

Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing and Branding Strategies for Edtech Startups

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Abstract : The EdTech industry is rapidly expanding, driven by a growing demand for skill development, attracting numerous startups and intensifying competition. In this context, building a trustworthy brand through effective social media marketing is crucial. This study explores the key social media and branding factors that influence brand trust and customer engagement for EdTech startups. Through a survey-based approach, the research examines elements such as video marketing, personalization, automation, analytics, influencers, brand consistency, and brand personality. The findings offer actionable insights to help startups craft impactful marketing and branding strategies, enabling stronger brand differentiation and trust in a competitive market.

Keywords: Edtech, startup, social media marketing, branding, digital marketing

I. INTRODUCTION

Today we live in an information driven world where technology have penetrated in all our lives. Most people are using technology like internet and smartphone for a longer duration of time whether to communicate, navigate or another purpose. Therefore, it has become very crucial to transform and adapt to serve the needs of the new generation of students. Traditional techniques and classroom teaching are no longer sustainable. We can see that there is a prevalence of EdTech in recent years. EdTech is a combination of the word “education” and “technology.” EdTech Startups are companies that are looking for a profitable and scalable business leveraging digital technologies and creating new solutions.

Research problem statement

There is a need to find which are most important factors related to social media marketing and branding strategy that influence EdTech startups.

Research Objectives:

1. To Identify Key Social Media Marketing Elements That Most Influence the Consumers of Edtech Startups.
2. To Examine the Role of Branding Strategy.
3. To provide Actionable Insights for EdTech Startups.

Scope and Significance of research:

The Educational Technology (EdTech) industry has experienced significant growth in recent years, and with an increased focus on skill development, the potential in this industry is immense. This potential will attract various startups aiming to seize the opportunity. Consequently, competition will intensify, making it crucial for startups to differentiate themselves and build a trustworthy brand. To identify the social media marketing and branding factors that most influence brand

building and trust among customers for EdTech startups, a research survey was conducted. The key areas of investigation included social media marketing elements such as video marketing, personalization, automation, analytics, and influencers, as well as branding elements like brand consistency, brand trust, and brand personality. Ultimately, this research aims to provide valuable insights that will benefit EdTech startups, helping them formulate effective social media marketing and branding strategies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Casey, M. (2023) Content Strategy defines content purpose and then guides planning for the creation, maintenance and distribution of that content. Luckyardi, et.al, (2023) Branding Strategy is to cultivate a positive brand image that will lead to establishing a strong connection with the consumers and ultimately brand loyalty. Becker, et.al, (2023) Brands Consistency is the extent to which its content advertised is similar over time and it creates a unique and memorable brand image. Consumers should effortlessly recall about the brand.

Tuten, T. L. (2023) Social Media Marketing is the utilisation of the social media technologies, channels and software to create, communicate, deliver and exchange offerings that have value for an organisation's stakeholder.

Makrydakakis, N. (2024) SEO is the process of optimizing websites and refers to all actions that make them friendly to search engines in order to optimize ranking on organic results for specific keywords. A well-structured SEO strategy is that which aligns with the nature of search engine algorithms and user expectations.

K V, S., et. al (2021) Social media advertising is new form of advertising that offers more targeting options than traditional advertising. Creative characteristics, attention-grabbing details, emotional appeal, and celebrity endorsement all had an effect on how social media advertising is evaluated.

Mowat, J. (2021) Video marketing is a strategic mindset that uses insights and planning to deliver brand growth with multiple videos on multiple channels. It takes into consideration the audience and emotions to get results.

Rachmad, Y. E. (2024) Influencer Marketing is a strategy that leverages the popularity and credibility of individuals or groups to enhance brand awareness, reputation and product or service sales. It enables brands to target highly specific market segments. Uzun, B. (2024) Personalisation is to increase customer satisfaction through direct contact between businesses and individual consumers. Personalisation positively influences purchase intention. Wolters, M. (2022) Customer testimonial is defined as an endorsement of a customer representative to the company's target group.

