media marketing strategies positively influenced variables such as brand image, recall, and purchase intention. It showed that sustained digital activity, consistent visual management, and two-way interaction with users strengthened brand positioning. **Theoretically,** it integrated social identity theory, which explained belonging to brand communities on social media, and dual-process theory, which allowed for interpreting how consumers recognized and chose brands both automatically and deliberately. In addition, it defined operational dimensions of digital marketing—content dissemination, network presence, and customer interaction—and dimensions of brand recognition—familiarity, emotion, visual simplicity, and social reputation. **Conclusions:** the article concluded that social media marketing was a strategic tool for competitiveness, as it generated visibility, credibility, and emotional connection. It pointed out that brands with an active, coherent, and aesthetically consistent presence achieved higher levels of trust, preference, and recommendation. Finally, it stated that digital interaction translated into symbolic and commercial capital, and that the ability to connect authentically with the public became a differentiating and sustainable factor.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing; Brand Recognition; Positioning; Digital Interaction; Consumer Behavior.

RESUMEN

Introducción: el artículo analizó cómo el marketing en redes sociales transformó la forma en que las marcas construyeron reconocimiento, posicionamiento y vínculos con los consumidores. Planteó que estas plataformas dejaron de ser solo canales de difusión y pasaron a ser espacios interactivos donde se co-creó valor entre usuarios y empresas. También sostuvo que el reconocimiento de marca operó como un elemento decisivo para la intención de compra, la confianza y la lealtad, articulando dimensiones cognitivas, emocionales y sociales. **Desarrollo:** a partir de evidencia internacional, nacional y local, el estudio describió que las estrategias de marketing en redes sociales influyeron positivamente en variables como la imagen de marca, la recordación y la intención de compra. Mostró que la actividad digital sostenida, la gestión visual coherente y la interacción bidireccional con los usuarios fortalecieron el posicionamiento de las marcas. **Teóricamente,** integró la teoría de identidad social, que explicó la pertenencia a comunidades de marca en redes, y la teoría del proceso dual, que permitió interpretar cómo el consumidor reconoció y eligió marcas tanto de manera automática como deliberada. Además, definió dimensiones operativas del marketing digital —difusión de contenidos, presencia en redes e interacción con clientes— y dimensiones del reconocimiento de marca —familiaridad, emoción, simplicidad visual y reputación social. **Conclusiones:** el artículo concluyó que el marketing en redes sociales constituyó una herramienta estratégica para la competitividad, ya que generó visibilidad, credibilidad y vínculo emocional. Señaló que las marcas con presencia activa, coherente y estéticamente consistente obtuvieron mayores niveles de confianza, preferencia y recomendación. Finalmente, afirmó que la interacción digital se tradujo en capital simbólico y comercial, y que la capacidad de conectar auténticamente con el público se volvió un factor diferencial y sostenible.

Palabras clave: Marketing en Redes Sociales; Reconocimiento de Marca; Posicionamiento; Interacción Digital; Comportamiento del Consumidor.

INTRODUCTION

The development of social media marketing transformed how brands built presence, recognition, and relationships with consumers. Digital platforms ceased to be merely dissemination channels and became spaces for strategic interaction where users co-created value with companies, directly impacting variables such as brand image, positioning, and purchase intention. Within this framework, various international, national, and local studies provided empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of social media marketing as a tool for consolidating brand visibility and preference.

At the international level, social media marketing strategies were reported to significantly influence brand awareness, perceived image, and purchase intention, with positive coefficients and levels of statistical significance that confirmed their effect on consumer behavior. Likewise, interaction between users and brands in digital environments was observed to strengthen the credibility of the offering and the perception of accessibility, key elements for brand recognition. Overall, the findings suggested that sustained digital activity enabled brands to position themselves more strongly against the competition.

In the national context, the results showed that brand presence and identity on social media were related to higher levels of purchase, especially when brands consistently managed their visual appearance, messaging, and customer relationships. In the local environment, the dissemination of digital content, the attraction generated by the brand, and the effective conversion of users were associated with perceived brand positioning, indicating that even in regional markets social media functioned as a decisive channel for competitiveness.

