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**BE965 & BE969: RESEARCH METHODS IN MANAGEMENT
& MARKETING**

**PROJECT TITLE: UTILISATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA
MARKETING FOR INFLUENCING CUSTOMER
EXPERIENCE: A CASE STUDY OF THE UK AUTOMOBILE
SECTOR**

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Project Title

“Utilisation of social media marketing for influencing customer experience: a case study of the UK automobile sector”

Introduction

Implementing social media platforms is essential for business organisations in terms of reaching a large volume of existing or target customers conveniently within a short time. In addition, the utilisation of social media marketing is also likely to help trading firms to maintain uninterrupted interaction with customers from any flexible location by engaging them virtually with the brand. Based on the observations of de Oliveira Santini *et al.* (2020), using social media platforms such as “Facebook”, “Twitter” and “Instagram” for product marketing enables businesses to increase the rate of customer engagement effectively. Furthermore, engaging customers uninterruptedly with the organisation through social media platforms is advantageous for business corporations in terms of influencing their overall experience by providing constant support and assistance from any suitable location. Accordingly, this study will strongly focus on evaluating the significance and impacts of social media marketing on improving customers’ experience within the *automobile industry of the United Kingdom (UK)*.

The UK automotive sector emphasises on creating digital advertisements in order to provide a better experience for their customers by informing them about the launch of any new product through social media channels. The automobile industry of the UK spent **£1.98 billion** on creating digital advertisements (Statista.com, 2023). Thus, it can be determined that the UK automobile sector is willing to focus on improving its digital promotional approaches by using social media channels like “Facebook” and “Instagram”.

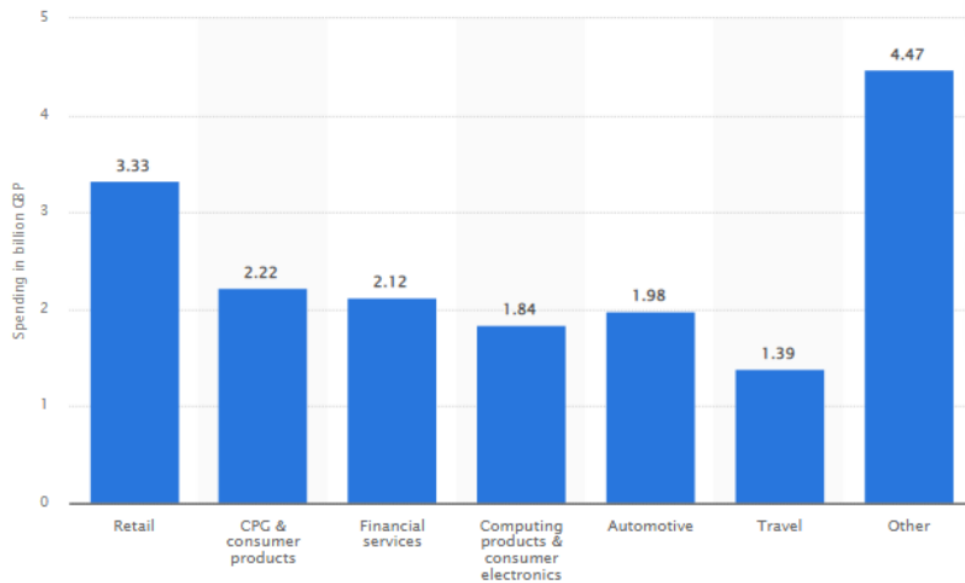


Figure 1: Total Digital Advertising Spending of the UK Automotive Industry in 2021

(Source: Statista.com, 2023)

However, the utilisation of social media channels for marketing can be adverse within the UK automobile sector in terms of increasing job loss for manual labours due to the growth of automation in product promotional operations. Social media marketing can be considered as ⁵ the future of work in the automobile industry (Ilo.org, 2023). Accordingly, appropriate information can be obtained about the impacts of social media marketing on the UK automotive sector through the application of “quantitative research methods”. Thus, ⁷ it can be stated that the usage of social media mediums for enhancing customers’ experience can be destructive for the UK automotive industry in the context of increasing the rate of unemployment.

Research Objectives and Questions

Objectives⁶

The key objectives of this research study are:

- To explore the significance and benefits of using social media marketing in order to improve customers’ experience while engaging with automobile organisations in the UK
- To identify and illustrate the challenges faced by the UK automobile industry while implementing social media marketing strategies for product promotion

Questions

The questions that will be addressed in this research study are as follows:

- What are the impacts and importance of using social media platforms for marketing within the automobile industry in terms of enhancing customers' experience?
- What are the obstacles and threats faced by the automotive sector while implementing the social media marketing approach?

