



## The Role of Social Media Content Marketing (SMCM) as a Digital Marketing Strategy towards the Internal Factors of Consumer Behavior among the Millennials

Nur Syakirah Ahmad\*, Rozaini Rosli

Lincoln University College, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, 47301 Malaysia

\*Corresponding Author's E-mail: [syakiera89@gmail.com](mailto:syakiera89@gmail.com) , [rosrozaini@yahoo.com](mailto:rosrozaini@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

In this savvy world of technology, most consumers want something that is quick, convenient, and can fulfill their needs. Hence, it is parallel to the businesses nowadays that have the tendency to use online platforms to market their products. Thus, social media becomes one of the most popular online selling mediums among business firms. In a social media marketing strategy, one of the most important elements that needs to be highlighted by the firm is the content marketing itself. In other words, to succeed in a social media marketing strategy, it is necessary for the firm to provide high-quality content marketing for consumers. Considering that nowadays most consumers in the world use social media as one of the mediums through which they shop, the author suggests Social Media Content Marketing (SMCM) plays a role in influencing consumer behaviour. Social media will work more effectively if the content marketing displayed is of high quality and meets the needs of consumers who buy online. Therefore, this SMCM model is one of the digital marketing strategies that need to be emphasized in online marketing, which in turn will have a positive impact on consumer behaviour. This paper will discuss further the SMCM on online purchases.

**Keywords:** Social Media Content Marketing (SMCM); Content Marketing; Social Media; Millennials; Consumer Behaviour; Social Media Marketing; Digital Marketing

### Introduction

In this modern technological era, it is anticipated that 4.26 billion people will utilize social media worldwide in 2021. This number is projected to nearly double to 6 billion by 2027 (Canuael, 2023). Due to evolving technology, consistent feature modifications, and fluctuating customer behavior, digital marketers must always be on the lookout for the next big thing. In this new technological era, the creation of electronic devices and the availability of the Internet have transformed traditional marketing into digital marketing. TikTok's ascent as the preferred social networking site for both users and marketers will accelerate in 2023. It is impacted by a number of trends, including those experienced by other social media firms and the rising popularity of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) formats in social media, two realms where TikTok is well-positioned to take the lead (Canuael, 2023).

Digital marketing channels include social media, search engines, websites, and email that help businesses connect with current and potential customers (Ponde & Jain, 2019). In the present, most businesses have employed digital marketing, and it has become a new trend for them to achieve their marketing goals. There are several components of digital marketing that provide an effective result for customers' actions and behaviour that eventually lead to high profits for businesses. The digital marketing components encompass of; Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing (CM), Social Networks Ads, Google Ads, Pay-per-click

(PPC), email marketing, and Affiliate Marketing (Dumitriu *et al.*, 2019). However, in today's world of business, most firms adopt digital marketing channels to reach their customers. Among the digital marketing channels that are usually involved in business strategies, social media and content marketing mutually need each other (Ahmad, Musa & Zakaria, 2021). Ponde & Jain (2019) also urge that in the present, content marketing plays a vital role in the realm of digital marketing as it can generate the management and implementation of varieties of engaging, written, downloadable, and visual digital media content. Thus, the author will discuss further this digital marketing channel strategy and its roles in the internal factors of consumer behaviour among millennials.

