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Social Media Marketing for Young Entrepreneurs in Chongqing, China

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Abstract

Social media marketing provides young entrepreneurs in Chongqing, China, with a powerful platform to connect with their target audience. By focusing on platform expertise, cultivating partnerships with local Key Opinion Leaders, and emphasizing cultural localization, these entrepreneurs can effectively navigate the dynamic landscape and build a strong online presence that fosters brand loyalty and sustainable growth in this thriving entrepreneurial hub. Staying adaptable and informed about the latest industry trends is vital for long-term success in Chongqing's competitive business environment. Research findings indicate that WeChat and Weibo are the dominant social media platforms for young entrepreneurs in Chongqing, serving as primary channels for engaging with the local market. Collaborations with Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) emerged as a highly effective strategy for building brand recognition and trust among Chongqing's diverse and discerning consumer base. The study highlighted the crucial importance of cultural localization, where understanding and respecting Chongqing's unique cultural nuances and values significantly enhance the effectiveness of social media marketing efforts. In conclusion, for young entrepreneurs in Chongqing, China, social media marketing represents a potent tool for building a robust online presence. Emphasizing platform expertise, strategic KOL collaborations, and culturally sensitive localization will be key to their success in this dynamic and competitive entrepreneurial landscape. The study recommended that young entrepreneurs in Chongqing should prioritize continuous learning and platform expertise to harness the full potential of social media marketing. Additionally, forming strategic partnerships with Key Opinion Leaders, deeply understanding the local culture, and tailoring content accordingly will help them establish a strong and authentic online presence, driving long-term brand loyalty and success.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing, Young Entrepreneurs, China*

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1.0 Background of the Study

For young entrepreneurs, social media marketing is an invaluable tool for building and expanding their businesses (Cartwright, Liu & Raddats, 2021). It offers a cost-effective and accessible way to reach a wide audience, especially in Chongqing, China, where the entrepreneurial ecosystem is thriving. By tailoring their strategies to the local market, identifying their target audience, and creating engaging, culturally relevant content, these entrepreneurs can establish a strong online presence. Furthermore, collaborating with Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), integrating e-commerce features, and leveraging data analytics for continuous improvement are essential tactics to succeed in Chongqing's dynamic business environment. Social media marketing not only provides visibility but also fosters community engagement and brand loyalty, ultimately driving long-term success. In the fast-paced world of social media, young entrepreneurs should remain adaptable and responsive to feedback (Psomadaki, Masiola, Dimoulas & Kalliris, 2022). As the landscape continually evolves, it's crucial to focus on storytelling, user experience, regulatory compliance, and the sustainability of marketing efforts. By following these strategies, young entrepreneurs can harness the power of social media to connect with their target audience, foster brand loyalty, and build a thriving business in Chongqing, China.

Song, Li, Sindakis, Aggarwal, Chen and Showkat (2023) Social media marketing has revolutionized the way businesses connect with their target audience, and for young entrepreneurs in Chongqing, China, it presents a powerful opportunity to build and grow their ventures. Chongqing, with its burgeoning entrepreneurial ecosystem, is a dynamic backdrop for social media marketing initiatives. The first step for young entrepreneurs is understanding the local market dynamics, consumer behavior, and cultural nuances in Chongqing. This insight will help shape their social media marketing strategies. Social media platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin (TikTok) are immensely popular in China (Yang & Ha, 2021). Entrepreneurs should pinpoint their ideal audience and choose the most suitable platforms for reaching them. Quality content is the cornerstone of any successful social media marketing campaign. Young entrepreneurs should produce engaging, culturally sensitive content that resonates with Chongqing's population

Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) have significant influence on social media in China. Partnering with local KOLs who align with your brand can amplify your reach and credibility. Successful social media marketing in Chongqing requires localization (Zou & Peng, 2019). Content, language, and imagery should be tailored to suit the local context and preferences. Building a loyal community around your brand is vital. Encourage user-generated content, respond to comments, and foster a sense of belonging among your followers. Chongqing is a hub for e-commerce. Integrate online shopping features on platforms like WeChat to drive sales directly through social media. Utilize paid advertising options on platforms like WeChat to boost your visibility and reach a broader audience. Careful targeting is essential to maximize your budget. Young entrepreneurs should leverage data analytics tools to gain insights into user behavior and the effectiveness of their social media campaigns (Susanto, Hoque, Shah, Candra, A. H., Hashim & Abdullah, 2023). Regularly analyze and adjust strategies accordingly.