Theoretical Background

"Theory of planned behaviour"

The application of the "Theory of Planned Behaviour" can be appropriate for understanding the behavioural approaches of its customers after implying the social marketing approach in the automobile industry of the UK. Based on the observations of Ajzen (2020), the utilisation of the "theory of planned behaviour" mainly aims to study and evaluate the behavioural tendencies of an individual under any given circumstance. Accordingly, the UK automotive industry which can be considered as the *controlling variable* can understand whether its consumers are accepting the approach of marketing through social media platforms by observing their actual behaviour while engaging with organisations. As per the comments of Meng and Cui (2020), managers understand the satisfaction level of customers by observing their behavioural approaches after engaging with the brand through the application of the "theory of planned behaviour". Therefore, using this behavioural theory can assist the UK automotive industry in understanding the importance of social media marketing for increasing customer experience which is the *dependent variable* of this research.

Furthermore, the utilisation of this theory can also be significant for the UK automotive sector in the context of identifying whether its employees are able to synchronise with the dimension of social media marketing by monitoring their behavioural intentions. According to the viewpoints of Lin and Roberts (2020), the application of the planned behaviour theory evaluates any change within human behaviour due to new changes in the adjacent environment. Hence, by implementing this theory the UK automotive industry can understand any issue faced by its employees in accepting social media marketing approaches which is the *independent variable* of this study.

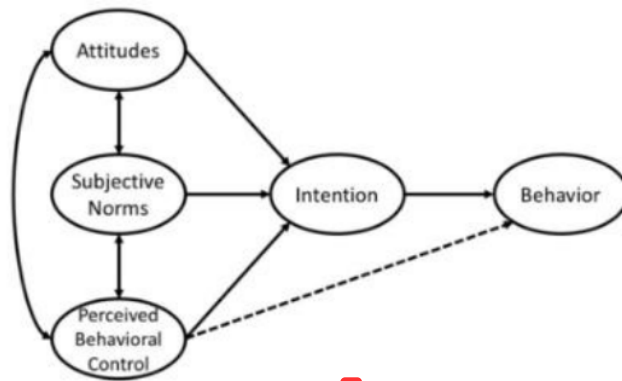


Figure 2: Overview of the dimensions of the “Theory of Planned Behaviour”

(Source: Ajzen, 2020)

The “Theory of Planned Behaviour” can be beneficial for the UK automobile industry in recognising changes in the intentions of its customers in accepting technological advancements which is the *mediating variable* by observing their behaviour. Based on the opinions of Rausch and Kopplin (2021), the “Theory of Planned Behaviour” aims to identify the intentions of an individual while accepting or synchronising with a new change. Consequently, the UK automobile sector can be able to identify any negative intentions of its customers while engaging with the industry through social media platforms by applying this theory. Accordingly, the UK automotive industry can apply relevant strategies in order to effectively influence the experience of its consumers who are likely to reject the social media marketing approach. In addition, the application of this theory can also help the UK automobile industry to monitor any sudden change in customers' behaviour. Thus, changes in customer behaviour can be considered as the *moderating variable* of this study. Based on the depictions of Ajzen (2020), the “Theory of Planned Behaviour” strongly focuses on studying any uncertain changes in human intentions while adopting new technology. Thus, the utilisation of this theory can be valuable for the UK automotive industry in the context of improving its customers' experience by observing any negative intention regarding the acceptance of social media marketing approaches.

Conceptual Model

UTILISATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING FOR INFLUENCING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE: A CASE STUDY OF THE UK AUTOMOBILE SECTOR