### Review of Literature:

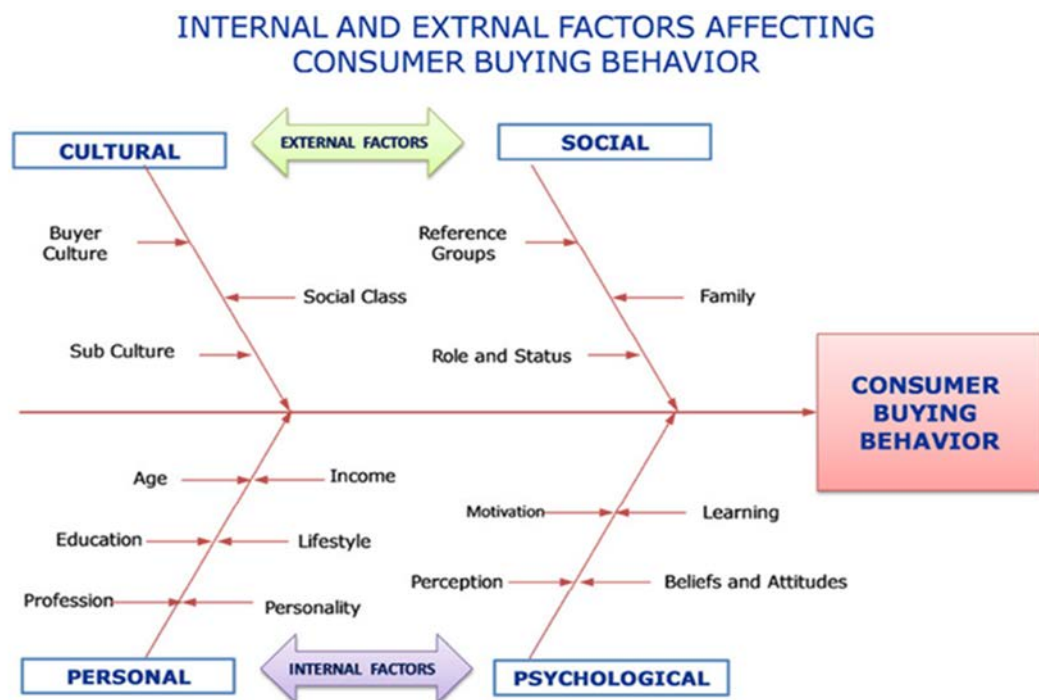
Basically, the term of social media has been derived from the format of electronic communication that consists of Web sites for blogging and social networking, in which the users form online communities to share ideas, information, videos, images, personal messages, and so on (Philip & Keller, 2016; Edosomwan *et al.*, 2011). However, the definition of social media is slightly different according to Manning (2014); he stated that social media can be divided into two different ages, which encompass the broadcast age and the interactive age. Broadcast age is basically dependent on one entity, such as a newspaper company, television station, or radio station, and customers always get late feedback from this kind of media. Otherwise, it is more convenient for the customers when they enter the interactive age, as it has two-way communication and the customers can get feedback on what they want to know from the business firms instantly. There are many forms of social media in this interactive age, such as video-sharing circles (You Tube), social networking sites (Google+, Facebook, LinkedIn), microblogs and blogs (Twitter), collaborative projects (Wikipedia), virtual social worlds (Second Life), instant messaging (Mxit) and virtual game worlds (World of Warcraft). Sometimes all of these social media classifications are commonly pointed out as social networking sites (Kaplan & Haeinlin, 2010).

When a business company uses social media as a medium for their marketing, it is very important for them to emphasize on highly effective content marketing in the business strategies. Generally, content marketing is one of the marketing strategy tools. This marketing strategy has been caught much attention among the business practitioners before the scholar researchers. For example, one of content marketing evangelists that famous among the business practitioners is Joe Pulizzi. Pulizzi (2012) is the founder of Content Marketing Institute and according to him, "*Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action*". Besides that, another one of previous content marketing proponent who is Odden (2012) has defined content marketing as "*an approach to attract, engage and inspire customers to a logical conclusion to buy and share through content that emphasizes with the varied interests and behaviours during the buying cycle*". In summary, based on both the purposes of content marketing that clearly showed it was related with customer engagement. Thus, through social media the business firms also can create the engagement with the customers easily without incurring much cost and as return it can help the firm to strengthen their brand experience. Edosomwan *et al.* (2011) conclude that social media is a powerful tool for the business firms to convey the brand value as well as the brand attribute because it enables open format of communication.

In relation to this topic, the author asserts that social media and content marketing are closely interrelated in determining a business strategy. As mentioned by Ahmad (2016), social media marketing could not function well without content marketing because the content itself is something that the firms can share and post to their customers. On the other hand, Social Media Content Marketing (SMCM) is basically the term that reflects social media and content marketing for the business strategy, as both elements are mutually dependent on each other (Ahmad, Musa & Zakaria, 2021). In addition, Mafas & Kuppusamy (2019) used the term "SCM" which refers to the integration of content marketing via social media. Both terms basically refer to the integration of content marketing and social media as part of a business strategy. Meanwhile, Musa, Ahmad & Janiffa, (2020) stated that SMCM encompasses three elements of content marketing, which consist of photos, videos, and websites. Besides that, the author concluded that the SMCM is relevant to be used in this research as it is closely related to social media

consumption among businesses and consumers by utilizing content marketing as a strategy. Many marketing proponents believe that customers are generated and retained by marketing strategies that rely on serving, influencing, and knowing consumers (Barmola & Srivastava, 2010).