On this empirical basis, the research incorporated the conceptual framework of social media marketing and brand awareness, as well as theories such as social identity and dual process. Social media marketing was understood as a strategy that not only promoted products but also facilitated bidirectional relationships, fostered communities around brands, and enabled immediate feedback. In turn, brand awareness was interpreted as the consumer's ability to identify a brand among alternatives, a critical function for purchase decision, trust, and loyalty.

It was assumed that these psychological and communication processes did not operate in isolation: brand building in digital environments depended as much on visual and narrative exposure as on emotional and social interaction between the brand and its audience. This perspective made it possible to analyze how social networks simultaneously contributed to the commercial positioning and symbolic capital of the brand.

DEVELOPMENT

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

International Background

In Indonesia, Faisal and Ekawanto carried out a study that revealed positive impacts of social media marketing on a brand's image, with a coefficient equal to 1.071 (p value < .001). In addition, it was observed that consumers' purchase purpose was positively influenced by marketing through social media platforms, with a coefficient of 0.568 and a p value of 0.014, proved to be decisive in improving purchase intent by presenting a positive brand image, with a coefficient of 0.222 and a p value of 0.038. In addition, it was evident that social media marketing generated satisfactory brand awareness (p value < 0.001). In summary, it is concluded that the social media marketing strategy is effective in enhancing the recognition of a service.

Conversely, the study conducted by El Aydi in Egypt found that virtual communities and their interaction with a specific company showed a correlation of ,398 with the degree of brand recognition, according to Pearson's correlation assessment. Brand recognition also showed a significant relationship with several dimensions: an r of ,307 with user interactions, ,48 with the number of intervened advertisements, ,580 with accessibility, and ,606 with perceived credibility of brand offers. All these coefficients were statistically significant (p < .05). The conclusion was that there is a notable relationship between social media marketing and brand recognition.

National background

First, Urrutia et al. (1) conducted their research in Lima, Peru, and found that improvement in a brand's appearance was directly related to an increase in purchases made through social networks (p = .00; Rho = .81). Furthermore, an association was observed between brand design

and acquisition levels ($Rho = .792$, $p = .00$), and the way the brand was managed was also linked to purchases through its social networks ($p = .00$; $Rho = .774$). Another important finding was that the degree of brand positioning was strongly associated with the level of acquisition through social networks ($Rho = .85$; $p = .00$). The study concluded that better brand positioning in the market leads to higher purchase levels.

For their part, Rojas et al.(2) conducted a study in Lima and evaluated the support that different hotels received through digital content on their social networks. The first hotel analyzed obtained a 60 % contribution thanks to user comments, disseminated videos, promotions, and sales news. Another hotel achieved a 60 % contribution, using virtuality guides, promotion, video, news, comments, and images on their networks. Finally, the last company studied reached a 40 % contribution. The conclusion was that participation in various social networks increased as more digital content was shared, which helped companies get closer to their customers and achieve one bidirectional, fast, and attractive communication.

Local background

The authors Blas and Meléndez carried out their research in the department of San Martín, discovering that the distribution of content on social networks was correlated with brand positioning ($Rho=.225$, $p=.00$). The attraction that the brand generated in customers was also associated with its level of positioning ($Rho=.510$, $p=.00$). In addition, it was found that customer conversion was linked to the level of brand positioning ($Rho=.46$, $p=.00$). It was observed that brand positioning was at a regular level according to 47.2%, while digital marketing performance was rated as regular low by 56.9% of respondents. The conclusion was that digital marketing tools have a direct contribution to the level of positioning of a brand, supported by a Rho coefficient of .52 and a p value of .00.

