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EFFECTIVENESS OF EMAIL MARKETING VS. SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This research study compares social media marketing and email marketing on the basis of customer engagement. It looks into a number of metrics, which reveal that email generally performs better than social media across most indicators. Email marketing generates higher click-through and open rates, which translates into better ROI. Social media, in turn, scores higher on brand awareness and content engagement. According to the study, the two approaches together can enhance customer engagement. This study assists marketers in leveraging digital approaches and managing customer relationships more efficiently.

KEYWORDS: *Email Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Customer Engagement, Open Rates, Click-Through Rates, Conversion Rates, Return on Investment, Digital Marketing Strategies, Brand Awareness.*

INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing strategies are an important part of organizations to increase customer interaction. Organizations typically prefer email or social media marketing. Email marketing offers direct communication, which leads to greater open and click-through rates than social media (Smith & Johnson, 2023). Research indicates email campaigns have greater return on investment, opting for direct conversions (Anderson et al., 2022). Social media marketing, however, offers wide reach and interaction, enabling brands to engage more people through interactive content (Thompson, 2023).

There is not much in-depth research contrasting the effectiveness of social media marketing and email marketing. This study seeks to identify their strengths and weaknesses in terms of engagement, conversion rates, and ROI. With 31.9% of marketing investments going to digital media (Davis & Miller, 2024), their effectiveness needs to be realized. The study seeks to provide actionable guidance to marketers in how to use both strategies for more effective customer engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media marketing interest has increased over email marketing for customer interaction because of the need by businesses to drive digital campaigns. Initial studies had identified the need for email marketing to enable direct interaction and retention by sending messages directly to customers' mailboxes (Smith & Johnson, 2023). Research indicates that email campaigns have greater open and click-through rates, which translate to improved conversion rates compared to other types of advertisements (Anderson et al., 2022).

Social media appeared in the late 2000s with an emphasis on customer interaction and community. Thompson (2023) discovered that it increases brand recall and live interaction, leading to customer loyalty. It is platform and target market dependent, however.

Studies compare the two. Rodriguez (2015) discovered that social media generates traffic and engagement but email marketing delivers higher ROIs and direct conversions. Davis and Miller (2024) insisted on utilizing them in combination to achieve maximum engagement.

Few are the existing in-depth studies of customer engagement metrics. In this study, email and social campaigns are compared in terms of how effective they are based on engagement percentages, conversion rates, and ROI in order to provide practical insights into the practice and preference of an ever-changing online marketplace.

RESEARCHGAP

No longitudinal studies are documented in the literature on social media marketing versus email marketing, measuring long-term performance and customer effect. The majority of studies only look at short-term measures such as openings and conversions, without a break in their effect on long-term customer interaction.

- **Long-Term Impact on Customer Relationships:** Social media and email marketing are at the core of long-term customer value, retention, and loyalty. Studies have a tendency to ignore the way consistent interaction helps mature customer relationships.
- **Integration of Marketing Channels:** Since businesses employ integrated marketing, studies on how social media and email can be combined to increase customer engagement are needed. The effect of these channels on customer behavior is not studied extensively.
- **Industry Insights:** Research indicates that email and social media marketing strategy performance differs substantially by industry and demographics (IBM Workforce Institute, 2022).

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Yet, the long-term impact of email and social media marketing in some industries has not been adequately researched.

Research Gap Data

- **Engagement Measures:** Email marketing has a reported average open rate of 18-20%, higher than lower rates of social media (Smith & Johnson, 2023), but nothing is known long-term for both.
- **Customer Loyalty:** Email marketing can return $36 for each $1 invested, demonstrating its worth for loyalty (Davis & Miller, 2024). Its impact on long-term engagement is, however, unknown.

Industry variance refers to the fact that social media and email marketing perform differently across industries, with targeted email performing better in technology than social media in services (IBM Workforce Institute, 2022).

HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

H1: Engagement Efficiency Hypothesis

Email marketing demonstrates higher engagement levels compared to social media, according to numerous different metrics.

H1a: Social media engagement will be no more than 20% lower than open rates of email campaigns, controlling for industry and audience.

• H1b: CTRs of email campaigns will be 30% higher than social media posts when audience and content are the same.

• H1c: Email marketing campaigns will result in a conversion rate at least 15% greater than social media marketing, at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Smith & Johnson (2023) found that email marketing campaigns were most likely to surpass social media in conversions.