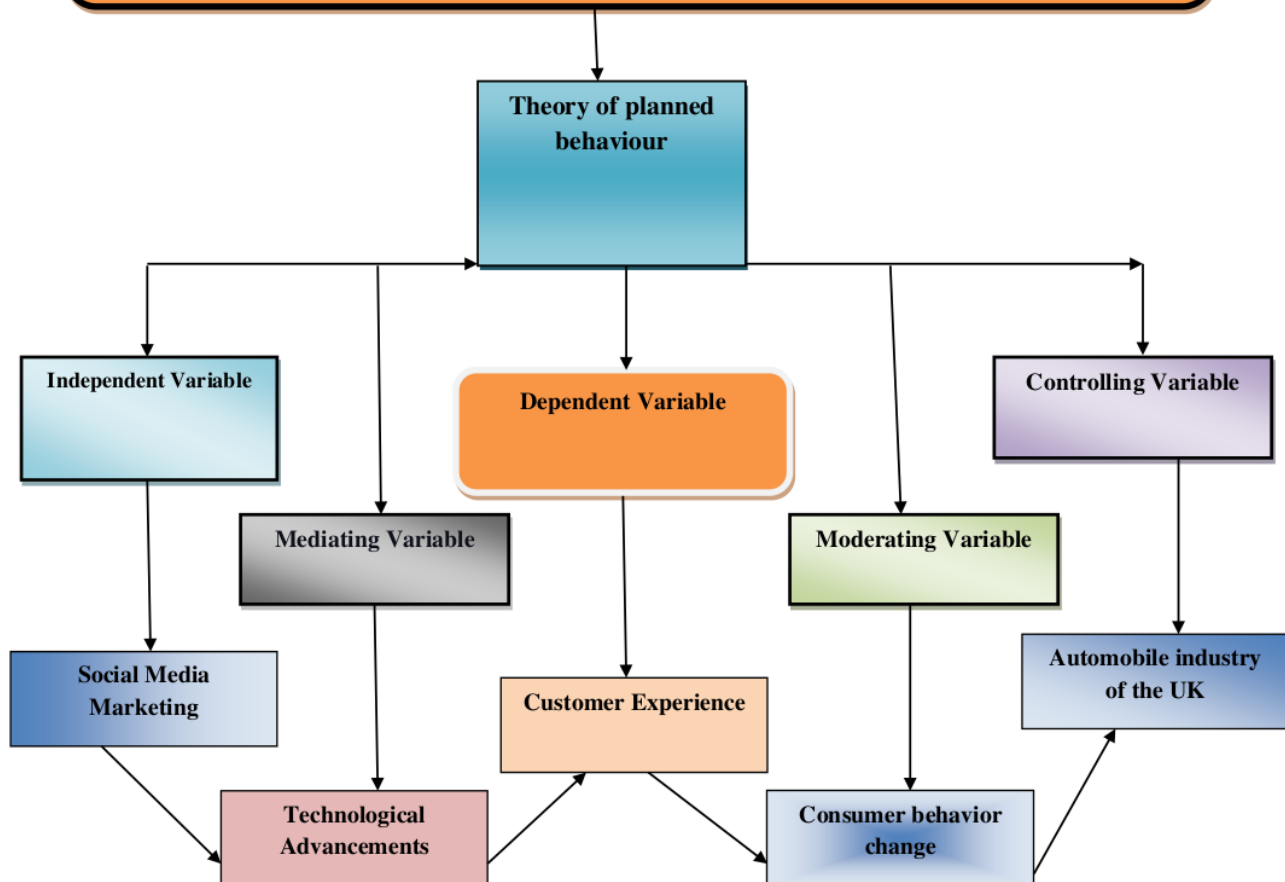


Figure 3: Conceptual model

(Created by author)

Hypotheses

H0- The application of social media marketing approaches cannot be convenient for the automobile sector of the UK in enhancing its consumers' experience

H1- The utilisation of social media marketing is beneficial to the UK automotive industry to effectively influence customers' experience

Methodology of Research

The “***quantitative research method***” will be used in this study for gathering the required data based on the core objectives of this study. As per the opinions of Mohajan (2020), the application of the “quantitative method” enables an individual researcher to amalgamate large volumes of numeric data within a short time. In turn, the implementation of the quantitative method can be significant in this study in the context of understanding the importance of social media marketing for influencing customers' experience in UK automotive industries by collecting statistical data. Furthermore, “***primary data***” will be collected in order to obtain accurate results based on the specific research topic. As mentioned by Alavi and Buttlar (2019), primary research is mainly based on the collection and interpretation of real-time and measurable data. Consequently, the utilisation of “primary data” can be highly advantageous in the context of improving the accuracy of this research's outcomes by analysing large sets of real-time data.

Furthermore, the “***descriptive research design***” will be implicated in this study in order to explore and evaluate the collected primary quantitative data in a systematic manner. According to the comments of Hew *et al.* (2019), the utilisation of the “descriptive design” enables researchers to obtain quality results by exploring the distribution of one or multiple variables. In addition, the “descriptive design” also assists researchers to generate accurate research results without depending upon hypotheses by further linking dependent, independent, controlling, mediating and moderating variables accurately. In turn, the required quantitative data will be collected from a ***sample size of 101 customers belonging to the UK automobile industry***. In addition, an ***online survey*** will be carried out in order to engage the chosen participants actively in terms of obtaining real-time responses based on the significance of social media marketing in influencing their experience while engaging with the UK automobile industry. “***Statistical data analysis***” will also be used in order to interpret the gathered data in an effective manner. Hence, it can be stated that the implementation of

the “primary quantitative” methods can be appropriate in order to generate accurate outcomes based on the key questions and objectives of this study by analysing real-time data.

On the other hand, the collected data will be strictly protected from leakage by storing those in electronic devices such as computers and laptops. In addition, the administrative guidelines of the “*Data Protection Act of 2018, the UK*” will be followed in terms of preventing the leakage of the amalgamated data. The “Data Protection Act of 2018, the UK” provides effective legal outlines in terms of restricting confidential data theft by ²unauthorised interventions of hackers (Legislation.gov.uk, 2023). In addition, ²genuine in-texting will be done throughout the study in order to avoid academic misconduct. Furthermore, informed consent from the chosen participants will be obtained before engaging them in the online survey. Hence, the identified ethical measures can be significant in terms of enhancing the overall moral values and validity of this study in an effective manner.

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