On the other hand, Aching and Torres conducted their study in Tarapoto, finding that social networks were regularly used to promote products, as 62% of responses indicate. Market participation was rated as regular by 56% of participants. It was established that competition was associated with the use of virtual networks for promotions with an r coefficient of .49 and a p value of .001. However, the participation offer did not show a significant association with promotion on these networks ($p = .15$), as did demand ($p = .15$). Broadly speaking, it was concluded that the promotion tactic through social networks is linked to the company's level of market participation ($r = .57$; $p = .01$).

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Social media marketing

Definition

The use of platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook as a strategy to establish communication with users constitutes a crucial facet of modern marketing. These platforms go beyond the mere transmission, reception, and sharing of content; they have become essential spaces where users experience significant moments, acting as channels of word-of-mouth advertising in the digital sphere. These networks are much more than technologies; they represent environments where individuals and organizations interact and shape behaviors. They create an interconnected ecosystem in which technology and culture are intrinsically intertwined, becoming a fundamental part of contemporary life and highlighting cultural relevance and interactivity at both global and local levels.(3)

This Marketing approach seeks to promote products and build relationships with consumers simultaneously through social media, enabling bidirectional communication between customers and brands, and redefining the way information is shared. The links generated on such platforms, whether weak or strong, have an impact on customer comments. It is essential that companies identify and adapt to the fact of changing their marketing methods as noted by Li et al.(4) As the variable in question refers to the tactical use of online platforms to promote and increase Brand Awareness. Platforms facilitate productivity and the exchange of user-generated information, thus enabling interactions and collaborations to be more effective.

Characteristics

Social media marketing is characterized by its capacity for segmentation and personalization, allowing brands to target specific audiences with messages tailored to their interests and behaviors. It stands out for its interactive and dynamic nature, encouraging public participation and engagement through varied multimedia content such as images, videos, and texts. The immediacy of these platforms enables rapid communication and constant updating, taking advantage of a global reach to connect with users around the world. In addition, social media offer advanced

analytical tools to measure the effectiveness of campaigns, and their low cost compared with traditional media makes them accessible to companies of all sizes. The influence of content creators and user-generated content are aspects that enrich these strategies, while the constant evolution of these platforms requires that marketing tactics be equally adaptable and evolving.(5)

Complementing these characteristics, social media marketing benefits from the potential virality of content, enabling brands to achieve exponential dissemination when their content resonates with the public. The collaborative nature of these platforms also facilitates strategic partnerships and co-branding campaigns, leveraging the follower communities of different brands to expand reach. Moreover, the ability to obtain instant, direct feedback from consumers enables companies to adjust their strategies rapidly and improve their products or services in real time. Social media environments are also ideal for launching experiential marketing and brand storytelling campaigns, where authentic stories and experiences can be shared and amplified, thereby strengthening emotional connections with the public. These elements make social media marketing not only a promotional channel but also a vital means of building brand identity and strengthening long-term customer relationships (5).

Importance

Social media marketing is crucial because of the extensive and universal presence of users on these platforms. With billions of users interacting daily, social networks provide marketers with an effective means to reach their target audience. Despite extensive research in this field, the dynamic and constantly changing nature of social media requires that marketing strategies be adapted. (3) Major platforms such as Twitter and Facebook are fundamental to communication, connecting thousands of people and allowing free expression and access to the information network. YouTube further extends reach by enabling the sharing of multimedia content, making it indispensable in modern life. (6) Social media are crucial for corporate marketing, as they allow companies to reach broad audiences by establishing authentic connections. Platforms such as Snapchat are particularly attractive to young audiences. Depending on the target audience and the selected platform, informative, transformational, or interactive marketing methods can be implemented. The choice of content, whether interactive or simple, and its authenticity play an important role in the individual's reaction. Factors such as quality, relevance, and authenticity are fundamental to success.