H2: Customer Retention Hypothesis

Email marketing consumer retention trends are a long way from those collected through social marketing:

• H2a: The customer retention rate for email marketing is at least 10 percentage points higher than customer retention rate for social media, considering purchase frequency and demographics.

H2b: Customers who have been sent e-mails for email marketing purposes will exhibit a notably smaller six-month churn rate than their social media counterparts (≥15% expected difference).

H2c: Perceived value will mediate the link between marketing channels and customer retention, while customer engagement levels will moderate it.

Anderson et al. (2022) discovered that individual communication increases customer retention.

H3: Brand Perception and Loyalty Hypothesis

Email marketing increases awareness and brand awareness among consumers.

• H3a. The brand loyalty scores of the customers through email marketing will be at least 20% higher than customers' brand loyalty scores through social media.

• H3b. Customer satisfaction is strongly linked with engagement with email marketing, after controlling for purchase history and product type.

H3c: Customers acquired through email marketing will repeat buy at least 25% quicker than customers acquired through social media.

Thompson (2023) discovered that personalized emails increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

H4: Contextual Effectiveness Hypothesis

Social media marketing and email marketing success differ by market segmentation and circumstance.

H4a: The success of email and social media marketing will differ significantly across B2B and B2C, and B2B will have the most significant effect.

• H4b: The relative effectiveness of social media and email marketing will vary by product type, with high-involvement products preferring email more.

• H4c: Email campaign cost-effectiveness in comparison to advertising on social media will differ depending on the industry and company size.

Findings of the PWC Global Marketing Study (2023) show that effectiveness differs with market dynamics.

H5: Long-Term Engagement Hypothesis

Email marketing connects with customers through individual long-term trends:

H5a: Within email customers, after demographic adjustment, first repeat purchase will be at least 20% quicker than it will be for social media customers.

• H5b: Long-term involvement, such as repeat purchases within a year, will be at least 25% greater for customers gained through email marketing within two years. • H5c: Email marketing customers will have higher CLV scores, driven by overall satisfaction. New Corporate Executive Board 2023 data shows that continuous interaction is highly related to early acquisition channels.

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Alignment of Hypotheses and Constructs for "Effectiveness of Email Marketing vs. Social Media Marketing in Customer Engagement"

- **Directly Aligned with Original Research Focus:** The hypotheses are specifically designed to compare the effectiveness of email marketing and social media marketing, focused on their respective impacts on customer engagement metrics like open rates, click-through rates, and conversion rates. This ensures that the research remains inline with its core objective.
- **Base Upon Results Presented in Literature Review:** There is evidence the constructs are drawn from established work that features many of the factors associated with e-mail marketing, as well as social media. By drawing references to studies demonstrating each campaign's strength and weakness, a research basis solidly constructed atop existing knowledge may be used in this effort.
- **Address Identified Research Gaps:** this research seeks to fill a large gap in critical understanding regarding long-term customer involvement influenced by how email marketing, and social media marketing are likely to be employed. It checks the mediators of customer satisfaction and connection with emotional states as ways by which the operational mechanisms of those marketing strategies influence long-term involvement.
- **Enable Quantitative Testing and Measurement:** The hypotheses are framed to be amenable to quantitative analysis, so statistical testing of the relationships between variables is possible. This will ensure empirical evidence that either supports or rejects the relationships, thereby strengthening the reliability and validity of the findings.
- **Support the Research Objectives:** The hypotheses directly support the overall comparative effectiveness of email marketing and social media marketing in relation to the research objectives. The study will focus on key metrics: customer engagement, retention rates, and overall customer lifetime value.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- **To Conduct a Comparative Analysis of Engagement Metrics:** This aims to compare whether email marketing or social media marketing is more effective and efficient as compared to one another by performing an analysis over key performance indicators such as the open rate, click-through rates, conversion rate, and overall return on investment.
- **To evaluate the relationship between marketing channels and customer retention**: It is an objective that examines how different marketing channels may influence customer retention patterns through time, such as churn rates and repeat purchase rates.
- This aim will help evaluate the influence of email marketing in comparison with social media marketing on the outcomes of customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. In doing so, the use of surveys and mechanisms of feedbacks can be helpful to gather information from consumers' perception.
- **To Analyze Effectiveness of Marketing Strategies Across Demographics:** This objective will attempt to determine the effectiveness of email marketing and social media marketing in different demographic groups, such as age, gender, and purchasing behavior, to identify the best strategies that resonate with specific audiences.
- **To Examine the Long-Term Engagement Patterns of Customers Acquired Through Different Channels:** This objective focuses on comparing the long-term engagement trajectories of customers acquired through email marketing versus those acquired through social media marketing, analyzing metrics such as customer lifetime value (CLV) and frequency of engagement over an extended period.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper used a quantitative approach to find the relative effectiveness of email marketing and social media marketing in enhancing customer engagement. The study used a cross-sectional design, which selected participants, equally split between customers engaged through email marketing and those engaged through social media platforms. Such an equal proportion ensures statistical power but maintains representativeness for all demographic segments.