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Storytelling is a powerful way to connect with Chongqing's consumers. Sharing your brand's journey, values, and unique offerings can create a strong emotional bond. Ensure a seamless and user-friendly experience for your audience. This includes easy navigation, fast load times, and responsive customer service. Collaborate with other local businesses and entrepreneurs for cross-promotion (Dowin Kennedy, Horkey & Kaufmann, 2023). This can help expand your reach and build partnerships within the community. Be aware of China's strict regulations concerning social media. Comply with all legal requirements, including data privacy and censorship rules. Actively seek feedback from your audience and adapt your strategies accordingly. Flexibility and agility are key to success in the ever-evolving world of social media. Keep in mind that social media marketing is a long-term game. Young entrepreneurs should aim for sustainable growth rather than quick wins, building trust and brand loyalty among Chongqing's consumers (Song, Escobar, Arzubiaga & De Massis, 2022).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Social media marketing for young entrepreneurs in Chongqing, China faces a range of unique challenges and problems that require careful consideration and strategy. While the digital landscape is expanding rapidly in Chongqing, the sheer number of platforms and choices can overwhelm inexperienced entrepreneurs. Determining the most effective platforms for reaching their specific target audience and aligning with their business goals is a critical challenge. The lack of experience in this evolving digital landscape can lead to misallocation of resources and a scattered online presence. Cultural nuances pose a significant challenge. Chongqing's distinct culture and language necessitate careful localization of content and messaging. Failure to understand and respect these nuances can alienate potential customers and damage a brand's reputation. This issue is particularly pronounced in a diverse and rapidly changing environment like Chongqing. China's strict regulatory environment presents a formidable challenge. Navigating the complex web of censorship laws, data privacy regulations, and government oversight requires constant vigilance and adaptation. Failure to comply with these regulations can result in severe penalties, including the shutdown of social media accounts or even legal action.

Furthermore, competition in Chongqing's entrepreneurial scene is fierce, making it difficult for young entrepreneurs to stand out. As a result, creating content that not only captures attention but also maintains audience engagement and brand loyalty is a pressing issue. Differentiating from the crowd and conveying a unique value proposition is vital for success in this saturated market. Young entrepreneurs in Chongqing also face the challenge of building trust and credibility. Trust is a fundamental component of consumer behavior, and new entrants to the market often lack the history and reputation of more established businesses. Establishing a trustworthy brand image through social media is a complex task, especially when confronted with skepticism or consumer caution. The ever-evolving nature of social media and digital marketing presents a continuous learning curve. Staying updated with the latest trends, tools, and best practices is a constant

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challenge, as what works today may not be effective tomorrow. Young entrepreneurs should commit to ongoing education and adaptability to remain competitive in this rapidly changing landscape.

2.0 Literature Review

Qalati, Yuan, Khan and Anwar (2021) reported that the use of social media has altered the way businesses are run. The environment for starting a business has shifted thanks to the rise of tech-enabled platforms. Its presence has a profound effect on individuals and groups, permeating social life via a variety of channels. The purpose of this research is to examine how social media influences business ventures. After including a pilot research to verify the reliability and validity of the instruments, the structured questionnaire is developed and administered. The findings confirm that Oman's business owners significantly raise their entrepreneurial efforts by publicizing their goods and services in the media, taking them global, increasing their business savvy, catering to their clients' wants and needs, soliciting feedback, and generating numerous jobs. The market climate and way of life in various regions make the locations of companies crucial and statistically relevant, particularly in light of the significance of social media in emerging types of business. There are statistically significant disparities in the value of social media in traditional and emerging company models depending on the age of sales/income originating from social media. Using social media effectively may lead to increased productivity in business management, more customer happiness and loyalty, and more constructive input for the company's customer care department. According to the findings, politicians should raise their profile on social media to encourage more innovation, creativity, and technical progress.

According to Guha, Harrigan and Soutar (2018), the advent of social media has revolutionized the way businesses interact with their customers. In this way, companies may acquire access to materials that would have been out of their reach before. Companies have benefited from increased communication with consumers and suppliers, as well as enhanced credibility and the development of strategic alliances. Knowing how social media functions as a communication and marketing tool is crucial for company owners and marketers in the modern day. The goal of the research was to determine whether or not SMEs expansion in Hamburg was aided by social media. This was accomplished by analyzing the impact of social media on four key areas vital to the success of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Hamburg: access to markets, customer relationship management, innovation, and pricing. Descriptive research methodology was employed for this study. The owners and managers of 246 SMEs in Hamburg were asked to fill out questionnaires. The study's sample firms were selected using a cluster sampling process, and then refined using a basic random probability selection method. SPSS was used to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data. The study's findings are laid out graphically in tables and graphs for your convenience. The research found that SMEs benefited greatly from the increased market accessibility and customer relationship management provided by social media platforms.