Likewise, the importance of social media marketing in today's landscape is indisputable, as it offers companies of any size a powerful and cost-effective means to reach their target audience. This form of marketing stands out for its ability to facilitate direct and personalized communication with consumers, allowing brands to build deeper and more meaningful relationships with their audience. The detailed segmentation capability and advanced analytical tools offered by social media platforms allow companies to target specific segments precisely, thereby optimizing campaign effectiveness and maximizing return on investment. Moreover, the dynamism and interactive nature of social media provide unique opportunities for user engagement and content generation, which can increase brand visibility, improve customer loyalty, and enhance organic reach through shared content. In an increasingly digitalized world, where consumers spend a considerable amount of their time on social platforms, social media marketing has become an essential tool for companies seeking to remain relevant and competitive.

Social identity theory

Proposed originally by Tajfel and Turner, social identity theory posits that each individual socially defines their identity through their affiliation with specific social groups, distinguishing this from their personal identity. The theory focuses on the distinction between groups, and how individuals tend to favor members of their own team compared with those from out-groups. In the context of Marketing, this foundation manifests in brand groups on social networks such as Instagram or Facebook. Internet users join communities influenced by their social identity. These are affiliations that can create powerful bonds between brands and consumers, and on virtual network platforms, followers often view brands as "friendships", perceiving their communications as friendly and non-intrusive.(6)

The basis of social identity theory also examines that one person regards themselves as part of specific social categories. This theory is especially applicable to social media platforms, as this is where people seek to belong to groups that help them develop their personality.

On the other hand, self-esteem is understood within personal identity and social identity. One essential part of an individual's self-awareness comes from affiliation with social groups and their relationships with them. In turn, "collective self-esteem" reflects how a person perceives their

social identity, similarly to how personal self-esteem influences individual evaluation. Despite its importance, group identity has received less attention in studies than personal identity.

Evaluation of the variable

According to Jamil et al., social media marketing comprises three fundamental dimensions that enable companies to maximize their impact on these platforms. These dimensions are:

Content dissemination: Content dissemination is the process of sharing and spreading content across different social media platforms. This phenomenon can be driven by various aspects, such as the emotions that the content arouses or its relevance for informing or socially influencing, which is inherent in the content that impacts observers' decision-making. The main indicators of this process are attractive advertising; this indicator refers to content that, due to its emotional or informational nature, captures consumers' attention. Its effectiveness is based on the ability to connect with the emotions or needs of the audience, encouraging their interaction with or sharing of the content. **Content preferences:** This indicator is related to the variety of interests and motivations of consumers when they use social networks. Content preferences vary among users and are a decisive factor in the effectiveness with which content is received and shared on these platforms.

Social media presence: This refers to visibility and level of activity on social media platforms. This presence, enhanced in the Web 2.0 era, significantly expands the possibilities of marketing by focusing on user participation and engagement. The effectiveness of this presence is evaluated through specific metrics and has several key indicators: (1) Facebook and Instagram: platforms considered 2 of the most important channels for establishing and reinforcing a brand's online presence. They provide interactive tools that promote participation, loyalty, and audience engagement, in addition to offering a valuable database for marketing professionals. (2) WhatsApp contact: this indicator reflects personalized interaction between consumers and the brand through instant messaging communication. This platform facilitates a more personalized approach to communication, increasing engagement while effectively strengthening the customer-brand relationship. (3) Google results: this represents the visibility and effectiveness of a brand in the world's most used search engine by web users. This indicator is decisive for measuring how a brand is found and perceived in the digital sphere.

Customer interaction: It is a key process in which brands communicate with their customers through these platforms to encourage their participation. This includes the exchange of knowledge, preferences, and ideas. Such interaction is vital for value co-creation and stimulates the generation of collaborative behaviors and ideas that are mutually beneficial. The indicators of this interaction are: (1) Customer data: this involves the collection and analysis of the information voluntarily provided by the individual on social media. This includes their behaviors, preferences, and feedback, which are essential for personalizing and improving brands' marketing strategies. (2) Sending of advertising emails: this process consists of sending promotional material directly to customers through digital channels. It is a form of direct marketing that allows brands to communicate in a more personalized and measured manner with their audience. (3) Customer response: this refers to the active role of brands in responding to and interacting with customers' questions, comments, concerns, or feedback. This rapid and attentive response helps strengthen customer-brand relationships and improves the overall perception of the brand. (7)