Manoharan, A. (2024) Automation in social media marketing refers to using software tools, algorithms, and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to simplify and optimize different operations and procedures involved in maintaining social media accounts and connecting with the audience. Salhab, et. al (2023) Social Media Marketing enhances customers' trust in brands, leading to an increase in their willingness to purchase. Sanak-Kosmowska, K. (2021) Social proof is the psychological phenomenon whereby people copy the actions of others because they assume this action is acceptable when others are doing it. Social proof has a role in the search for product information and in making purchasing decisions.

Santos, et. al (2023) Real-time marketing (or RTM) consists of incorporating news, events, and trends happening in the moment into the social media content of brands to capture attention and drive positive consumer responses. It is an effective strategy to increase word of mouth.

Zhuang, et.al (2023) User generated content originated from the development of social media, which refers to innovative text, picture, audio, and video content created by non-professional users. More and more people are used to obtaining information about products from social media platforms to form a preliminary awareness, so as to reduce potential uncertainty of purchase decisions.

Andrade, et. al (2024) Brand personality is the set of human characteristics associated with a brand and it serves as an effective marketing tool to generate emotional and symbolic connections with consumers. Al Adwan, et.al (2023) Collecting and analyzing data from social media sites is known as "social media analytics". Social media data allows businesses to hear the voice of the customer immediately and these insights can inform and strengthen marketing campaigns. Social media metrics provide the foundation for constant development and progress, from the number of people who view a company's content to the amount of money it generates via social media.

Zimand-Sheiner, D. (2024) Brand storytelling is a pivotal tool for strategically positioning brands. The main dimensions are story, meaning, ritual and transmedia. A brand story includes various elements such as structure, time, hero and culture. Stories that are meaningful for consumer inspirations, values, and desires has shown a more positive attitude towards the brand than other stories. Brand Storytelling should be consistently communicated across all digital channels.

Mahoney, L. M., & Tang, T. (2024) Understanding consumer behavior is crucial for businesses to turn customers into lifelong brand advocates. Marketers need to grasp the lifestyles, experiences, and routines of their consumers. Crafting social media marketing messages that resonate and engage with customers fosters positive reinforcement and builds strong relationships, encouraging repeat business. Purushothaman, G., & Manivannan, P. (2023) Using relevant hashtags in social media posts boosts discoverability, leading to greater reach among potential customers and enhanced brand awareness. However, it's important to avoid overusing or misusing them. Research popular hashtags within your industry or topic area before adding them to your posts.

Ferraro, et.al (2024) A virtual influencer can be defined as an entity—humanlike or not—that is created by AI and is visually presented as an interactive, real-time rendered entity in a digital environment. They are typically managed by a team of artists, designers, and animators, often created using generative AI, and are increasingly being used to promote products, brands, and services. Lee, et.al (2022) social media-based brand communities are widely embraced by firms who use them to create consumer engagement and facilitate stronger consumer-brand relationships. Community engagement facilitates an individual's love for a brand and ultimately leads to positive behaviours towards the brand. This love subsequently affects the individual's inclination to engage in brand-related information-sharing behaviours.

Tanase, G. C. (2024) Emotional connections have the power to transform passive consumers into loyal brand advocates. This loyalty can extend beyond individual transactions, leading to increased customer lifetime value. Loyal customers are also more inclined to recommend the brand to friends and family, acting as organic brand ambassadors. Emotional experiences that resonate with consumers can create a unique brand identity. Choi, et.al (2021) Brand advocacy positively influences purchase intentions of brand advocates. The amount of time spent on Facebook moderates the relationship between brand advocacy and purchase intentions. Khetarpal, M., & Singh, S. (2023) Marketers frequently use time-limited promotional offers to boost sales. The implementation of limited-time messages in online promotions significantly influences consumers' impulse buying behavior.

Sivakumar, A. (2024) Gamification makes online learning enjoyable and engaging. While online learning is a powerful educational tool, course dropouts remain an issue, not solely due to course content or value. Social interactions among students and engaging elements are also crucial in online learning ecosystems. Marketers can highlight these gamification and reward features in their social media marketing strategies. Meral, K. Z. (2021) Customer's data privacy is an important risk as the private data of the users collected by the social media platforms might be used improperly, and for the marketers, the negative electronic word-of-mouth about the product or services might have negative outcomes for the company.