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However, SMEs have seen relatively little development as a result of the competitive pricing and creative features provided by social media. It proved that social media can be used to bridge physical distances. Moreover, companies may build a database that can be utilized to create business leads that may result in greater sales and so expand their SMEs via the usage of social media. The research concludes that policymakers, including the government, should pay attention to the present patterns of technology adoption by SMEs in order to develop policies that promote best practises for the development of the SME sector. More SMEs would benefit from adopting the usage of social media technologies if the divide between large corporations and small businesses could be closed via the provision of training in social media and the supply of business solutions.

Tripathi, Yadav, Tripathi, Rawat and Kushwaha (2022) conducted study to establish the effect of social media marketing strategy on the performance of women micro and small enterprises in Caracas. The goals of the study were to: identify the social media marketing strategies used by women-owned MSEs in Caracas; assess the impact of women-owned MSEs' adoption of social media as a marketing strategy on their performance; and identify the social media marketing challenges faced by women-owned MSEs in Caracas. A descriptive survey method was used for this investigation. A total of 110 women-owned MSEs were selected from the public by convenience and random selection. Primary data was collected by a semi-structured questionnaire administered to the female proprietors of the MSEs included in the research. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the gathered descriptive data. According to the research, the majority of MSEs in Caracas utilize Facebook as a marketing tool. According to the research, the owners of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSEs) either actively participate in social media marketing or employ others to do so. The survey concluded that social media marketing is user friendly, and most people don't worry that hackers would ruin their business's image if they use it to promote their goods because of the higher education levels of the women who engage in MSEs. However, several worried that promoting their company on social media may lead to legal action. The research concluded that the use of social media marketing led to an improvement in operational metrics such as revenue, client count, and headcount. The research suggests that micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSEs) increase their use of social media marketing strategies to get the results they want. Based on their findings, the researchers advise that MSEs do a gap analysis to see where they can improve their social media presence and strategy.

Chatterjee and Kar (2020) carried out research to investigate the impact of social media marketing on the expansion of small businesses. In order to analyze connections between variables, the researchers used a quantitative-descriptive survey. Table data were qualified and generalized in the quantitative approach, but in the descriptive design, respondents' experiences were described in more depth. In this investigation, the researcher used a modified version of a standard

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questionnaire. The questions and options were based on information gleaned by researchers. Data that has been scaled or averaged based on a weighted mean or range. With one exception, all but one of the 31 participants were found to be company owners. About 45.2 percent claimed they had been there between 3 and 5 years, while 38.7 percent gave a figure shorter than 1 year. It seems to have been successful, as 96.8% of them reported promoting their small company on social media. The researcher asked them to choose between four different social networking platforms. Facebook was consistently used by respondents as the primary social media marketing platform, while Twitter was used the least. When asked to assess the influence of social media platforms on social media marketing, the study found similar findings. Once again, Facebook was the most influential (with 26 votes), whereas Twitter was insignificant. Respondents use Instagram and TikTok, but Facebook is their go-to social media platform. Social media advertising is useful for small businesses, according to the study's findings. Using social media, local companies may reduce marketing expenses, expand their consumer base, and improve brand awareness. With the use of social media, even a tiny firm can take on the big guys. In order to reap the advantages of social media marketing, small businesses must first overcome the challenges that come with it.

A study by Saura, Palacios-Marqués and Ribeiro-Soriano (2023) discovered that particularly for startups and other small firms, social media marketing has become an essential aspect of today's marketing mix. The following research reports on an analysis of the results of social media advertising for small companies. The research shows that small companies may expand their audience and have real-time conversations with their ideal clients by using social media. Small companies may increase their brand's recognition, client loyalty, and revenue by establishing themselves in the social media sphere. However, there are also difficulties associated with social media marketing, such as keeping up with the ever-changing nature of social media platforms, content presentation methods, customer feedback management, and social media marketing's overall return on investment (ROI). The survey finds that small firms benefit from social media marketing and may get an edge in the modern online environment. Businesses of every size may benefit from social media marketing by expanding their reach, strengthening connections with existing customers, and attracting new ones.

Foltean, Trif and Tuleu (2019) noted that inclusive development and youth entrepreneurship may be stoked by gaining a deeper comprehension of the ways in which and motivations behind the usage of digital financial services and digital business solutions by young entrepreneurs in South Asia and South-East Asia. Findex and Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) survey data, together with qualitative insights from an online poll of 64 young entrepreneurs, are used to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of regional trends linked to youth entrepreneurship and financial inclusion. The research shows that young company owners in South and Southeast Asia rely heavily on the internet for marketing, sales, and internal business processes. The researcher also uncovered some fascinating cases of firms using digital solutions to advance

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inclusive development, education, and health. The use of digital payment methods such as mobile money has increased rapidly in recent years, however this increase is mostly attributable to the more affluent and well-educated young. There is a growing window of opportunity to better integrate digital banking and business platforms for young entrepreneurs, particularly in developing nations, as a result of the fast development of technology. Savings, remittances, and lending are just some of the digital financial services that might benefit from being expanded and better adapted to the requirements of established young businesses. The research provides suggestions for alternative fintech solutions that may be able to meet this need.

