

Article

Investigating Complimentary E-Marketing Strategy for Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises at Growth Stage in Taiwan

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Abstract: Globally, 95% of enterprises are small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Social media has recently become a powerful marketing tool due to characteristics such as the ability to share digital information and interact with consumers instantly. In SMEs, limited budgets restrict the use of social media as marketing tools. Thus, complimentary use of social media may be an alternative method for SMEs to maximize their marketing strategies. This study identifies what marketing goals are important for SME growth and how complimentary social media are used for attaining marketing goals. The analytic hierarchy process (AHP) analysis was conducted to confirm the order of local weights and global weights for marketing goals and complimentary social media. We found that the order of local weights for marketing goals for SMEs in the growth phase is brand awareness > online purchase > sales potential. The order of global weights for complimentary social media to meet above marketing goals is Facebook > PIXNET > Twitter > Instagram > YouTube > LINE. Finally, we used an SME from Taiwan as a case study to ensure that the application of the above complimentary social media can meet above marketing goals and potentially increase the survival of SMEs at the growth phase in Taiwan.



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Keywords: e-marketing; complimentary social media; small and medium sized enterprises; growth phase

1. Introduction

A report from the OECD [1] states that enterprises can be divided into micro-sized (number of employees between 1–9), small-sized (number of employees between 10–49), medium-sized (number of employees between 50–249), and large-sized (number of employees over 250), and 95% of enterprises are small and medium-sized. Thus, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may play a central part in supporting economic growth. In recent years, the development of the internet changed consumer behavior. Dimmick et al. [2] point out that internet media exploration for consumers is greater than that of traditional media because of widespread mobile device use. Further, 82.4% of teens use the internet to acquire information [3]. In addition, personalized apps and rapid information exchanges in the digital environment have led to changes in consumer internet behavior [4,5]. The shift in consumer behavior also strongly influences brand management [6]. As mentioned previously, online social media has deeply affected the changes in consumer behaviors and marketing strategies. Social media has become the mainstream avenue for enterprises to increase revenue. Therefore, enterprises pay increasingly more attention to the relationships between electronic marketing (e-marketing) and consumer behaviors. Although performing e-marketing strategies is crucial, it is important to understand which complimentary social media functions may assist enterprises in performing e-marketing strategies, especially in SMEs with a limited marketing budget. In addition to social media, appropriate marketing goals are pivotal for SMEs to grow.

1.1. Motivation

As the connection between e-marketing and social media plays a more important role in consumer purchase decisions, enterprises need to budget for e-marketing. Large-sized enterprises place more resources into e-marketing strategies than small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This results in different e-marketing results. Thus, e-marketing strategies through complimentary (free of charge) social media may increase e-marketing success for SMEs with limited budgets. No referenced papers have mentioned which marketing goals are necessary for SMEs at the growth phase. This study investigated which marketing goals are essential for SMEs at the growth phase and which complimentary social media techniques can assist SMEs in reaching their marketing goals.

1.2. Purpose

Although complimentary social media may maximize brand awareness for SMEs with limited budgets, the complimentary social media selection should be based on the SME marketing characteristics, purposes, or strategies. Thus, establishing a platform for providing suitable complimentary social media to SMEs is the main purpose of this study. Firstly, the marketing goals for SMEs at the growth phase and the most common social media used for e-marketing will be surveyed based on documentary analysis. Secondly, the representative marketing goals and complimentary social media will be extracted after suggestion by industrial and academic experts. Finally, the analytic hierarchy process (AHP) will be applied to measure the order of local and global weights for marketing goals and complimentary social media in order to provide a suggestion for SMEs during e-marketing operations.

1.3. Literature Review

Enterprises are a crucial factor in global economic growth. Based on a report from OECD [1], enterprises can be categorized by the number of people employed as micro-sized (fewer than 10 employees), small-sized (number of employees from 10 to 49), medium-sized (number of employees from 50 to 249), and large-sized (number of employees over 250) enterprises. Among these enterprises, those with employees fewer than 250 people account for 99% of all enterprises [7]. Thus, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play important roles in supporting global economic growth.

Enterprise life cycle can be used to describe the current stage of an enterprise. Churchill & Lewis [8] suggested that the life cycle for small business can be divided into five stages after evaluation of organizational factors, including existence, survival, success, take-off, and resource maturity. Miller & Friesen [9] studied 161 periods of 36 firms and stated that the corporate life cycle is classified into five stages: birth, growth, maturity, revival, and decline. Among the different life-cycle stages, the growth stage is critical for SMEs because the growth stage is greatly associated with SME survival [10].

Performing accurate marketing goals plays a central role for SMEs to sell their products/services, leading to increased revenue. Andreopoulou et al. [11] suggested that customer databases offer precise customer information (including past, present, and future data), allowing the SMEs to make the right decisions for marketing strategies. Furthermore, a survey with 176 customers indicated that customer participation shows a positive effect in repurchase intention. The increase in repurchase intention can increase SME revenue and growth [12]. In addition, the improvement in customer service is one of the best marketing goals for SMEs. Customer service can be briefly described as serving customers needing support before, during, and after making a sale. Innis et al. [13] stated that any improvement in customer service affects customer satisfaction and customer loyalty positively, leading to increased market share and SME growth. Similarly, brand awareness has been mentioned as playing an important role in increasing SME revenue. Brand awareness is the extent to which customers can recall or recognize a brand. Experimental results from 645 university student interviews revealed that brand awareness positively affects

purchase decisions. This means that increased brand awareness is capable of increasing purchase intention and increasing revenue [14].