Brand recognition Definition

The brand awareness variable is related to people's ability to identify and recall a distinctive brand among a variety of services or products. This awareness is achieved when consumers associate certain exclusive characteristics or attributes with a brand, distinguishing it from its competitors. The prominence of a brand in a market context is strongly influenced by this level of awareness. Within this context, users process and memorize details about products, forming perceptions based on prior knowledge and experiences. Two key elements in brand perception are awareness and emotional valuation. Awareness is related to the beliefs and knowledge that stakeholders have about a product, while emotional valuation encompasses attitudes and emotions toward the product, shaped by previous interactions.

Brand recognition involves a consumer's ability to identify a brand that they have previously encountered, whether visually or aurally. It is defined as the ability to recognize the brand when presented with a reference or cue about it. In terms of memory, the process of recognizing is generally less demanding than that of recalling. Consumers tend to gravitate toward what is familiar to them, even when their experience has been limited. The act of recognizing acts as an indicator

of confidence, suggesting that what is familiar is perceived as safer or more reliable. The formation of a strong brand image depends to a greater extent on this recognition, which is based on the consumer's perspective and shaped by previous experiences and information about the brand (8). On the other hand, brand recognition concerns users' ability to recognize a brand when they encounter it. It constitutes a critical dimension of brand knowledge, determining whether a brand will be considered by the consumer at the time of a possible purchase (9).

Characteristics

Brand recognition is characterized by consumers' ability to identify and recall a specific brand among others in the market. It is built through distinctive visual elements, such as logos, color schemes, and design styles, as well as through consistent messages and a unique brand voice across all platforms and customer touchpoints. A recognizable brand also benefits from repetition and continuous visibility, as frequent exposure to the brand in diverse contexts helps strengthen consumer memory and familiarity with the brand. Furthermore, effectively conveyed emotional associations and brand values contribute significantly to brand recognition, creating a deeper connection with the target audience. Effective brand recognition not only increases customer loyalty and preference in purchasing decisions but also enhances trust in the brand and can positively influence the overall perception of quality and value.

It is important to note that brand recognition is also strengthened through consistent and positive customer experiences with the products or services offered. This implies that every interaction, whether through customer service, the online user experience, or product quality, must reinforce the brand's image and values. Consistency in these experiences ensures that brand perception remains positive and unified in the consumer's mind. Furthermore, in the digital era, content marketing strategies and social media campaigns play a crucial role in strengthening brand recognition, allowing companies to tell their story and share their values more directly and personally with their audience. The ability to adapt to emerging trends and respond to changing consumer expectations is also vital to maintaining brand recognition and relevance in a competitive and constantly evolving market. Ultimately, strong brand recognition not only translates into greater commercial success but also becomes a valuable intangible asset that can provide a sustainable competitive advantage.

Importance

Brand awareness, which includes both recognition and recall, plays an essential role in consumer decisions, directly affecting sales, marketing strategies, and the perception of brand value. Generally, brands that are recognized tend to be preferred by consumers. In the field of contemporary marketing, the ability to evoke and recall a brand is fundamental. Brand awareness contributes significantly to customer loyalty. Social platforms, by promoting the strategies that activate brands, not only increase recognition but also improve their reputation and foster loyalty, thus influencing purchasing decisions.⁽¹⁰⁾ Brand recognition proves to be a crucial factor in consumers' purchasing decisions. A brand that is easily identified tends to be prioritized and contributes to building lasting relationships. Although the terms "awareness" and "recognition" of a brand may seem similar, they represent different levels of familiarity with the brand. While recognition refers to the ability to recall a brand with certain cues, recall implies doing so without them. Differentiating and correctly measuring these dimensions is vital for the development of brand strategies.