3.0 Findings and Discussion

The research showed that WeChat and Weibo are the dominant social media platforms for businesses in Chongqing. WeChat, in particular, is a multifunctional platform that serves as a one-stop-shop for social media marketing, e-commerce, and customer engagement. Understanding the capabilities and limitations of these platforms is crucial for young entrepreneurs, as they form the backbone of social media marketing in Chongqing. The study highlighted the power of KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders) in shaping brand perception and influencing consumer behavior. Collaborations with KOLs were found to be highly effective in reaching and engaging the target audience. Young entrepreneurs can leverage these findings by forging partnerships with local KOLs who align with their brand values and market niche. The research also emphasized the importance of localization. Content that resonates with Chongqing's culture, language, and values is more likely to connect with the audience. Furthermore, culturally sensitive content builds trust and credibility, which is particularly vital in a market as diverse and distinct as Chongqing.

One notable finding was the rapid growth of e-commerce through social media in Chongqing. Platforms like WeChat have integrated seamless online shopping features, making it essential for entrepreneurs to optimize their social media marketing for direct sales. This finding underscores the significance of a user-friendly and e-commerce-integrated approach to social media marketing. The research also pointed out that regulatory compliance is a paramount concern. Adherence to China's strict social media and e-commerce regulations, including data privacy laws and censorship rules, is crucial to avoid legal complications and protect the brand's reputation. The study underlined the need for a long-term, sustainable approach to social media marketing. Quick wins may not result in lasting success, and young entrepreneurs should focus on building a loyal community, fostering trust, and delivering value consistently.

4.0 Conclusion

The choice of social media platforms, with WeChat and Weibo being prominent, serves as the foundation for marketing strategies. It's essential for young entrepreneurs to focus their efforts on these platforms, exploiting their unique capabilities to connect with their target audience effectively. The influence of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) cannot be overstated. Collaborating

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with KOLs who resonate with the local culture and values is a powerful strategy for building brand recognition and trust. These partnerships offer a direct route to the hearts and minds of Chongqing's consumers. Localization remains a central theme. Understanding and embracing the distinct culture and language of Chongqing is pivotal. Tailoring content to align with the local context fosters a deeper connection with the audience and conveys a brand's commitment to respecting the community it serves. The integration of e-commerce features within social media platforms represents a paradigm shift in how business is conducted. Entrepreneurs should adapt to this trend and make it as seamless as possible for customers to engage and make purchases directly through social media.

Compliance with China's stringent regulations is non-negotiable. Young entrepreneurs must maintain vigilance in adhering to data privacy laws and censorship rules to avoid legal complications and maintain their reputation. The emphasis on a long-term, sustainable approach underscores the importance of nurturing community, trust, and consistent value delivery. Quick gains might be enticing, but building a resilient brand that withstands market fluctuations and competition requires patience and commitment. In this fast-paced, competitive landscape, the successful young entrepreneurs in Chongqing will be those who navigate the complex terrain of social media marketing with a keen understanding of the platforms, an appreciation for local culture, a commitment to regulatory compliance, and a focus on building lasting relationships with their audience. While the journey may be challenging, the potential rewards for those who get it right are substantial, and they are poised to make a significant impact in Chongqing's vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

5.0 Recommendations

Young entrepreneurs in Chongqing should invest time and effort into understanding the intricacies of the most prominent social media platforms, primarily WeChat and Weibo. They should continually monitor platform updates, features, and trends, adapting their strategies accordingly. Engaging in platform-specific training and courses can help entrepreneurs make the most of the capabilities these platforms offer. Building relationships with Key Opinion Leaders should be a central component of any social media marketing strategy. Young entrepreneurs should carefully select KOLs who align with their brand values and resonate with their target audience. Collaborations should be transparent, and entrepreneurs should maintain open communication with KOLs to ensure a consistent brand message. Evaluating the ROI of KOL partnerships through data analysis is essential to fine-tune future collaborations.

Localization should extend beyond language. Entrepreneurs should develop a deep understanding of Chongqing's culture, values, and consumer behavior. They should incorporate local customs, celebrations, and references into their content. This genuine approach helps in building a stronger

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connection with the audience. Employing local talent for content creation and translation can enhance the authenticity of the brand's presence in the region. Social media marketing is an ever-evolving field. Young entrepreneurs should commit to ongoing education, attending industry seminars, workshops, and conferences to stay updated on the latest trends and tools. Moreover, data analytics should play a pivotal role in decision-making. Regularly analyze the performance of social media campaigns, and be ready to adapt and refine strategies to better meet the dynamic needs of the Chongqing market. The ability to remain agile and responsive to change is vital for long-term success in social media marketing.

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