Sansome, et .al (2024) Brand transparency involves a proactive, positive, and intentional approach to communicating about its operations. The information shared should be easily understandable by customers. Managers need to distinguish between simply making information available and being truly transparent. Their transparency efforts should meet the expectations and needs of their target audience. Stsiampkouskaya, et.al (2021) Emotions influence the impact of engagement on posting frequency. Instagram users, in particular, often feel excitement and enthusiasm when they receive more engagement than anticipated. Shorter pauses between posts lead to increased excitement and higher engagement levels. Thomas, et.al (2024) The importance of EdTech in sustainability education is increasing, with its potential to nurture a generation of environmentally aware and responsible global citizens. The swift progress in Education Technology (EdTech) presents valuable opportunities for educational institutions to incorporate sustainable business practices into their operations and curriculum.

III. Methodology

Research design : The researcher plans to use exploratory research design to study how social media marketing and branding strategy influence EdTech startups.

Data collection methods: Primary data collection method is through questionnaire/Survey method. The researcher approached through social media, and the google form link to approach with the respondents . Researcher finally got 60 number of responses. Secondary data was collected using review method. Several journals and books using google scholar were reviewed.

Sample selection: Random sampling technique is used, wherein consumers of social media which includes students and professional were selected as respondents. As we have to understand how social media marketing and branding strategy will influence EdTech Startups the consumers who consume such data will directly contribute to the research and in identifying the most important factors.

Sample Size : The researcher intends to do ‘Factor Analysis’ during data analysis. ‘**KMO value**’ tells whether the sample size is significant to do overall factor analysis or not. After collection of data, it was found that KMO value is 0.763. And if KMO value is ≥ 0.70 then the sample size is sufficient for factor analysis and inferences.

Data analysis techniques: For data analysis “**Exploratory Factor analysis**” is used. Utmost care is taken to avoid sampling error (taking maximum number of possible sample size) and doing proper and accurate data entry to avoid the “systematic bias”. Various tests have been used like KMO value, ‘Bartley test of sphericity’ value and ‘Anti image’ values to cross validate the sample size. ‘**KMO value**’ tells whether the sample size is significant to do overall factor analysis or not. If KMO value is ≥ 0.70 then the sample size is sufficient for factor analysis and inferences. ‘**Bartley test of sphericity**’ tells whether the correlation matrices are identity matrix or not. If the identity matrix, then it will show as many factors, as many indicators/items/ variables. ‘**Anti image**’ creates distinct correlation (0 to +1) and covariance matrices (takes any value). It tells, whether, the sample size is sufficient for each and every variable. It should be $> +0.5$ to include the variable, else we can drop off.

IBM SPSS Statistics is used for statistical and data analysis purpose throughout.

IV. RESULTS

The researcher formed the conceptual framework. From the available literatures following variables / indicators were identified to start the initial work. These are listed below.