Brand recognition is fundamental in the world of marketing and business management, as it acts as a key pillar for establishing a company's presence and influence in the market. Its importance lies in the ability to differentiate a brand in a saturated environment, making it easier for consumers to identify it and prefer it to its competitors. A high level of brand recognition leads to greater customer trust and loyalty, which translates into repeat purchase decisions and a greater likelihood of recommendation to others. Furthermore, a well-recognized brand can command a price premium, since consumers are often willing to pay a higher price for products from brands they perceive as reliable and high-quality. In terms of marketing and advertising, brand recognition reduces the effort and cost required to attract and retain customers, since an established brand already has a loyal customer base. Ultimately, brand recognition not only drives direct financial performance but is also a valuable intangible asset that contributes significantly to the company's overall value.⁽⁹⁾

Dual Process Theory

This theory, abbreviated DPT, proposes that there are 2 distinct modes of cognitive processing:

Type 1 processing is autonomous and generally faster, whereas Type 2 processing is slower and depends on working memory. In traditional interpretations of DPT, Type 1 processing was often considered susceptible to biases or errors, and Type 2 was viewed as normative and more abstract. Nevertheless, this view has been the subject of debate. For example, it is argued that Type 1 cognitive processing is not only effective for achieving goals but can also implicitly adhere to logical norms. Moreover, it is suggested that people may possess a “logical intuition” in Type 1 processing when making decisions and reasoning. However, this does not prevent Type 2 from being biased, particularly when it is based on beliefs.(11,12)

In relation to brand recognition, Dual Process Theory explains how consumers typically process information about brands. Type 1 facilitates more automatic recognition of brand elements such as logos or slogans. On the other hand, Type 2 consists of more intentional recall. Brand recognition and recall are linked to the more deliberate ways in which people interact with and evoke brands.(8,13,14)

Evaluation of the variable

According to Rahman et al.(9), brand recognition is evaluated by considering several key components: brand familiarity, aesthetic attraction, brand emotion, visual simplicity, and social reputation. The definitions of each dimension are presented below:

Brand familiarity: This concerns the extent to which an individual has direct or indirect experience with a brand. This concept reflects how much customers know about a brand, information that is stored in their memory and that can influence how the consumer processes information about the brand. The indicators of brand familiarity include: (1) Spontaneous recognition: This indicator measures the consumer's ability to identify a brand spontaneously, without external stimuli. It depends on the consumer's memory and their previous experience with the brand. (2) Advertisement recall: This is conceptualized as the ability to remember and recognize specific advertisements for a service, which indicates the effectiveness and reach of the brand's advertising campaigns. (3) Slogan association: This analyzes the extent to which a consumer associates a particular slogan with a brand, underscoring the influence of key messages and brand identity on consumer perception (15).

Visual simplicity: This relates to a brand's ability to communicate its message directly. This implies prioritizing legibility and immediate interpretation. Visual simplicity is achieved through a clear design that captures the viewer's attention and evokes emotions while preserving the fundamental values and essence of the brand. Indicators of visual simplicity include: (1) Logo clarity: This focuses on the logo's ability to convey its information in a comprehensible and unambiguous manner. Logo clarity focuses on presenting the central idea so that the viewer can easily understand its symbolism and meaning. (2) Design: This is conceptualized as the composition and structure of the logo. An aesthetically attractive design acts as a powerful visual sign that effectively conveys the message behind the logo. (3) Color coherence: The choice and combination of colors in the image are connected with the generation of emotions and intellectual appeal. A carefully selected color palette can enhance the message present in the logo and facilitate its recognition by the person (16,17,18).

Aesthetic attraction: This relates to the evaluation of the aesthetics and visual appearance of a product, a crucial aspect in its delineation. It is particularly important when consumers have no prior awareness of a brand. Aesthetic attraction captures buyer attention, improving recognition and connection with the brand, especially in digital environments. The indicators of aesthetic attraction are: (1) Visual appeal: This is conceptualized as the first impression and aesthetic perception that a product provokes in consumers upon observation. This initial impression plays a determining role in generating a negative or a more positive response toward the product or service. (2) Modern design: This constitutes an aesthetic peculiarity of the product that reflects modernity, innovation, and relevance. Modern design is fundamental to the perception of currentness and adaptation to contemporary trends. (3) Interaction with visual content: This focuses on how consumers interact with the visual appearance of a product in an online environment. In this context, aesthetics can significantly influence consumer decisions, providing valuable information for marketers to develop effective strategies (9,19,20).