- **Sampling Strategy**
  The sampling strategy is stratified random sampling with a stratified sampling procedure designed to achieve representative sampling of each demographic stratum including age, gender, and purchasing behavior. The population will be stratified according to engagement channel, customer demographics, and purchase frequency. Each stratum will have a minimum quota established so

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that a meaningful comparative analysis can be achieved. This fits into established methodological frameworks utilized in marketing effectiveness studies (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

- **Data Collection**

  Data collection will involve both primary and secondary sources, with an emphasis on quantitative measures. Primary data collection will include structured questionnaires that will help in gathering engagement metrics, customer satisfaction levels, brand loyalty, and general purchase behavior. These instruments will be developed based on validated scales from previous studies (Davis & Miller, 2024) and adapted to the current research context.

Standardized evaluation forms and analytics tools will be used in gathering performance metrics to ensure consistent measurement across various customer groups. A multiple-instrument measurement framework is included that captures various dimensions of marketing effectiveness:

- Engagement metrics include open rates, click-through rates, conversion rates, and interaction rates for both email and social media campaigns.
- Customer Satisfaction Measurement uses a standardized 7-point Likert scale evaluation form to measure customer satisfaction with both marketing channels.
- Brand Loyalty Measurement uses loyalty measurement questionnaires adapted from established models (Oliver, 1999).

- **Data Analysis**

  Data analysis follows a systematic approach beginning with preliminary data cleaning and normalization. Statistical analysis employs a combination of techniques including independent samples t-tests and chi-square tests for group comparisons. Advanced analytics will include regression analysis to evaluate the relationship between marketing channel effectiveness and customer engagement outcomes.

  Internal consistency Cronbach's alpha Significant metrics Test-retest reliability Assessments of Customer satisfaction and Loyalty Inter-rater reliability Standard psychometric practices.

QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESPONSES

Timestamp	Age Group	Gender	Education Level	Employment Status	Q1 Response	Q2 Response	Q3 Response	Q4 Response
14/01/2025 23:34:22	18-24	Male	Master's Degree	Employed (Full-time)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)
14/01/2025 23:53:48	25-34	Female	Some College	Student	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Strongly Agree (5)
14/01/2025 23:53:48	25-34	Female	Some College	Student	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Strongly Agree (5)
14/01/2025 23:56:26	25-34	Male	Master's Degree	Employed (Part-time)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)
14/01/2025 23:56:26	25-34	Male	Master's Degree	Employed (Part-time)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)
15/01/2025 00:00:39	Under 18	Female	Doctorate	Employed (Part-time)	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)
15/01/2025 00:00:39	Under 18	Female	Doctorate	Employed (Part-time)	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)
15/01/2025 00:09:48	25-34	Female	Master's Degree	Unemployed	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Agree (4)
15/01/2025 00:09:48	25-34	Female	Master's Degree	Unemployed	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Agree (4)
15/01/2025 00:19:26	25-34	Female	Master's Degree	Student	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)
15/01/2025 00:19:26	25-34	Female	Master's Degree	Student	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)
15/01/2025 00:21:58	18-24	Female	Bachelor's Degree	Employed (Part-time)	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Agree (4)
15/01/2025 00:21:58	18-24	Female	Bachelor's Degree	Employed (Part-time)	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Agree (4)
15/01/2025 00:23:13	18-24	Female	Master's Degree	Employed (Full-time)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Strongly Disagree (1)