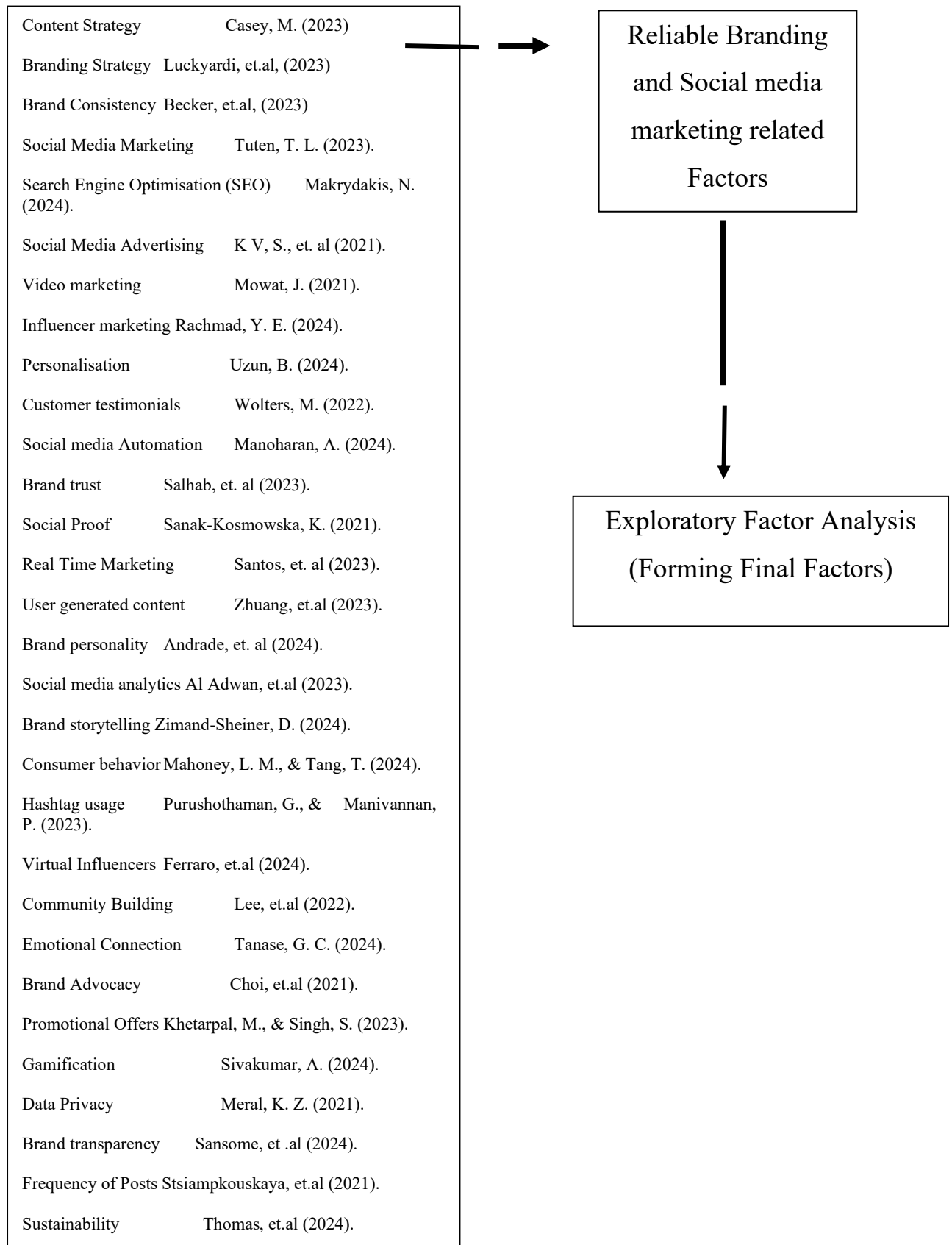


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of secondary data

Presentation of findings

Qualitative findings: Key findings that could emerge from research on "Social Media Marketing and Branding Strategies for EdTech Startups" based on Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of 30 variables revealing two main factors—credibility and integrity:

1. Credibility as a Core Branding Factor:

The analysis highlights credibility as a major determinant in the effectiveness of social media marketing for EdTech startups. This suggests that building trust and authenticity through consistent, reliable content is crucial for gaining customer confidence. Startups must ensure that their claims are backed by evidence, such as user success stories, partnerships with educational institutions, and expert endorsements.

2. Integrity's Role in Brand Perception:

Integrity emerged as the second major factor, indicating that transparency and ethical practices strongly influence brand perception. EdTech startups must ensure that their social media presence reflects honesty, such as transparent pricing, clear communication of educational outcomes, and ethical data use practices to build lasting relationships with customers.

Researcher gave the suitable names of the final factors: Credibility and Integrity.