Brand emotion: This refers to the emotional bond that is formed between the brand and its customers, originating from the technique of “emotional branding”. As an approach, it is customer-oriented and is relational and narrative in nature, being constructed through people's feelings and emotions, which positively affects their reaction toward the brand. The indicators of brand emotion include: (1) Associated feelings: These are the specific emotions that consumers experience

in relation to a brand, such as happiness, trust, or nostalgia (21,22). These feelings play a crucial role in how individuals relate to the brand. (2) Emotional connection: This refers to the affective bond that a consumer develops with a brand due to rewarding and positive experiences. This connection leads to a more intense commitment and a stronger attachment to their favorite brand. (3) Personal experience narratives: This involves the stories or anecdotes that consumers share about their interactions with the brand (23,24). These narratives reflect the emotional impact of the brand on the consumer's life and how it has influenced the consumer's relationship with it (9,25,26).

Social reputation: This represents the overall perception that interest groups or stakeholders have of a brand, based on their expressions, emotions, and thoughts about it. It is formed from events associated with the brand, both those under its control and those that are not, and directly affects the company's financial performance (27). This perception encompasses all stakeholders, ranging from current customers to investors. The indicators of social reputation are: (1) Positive mentions on social media: This shows the quantity and tone of the comments that stakeholders make about a brand on social media platforms. It highlights the positive perception and feelings that are expressed publicly. (2) Ratings on review platforms: This evaluates stakeholder satisfaction with a brand on specialized review platforms. It provides a quantitative perception of the brand's overall reputation. (3) Favorable opinions in perception surveys: These are specific responses from stakeholders about their emotions and impressions toward a brand, collected through survey tools. These surveys offer both qualitative and quantitative data on brand reputation (28,29).

Conclusions

The analysis of social media marketing made it possible to demonstrate its determining role in building brand recognition and shaping consumer behavior. The findings gathered at the international, national, and local levels coincided in showing that digital strategies not only strengthen a brand's visibility and recall, but also consolidate its competitive positioning and emotional connection with the public. In all the contexts studied, it was confirmed that constant interaction, the dissemination of relevant content, and communicative coherence are factors that directly affect purchase intention and consumer loyalty. Social media, by operating as spaces for dialogue and co-creation, transformed the traditional paradigm of unidirectional marketing toward a participatory model, in which users became active agents of brand reputation.

From a theoretical perspective, the integration of the digital marketing approach with social identity and dual-process theories provided a deeper understanding of consumer behavior in digital environments. Social identity theory explained how brand communities reinforce belonging and collective identification, whereas dual-process theory made it possible to understand the cognitive mechanisms through which consumers recognize and choose brands. These conceptual frameworks showed that purchasing decisions do not depend solely on visual exposure, but also on the symbolic and emotional connection that brands manage to establish with their audiences.

In strategic terms, the reviewed studies showed that companies that maintain an active and coherent presence on social media achieve higher levels of trust, preference, and recommendation. The ability to generate attractive, aesthetically consistent, and emotionally resonant content stands as a crucial element for enhancing brand recognition. Furthermore, the identified dimensions—content dissemination, social media presence, and customer interaction—proved to be interdependent and essential for creating both economic and symbolic value.

It is concluded that social media marketing constitutes an essential tool for the communicational and competitive sustainability of organizations. Its effectiveness lies in its dynamic, bidirectional, and emotional character, capable of translating digital interaction into brand equity. In an environment where attention and trust are the main assets, brands that manage to connect authentically with their audiences through integrated digital strategies will not only obtain commercial advantages, but also lasting legitimacy and relevance in the consumer's mind.

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