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15/01/2025 00:23:13	18-24	Female	Master's Degree	Employed (Full-time)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Strongly Disagree (1)
15/01/2025 00:24:19	Under 18	Male	High School or equivalent	Student	Strongly Disagree (1)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Agree (4)
15/01/2025 00:24:19	Under 18	Male	High School or equivalent	Student	Strongly Disagree (1)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Agree (4)
15/01/2025 01:40:24	18-24	Male	Master's Degree	Student	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Disagree (2)
15/01/2025 01:40:24	18-24	Male	Master's Degree	Student	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Disagree (2)
15/01/2025 01:40:55	18-24	Male	Master's Degree	Student	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Disagree (2)
15/01/2025 01:40:55	18-24	Male	Master's Degree	Student	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Disagree (2)
15/01/2025 01:41:40	18-24	Male	Master's Degree	Student	Strongly Disagree (1)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Strongly Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (5)
15/01/2025 01:41:40	18-24	Male	Master's Degree	Student	Strongly Disagree (1)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Strongly Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (5)
15/01/2025 01:42:14	18-24	Male	Master's Degree	Student	Strongly Disagree (1)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Strongly Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (5)
15/01/2025 01:42:14	18-24	Male	Master's Degree	Student	Strongly Disagree (1)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Strongly Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (5)
15/01/2025 01:45:44	Under 18	Female	High School or equivalent	Student	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Disagree (2)
15/01/2025 01:45:44	Under 18	Female	High School or equivalent	Student	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Disagree (2)
15/01/2025 01:46:17	Under 18	Female	High School or equivalent	Student	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Disagree (2)
15/01/2025 01:46:17	Under 18	Female	High School or equivalent	Student	Agree (4)	Agree (4)	Disagree (2)	Disagree (2)

DISCUSSION

This paper explores the effectiveness of email marketing versus social media marketing in enhancing customer engagement, focusing on its relevance in today's digital landscape. Findings indicate that these two strategies have a complex interplay in which they reveal strengths and limitations in engaging consumers.

One major observation is that email marketing generally shows higher engagement metrics than social media marketing. According to data, open rates for email campaigns are mostly 18-20%, which is higher than the average engagement rate on most social media sites (Smith&Johnson,2023).This means that email marketing is more effective in targeted communication as brands can directly reach consumers through their inboxes, creating a personal touch. Such direct engagement is crucial for driving conversions, as evidenced by studies showing that email marketing can generate a return of $36 for every $1 spent (Davis & Miller, 2024).

Conversely, social media marketing excels in brand awareness and community building. It provides brands with the ability to engage with a broader audience through interactive content and real-time communication (Thompson, 2023). In summary, although social media increases the visibility of the brand, conversion of engagement to sales is more or less situational. In that regard, research shows that awareness built through social media interactions among the respondents is very much there; however, making them purchase more often than not is more challenging than with e-mail marketing.

Contextual factors are crucial in determining how well each strategy performs. For example, the same context that is said to have an impact on brand perception from product placement

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impacts consumer responses through emails or social media posts (La Ferle & Edwards, 2006). Content should be integrated within the marketer's overall strategy in order to reach maximum impact.

With both channels of communication, there are disadvantages. Skepticism about marketing authenticity in the mind of viewers reduces the engagement level. Consumers will realize that marketers use promotional tactics to sell their product.

As awareness of these tactics increases, so will consumers' perception of being over-promoted or insincere (Russell & Stern, 2006). It follows that there needs to be value-creation and authentic poststhrough both channels toward building trust and engagement among consumers.

Measuring the long-term effects of these marketing strategies on customer behavior is another challenge. Though immediate engagement metrics such as open and click-through rates are crucial, how these translate into sustained customer loyalty and lifetime value is still important. Future research should look into these dynamics to give a better insight into how email and social media marketing can work together to enhance long-term customer relationships.

In conclusion, this study gives valuable insights to the comparative effectiveness of email marketing and social media marketing in the drive of customer engagement. The fact that most direct engagement metrics are outdone by email marketing does not undermine the strength and unique power that social media channels possess in influencing customer engagement. Marketers should, therefore navigate the authenticity challenge and measurement, as they find innovative ways of integrating these channels for maximum performance. They are able to develop strategies to further improve relationships with consumers and better engagement in the ever-changing digital world.

HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION RESULTS

Based on the results of the literature review and the outcome of the empirical study on comparing the effectiveness of email marketing vs. social media marketing in generating customer engagement, the following hypothesis has been set to direct the present study

- **H1: Engagement Efficiency Hypothesis**

Email marketing has better metrics of engagement efficiency than social media marketing.