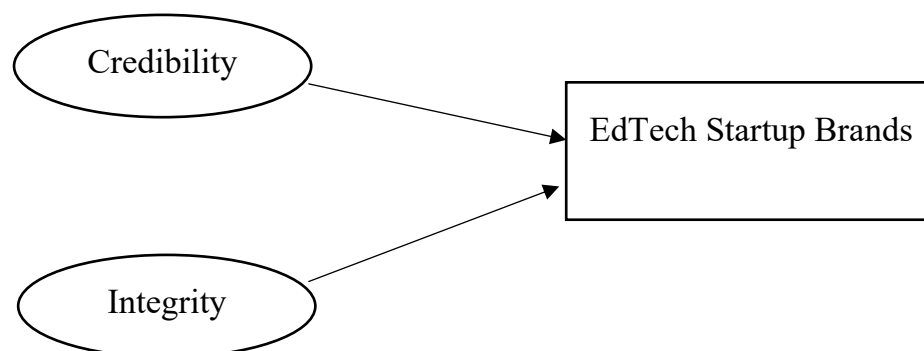


Figure 2: Final Factors

IV. Data analysis and Interpretation

Exploratory factor analysis is a process in which the large number of variables can be reduced to smaller number of sets of identified variables to find out underlying theoretical phenomenon. Various tests have been done which show the suitability of the data. All tests are done through IBM SPSS

KMO and Bartlett's test *KMO \geq 7.0 is accepted reference value ; KMO value (.763) is > 0.70 therefore sample is adequate. Bartlett's test of Sphericity shows it is significant (0.001).

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.763
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1420.877
	Df	435
	Sig.	.000

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Total Variance Explained

Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.666	53.312	53.312	2.666	53.312	53.312	2.093	41.860	41.860
2	1.128	22.555	75.867	1.128	22.555	75.867	1.700	34.007	75.867
3	.509	10.179	86.046						
4	.410	8.207	94.253						
5	.287	5.747	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 2: Total variance explained

Interpretation for Total Variance Explained. From (cumulative %) column it shows variance is 61.66% . Any value > 50 % is good . It also shows total 2 factors have emerged (whose eigen value is >1.0)

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component	
	Credibility	Integrity
Q.13 Social Proof	.889	
Q.11 Social media Automation	.811	
Q.12 Brand trust	.764	
Q.30 Sustainability		.897
Q.28 Brand transparency		.867
Percentage variance	41.860	75.867
Eigen Value	2.666	1.128
Cronbach's Alpha	.801	.772

KMO = .684, Bartlett's chi square = .95, P value = .000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation

Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Table 3: Rotated component matrix table

This table shows which set variables form the final factors.

Reliability Statistics of the factors.

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.801	.802	3

Table 4: Reliability statistics for 1st factor

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.772	.774	2

Table 5: Reliability statistics for 2nd factor

Doing reliability test for final factors Cronbach's Alpha is .801 for first factor and is .772 for second factor. This shows both the final factors named credibility and integrity are reliable and consistent.

V. DISCUSSION

The discussion highlights the pivotal role of credibility and integrity in shaping effective social media strategies for EdTech startups. Credibility, enhanced through influencer collaborations, authentic testimonials, and educational content, establishes authority and trust. Integrity, reflected in transparent communication and ethical branding, fosters long-term loyalty. Audience segmentation reveals that students, parents, and educators perceive these values differently, necessitating tailored content approaches. Strategic content such as success stories and behind-the-scenes operations strengthens these perceptions. When linked to success metrics like user retention and brand loyalty, the impact of these factors becomes measurable. Additionally, comparing competitors' use of credibility and integrity offers valuable insights to refine a startup's social media positioning.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that **credibility** and **integrity** are pivotal in shaping effective social media marketing and branding strategies for EdTech startups. In an industry where trust is crucial, especially in education, these factors play a significant role in establishing a brand that resonates with its target audience. By focusing on credibility—through demonstrating expertise, sharing success stories, and partnering with recognized educators—startups can build trust and authority. At

the same time, showcasing integrity through transparency, ethical practices, and open communication helps create a positive and trustworthy brand image that fosters long-term loyalty. Additionally, personalization also plays a key role in engaging users, allowing startups to tailor content and build deeper connections with their audience. By using these findings, EdTech startups can create a strong brand presence on social media, standing out in a competitive market.

Limitations: Only general public or consumers of social media were considered for this research. Any generalization is purely related to digital marketing industry. This research does not answer the influence on EdTech startups due to pandemic (like corona), act of gods, terrorism, recession, etc. The sample size could be more for better results.

Recommendation for Future Research : Future research could explore the evolving impact of emerging social media platforms and AI-driven content on perceptions of credibility and integrity in EdTech marketing. Additionally, further studies could examine how these factors influence customer loyalty and brand equity over time across different audience segments.

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