Thus, the objective of this study is to examine the role of SMCM in consumer behaviour. Consumer behaviour commonly associated with the purchase, consumption, and selection of goods and services, as well as ideas or experiences for satisfying needs and wants (Rani, 2014; Kotler & Keller, 2012). In a more specific definition, consumer behaviour is closely related to the decision-making process for the use of products and services (Mihart, 2012; Orji, 2013). There are four major factors that can influence consumer behaviour. Such factors usually consist of cultural, social, personal, and psychological aspects. Meanwhile, Khaniwale (2015) divides consumer behaviour into two categories: external (cultural, social) and internal (personal, psychological). However, the author will focus more on internal factors, which include personal and psychological ones. These internal factors are associated with SMCM and eventually affect consumer behaviour among millennial online customers. Figure 1 below delineates four major factors that commonly affect consumer behaviour.



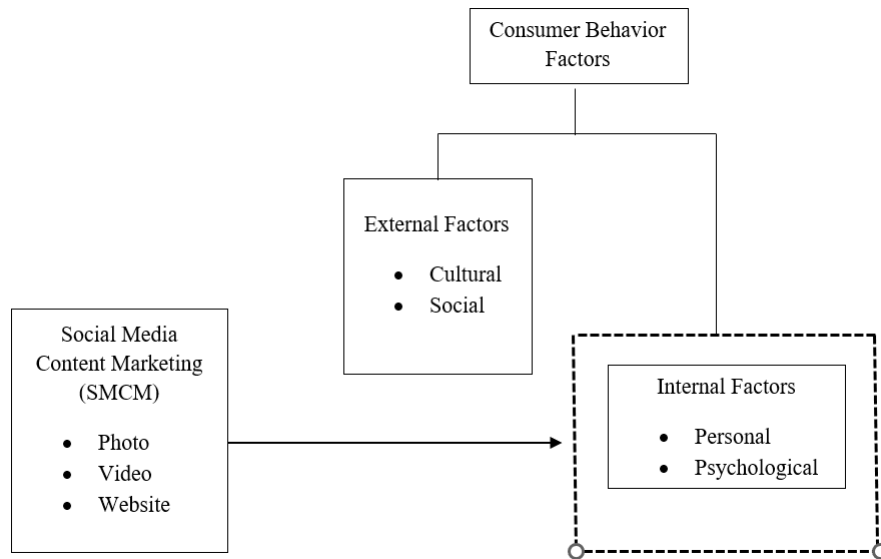
Sources: Consumer buying behaviour Khaniwale (2015)

**Figure 1: The Factors That Affecting Consumer Behaviour**

**Discussion**

**The Role of Social Media Content Marketing (SMCM)**

Basically, the SMCM consists of three elements that include photos, videos, and websites (Musa, Ahmad & Janiffa, 2020). The author agreed with this researcher regarding the model, as social media in marketing is associated with content marketing, which commonly takes the form of photos, videos, and websites. In this study, the author emphasizes the role of SMCM in affecting the internal factors of consumer behaviour. Figure 2.0 below illustrates the role of SMCM in the internal factors of consumer behaviour.



Sources: Adapted and modified from Musa, Ahmad & Janiffa, (2020) and Khaniwale (2015)

**Figure 2: SMCM and Factors of Consumer Behaviour**

Based on Figure 2, it illustrates the role of SMCM in the internal factors of consumer behaviour. In the present, there are many online consumers that mostly consist of the Centennial and Millennial cohorts. In parallel to the development of content marketing through the advent of social media platforms, it has brought many changes to the marketing environment around the world. Social media has become an essential way of communicating globally among millennials. According to Mafas and Kuppusamy (2019), young people can be divided into two cohorts: millennials (Generation Y, who were born between 1980-2000) and centennials (Generation Z, who were born between 1997-2010). However, Millennials are a decidedly larger part of the population who age between 19 and 39, and their behaviour is like the compass that businesses must follow in order to gain their attention (Werenowska & Rezepka, 2020). Hence, the author will focus more on the millennials regarding of their consumer behaviour. Most of these groups tend to spend much of their daily time on social media activities such as looking for information, social relationships, and entertainment that are highly influenced for marketing purposes (Werenowska & Rezepka, 2020). Apparently, nearly all social media users are millennials, and they prefer to shop online.