Rationale: According to various studies, campaigns via email garner a higher rate of opening, with at least 20% more significant openings and click-through rates of at least 30% more significant, thereby leading to a better rate of conversion as well (Smith & Johnson, 2023; Anderson et al., 2022).

- **H2: Customer Retention Hypothesis**

Customers retained through email marketing have significantly varying retention patterns from those retained by social media marketing.

Justification: Research suggests that customers acquired through email marketing have higher one-year retention rates (at least 10 percentage points higher) and lower churn rates (≥15% difference), indicating more effective long-term engagement (Davis & Miller, 2024).

- **H3: Brand Loyalty and Perception Hypothesis**

Customers engaged through email marketing show enhanced brand loyalty and perception metrics.

Justification: Customer satisfaction is likely to have at least a 20 percentage points greater brand loyalty scores for those obtained through e-mail, while exhibiting an important positive correlation between email engagement and customer satisfaction (Thompson, 2023).

- **H4: Contextual Effectiveness Hypothesis**

There is systematic variation in the relative effectiveness of e-mail marketing vis-à-vis social media marketing across various market segments and contexts.

Rationale: The extent to which these tactics are more effective is expected to vary dramatically between B2B and B2C industries, as well as by product type, with high-involvement products preferring email marketing (PWC Global Marketing Study, 2023).

- **H5: Long-Term Engagement Hypothesis**

Email marketing customers demonstrate different long-term engagement profiles compared to those brought in through social media.

Justification: The time for first repeat purchase will be at least 20% shorter with higher long-term engagement rates, with more than or equal to 25% in two years and higher customer lifetime value ratings. Corporate Executive Board, 2023.

Limitations

Email and social media marketing increase customer involvement but are not without their own limitations. Some of the most notable points about these online procedures are:

• Over-Saturation Risk

The ubiquity of email marketing can fatigue customers, lowering open rates and engagement. Overposting on social media can also desensitize the audience, lowering the impact of marketing.

• Decreases Control Over Audience Perceptions

Marketers have limited control over the reception of their messages online. Social media negative content can result in negative brand impressions.

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• Measurement Challenges

It is hard to quantify email campaigns compared to social media. Open and click-through rates rarely translate into actual buying behavior, so actual engagement and measurement of ROI is questionable.

• Viewer Scepticism

As marketing becomes more conscious, the audience will begin to question the authenticity of social media and email communications. Too much promotion will be seen as artificial or too aggressive, resulting in disengagement.

• Cost Factors

Email marketing is inexpensive, particularly while performing large campaigns, but quality social media content is costly for small businesses. Additionally, social media advertising can easily drain resources without guarantees of returns.

• Cultural Sensitivity and Demographics

Marketing strategies can fail to connect with every demographic segment or culture. What works with one group may not work with another, and so correct segmentation and targeting are necessary in order to be effective.

• Content Quality Dependence

The achievement of email marketing and social media is based on content. Low-quality content or unsuitable material is synonymous with low engagement and poor brand impressions.

• Social Media Algorithm Changes

Social media sites constantly change their algorithms, affecting brands' reach and engagements significantly. Marketers can find it difficult to have consistent reach and engagement in the long term.

• Shorter Attention Spans

Shorter attention spans are what the consumer has to contend with because of overabundance of information. Advertisers need to grab their audience's attention right away through catchy email headlines or interesting social media photos.

•Integration Problems

Social media and email marketing can strengthen campaigns but with thoughtful planning. In the absence of planning, messages get jumbled, and brands get watered down.

CONCLUSION

Email marketing frequently yields the greatest immediate results in customer interaction, beating out social media marketing when it comes to open rates, click-through rates, and sales conversion rates, as it has a personalized quality. Social media marketing, in turn, best promotes brand consciousness and community interactions, although it fails to leverage this interaction consistently into sales. Context and demographics have a wide influence on whether or not the two strategies prove successful. To drive maximum customer participation, the incorporation of both social media and email marketing strategies can take advantage of each other's complementary strengths. The challenges of viewer skepticism and the inability to measure long-term effects must also be addressed by marketers. Adapting constantly to changing consumer tastes and technology is key to keeping up relevance. Both these strategies combined are key to meeting desired outcomes in terms of customer participation and brand loyalty.