The internal factors of consumer behaviour encompass personal and psychological factors. For example, the SMCM involves social media consumption among millennials, as their personalities regarding the responses of traditional marketing stimuli are not extremely positive compared to those of the Baby Boomers and Xers (Naumovska, 2017). They have very low interest in traditional media like television, and they prefer social media and interactive platforms as well as swift communication (quick texting, messaging, and social media platforms) (Williams & Page, 2011). On the other hand, the lifestyle of the millennials, who tend to own their own computers and mobile phones, also has a big impact on their consumer behaviour especially in online shopping. As the consequences of owning a cell phone drove them to access digital media on a daily basis and be able to buy anything they wanted from suppliers around the world, eventually this circumstance was recognized as an activator of online shopping (Smith, 2011). That is how social media has affected the internal behaviour of millennials. In this case, content plays a crucial role for the youngster who is basically from the Millennial and generation Y (Spencer, 2009). This statement has been supported by Adams (2015), who highlighted that content marketing plays a pivotal role as one of the most effective driving forces of acquired media, like a vehicle that drives traffic and creates engagement with a brand. Therefore, based on the evidence presented above, it indicates the SMCM role in internal consumer behaviour, especially among millennials.

In relation to the personal factor, the millennials' lifestyles are more urban, and they prefer products or services that are up-to-date and look prestigious. So, the business firms need to consistently update and modify their promotions to drive traffic among this group of shoppers, as they may get bored easily (Williams & Page, 2011). To overcome this problem, the content marketing evangelists such as Pulizzi (2012) always insisted that good content marketing should be consistently created by business firms with relevant and valuable content in order to enhance and change consumer behavior. In keeping with the pace of these millennials, it is very necessary for business companies to provide the latest marketing content that is relevant to the needs of this group through social media platforms. This is as a result of the fact that they shop frequently, and their expectations for the selection of products should include prestige or novelty (Cohen, 2009; Furlow & Knott, 2009). Again, it proves that social media and content marketing, or SMCM, is a good strategy for business firms to cater to millennial consumers according to their internal consumer behaviour factors.

Moreover, psychological factors can also be considered one of the internal factors influencing consumer behavior. Basically, the psychological encompasses the elements of perception, learning, motivation, and attitudes and beliefs. For instance, one of the millennials' motivations is having the attitude of needing to control their environment, and the Internet is one way for them to foster this sense of control (Alch, 2000). This is because, through the Internet, millennials can express their opinions and views via lots of websites and social media platforms that have the tendency to affect other consumers and marketers (Smith, 2011). Hence, it is crucial for the marketers to provide SMCM that fulfills the millennials needs by mastering which media they tend to use, how individuals use media, and when they utilize it (Luck & Matthew, 2010). For example, this group has been defined as a successful and up-to-date marketing world order that focuses on digital-centric, social-first, and video-driven marketing (Genauer, 2016). Besides that, the millennial generation has a perception that very innovative and efficient ICT services will make their lives easier (Duffet & Wakeham, 2016). They live in a technological environment that really emphasizes their need to continuously stay online and connected, as well as their preference to engage with brands on social media, which eventually leads to shopping online (Bareblatt, 2015; Barney, 2011). Looking at the lifestyle and needs of young people today, they do not run far from the realm of social media, and this is one of the opportunities for businesses to use content marketing strategies to generate profits. Therefore, it shows that SMCM plays a crucial role in a business, especially for internal factors of consumer behaviour and the needs of this millennial group.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, the SMCM plays a pivotal role in business nowadays as the young generation has included social media as one of their daily needs. Through social media, they can communicate with others by buying products, expressing their views, and so on. Thus, businesses should take this opportunity by creating valuable content marketing that can attract this young generation and finally end with a positive response instead of increasing profit. However, it is necessary for the businesses to deeply define the behaviour of this cohort and provide an effective SMCM that meets their needs and satisfaction. Later, people will totally depend on social media for their daily activities, especially for business marketing, as social media can help both consumers and businesses communicate quickly, make it possible for all parties to use and experience it, as well as earn benefits. As a result, it will help organizations and stakeholders deliver, communicate, and change offerings that are valuable to them. Lastly, based on the arguments that have been stated above, it proves that something that drives a social media system for marketing nowadays is the marketing content itself. Therefore, it is appropriate for a business entity to use SMCM strategies to meet consumer behaviour.

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## Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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