Social media can be briefly defined as “digitally interactive technologies that facilitate information (such as ideas or expressions) via virtual communities and networks”. Basically, social media contains some general features that include interactive internet-based applications, user-generated contents, maintenance of user-created profiles (websites or apps) by social media organizations, and connection of user’s profiles with other individuals (or groups) by social media [15–18]. Aichner et al. [19] stated that there are 13 types of social media sites, including blogs, business networks, collaborative projects, enterprise social networking, forums, microblogs, photo sharing, product/service review, social book-marketing, social gaming, social networking, video sharing, and virtual worlds. In 2019, roughly 68% of American adults reported that they were Facebook users [20], and nearly 67% of American teens were YouTube users in 2019–2020 [21].

As mentioned previously, increasingly more people have experience using social media. Therefore, social media may impact SME marketing strategies. Social media marketing (also called e-marketing) can be briefly described as the use of social media platforms and websites to promote a product or service [22]. In 2014, over 80% of enterprises stated that e-marketing acts as an integral part of their business [23]. In addition, a statistical report suggests that 133% increases in business retailer revenue result from e-marketing [24]. Thus, social media marketing plays important roles in promoting SME products/services to continue the enterprise growth stage.

E-marketing platforms generally involve social networking websites and mobile phones. Social networking websites can build relationships and communities with individuals, groups, or business organizations, such as Facebook or Instagram. Once social networking websites are built, consumers can interact with them directly [25]. In addition to social networking websites, mobile phone use is crucial for e-marketing because the web browsing capabilities of mobile phones allow users’ easy immediate access to social networking sites [26]. In 2017, statistics suggested that over 90% of internet users will access website contents through their mobile phones [27].

Although e-marketing is important for enterprises to promote their products/services, the SME marketing budget is limited. Thus, complimentary (free of charge) marketing tool use may provide an option for SMEs to build e-marketing strategies. Palma AP. [28] pointed out that the percentage of a blog’s revenue growth after using Facebook as a free advertising tool is from 6% to 35% in 4 months. Duffett et al. [29] interviewed 400 Romanian and 400 South African respondents, and the results suggest that e-marketing with free YouTube advertising tools can increase brand-liking and brand preference. Similarly, applying Twitter as a free marketing tool has benefits for the business in terms of networking, relationships, and online branding opportunities [30]. From the above, many free e-marketing tools can assist SMEs in promoting their products/brand/services, but different free e-marketing social media provide different marketing goals for SMEs (such as revenue growth, brand preference, or relationships between SME and consumers). Thus, this study aimed to identify SME marketing goals at the growth phase and develop a platform of free e-marketing tools for SMEs to maximize e-marketing effectiveness for different marketing goals.

Several marketing goals are important in increasing SME revenue or sales, leading to SME growth. Solem et al. [31] pointed out that customer participation (when customers offer constructive recommendations or feedback on a firm’s services or products) positively affects brand loyalty. So, any increase in brand-use experiences may contribute to recognizing or recalling a brand, leading to increased brand awareness [32,33]. Furthermore, customer participation also affects brand repositioning (a company changes a brand’s status), because the brand repositioning process needs to engage customers in the knowledge-creating, knowledge-sharing, and knowledge-management process, leading to more accurate brand repositioning [34]. Customer service (supporting customers in their discovery, use, optimization, and troubleshooting of a product/service) is another factor

affecting SME product/service sales. A satisfied customer is more likely to purchase a product/service than a dissatisfied customer [13]. Thus, increasing the customer service level plays a pivotal role in increasing online purchase/repurchase intention [35]. Several social media sites, such as Facebook, developed the “like button” to enable users to easily interact or share information with friends. Once clicked by a user, the designated content immediately links to friends. Ding et al. [36] reported that a 1% increase in the number of “likes” is associated with an increase in sales by about 0.2%. In addition, the management of customer databases (collecting customer information including contact information, gender, age, etc.) enables SMEs to perform database-oriented relationship marketing programs [37], and sales potential prediction can minimize the risk and result in product/service success for SMEs [38].

The analytic hierarchy process (AHP) is a structured (or called hierarchy) technique for application in group decision making by pairwise comparison. The AHP was first developed by Thomas L. Saaty in 1970s [39]. Today, the AHP is used in a wide variety of decision situations, including healthcare [40], education [41], government administration [42], and business [43]. In addition, decision making in marketing strategies is also applied using the AHP assay. Costa et al. [44] reported that the AHP can be used in evaluating the impact of brand intangible assets on a firm value creation process. Büyüközkan et al. [40] investigated service quality by applying the AHP assay and confirmed that hospitals should focus more on empathy, professionalism, and reliability to provide satisfactory and quality service. Awan et al. [45] evaluated the factors affecting Halal customer purchase intention by the AHP analysis, and the results suggest that most of the customers rely on Halal marketing, personal and societal perception, and Halal certifications. These publications illustrate that the AHP is an appropriate technique to apply in making decision associated with marketing strategies.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Structure

In accordance with the research aim, the research structure of this study can be divided into the following. First, SME marketing goals at the growth stage and social media for complimentary e-marketing goals will be extracted after documentary analysis. The candidate data were collected and organized into a questionnaire and used to interview experts and professionals in order to confirm the appropriateness of these candidate data. Secondly, these candidate data then served as experimental indices after evaluation of appropriateness by experts/professionals and were reorganized as an AHP (analytic hierarchy process) questionnaire. Finally, the AHP questionnaire was delivered to experts/professionals, and the results were collected for further investigation. The research structure is shown in Figure 1.

2.2. Documentary Analysis

Documentary analysis is one of the qualitative methods used to extract useful data from the literature or secondary information based on a research topic. In this study, some preliminary data will be extracted using documentary analysis, including marketing goals for SMEs at the growth stage and complimentary social media for performing marketing goals. Most of the documents were from academic papers, and some documents were from websites. Very few documents were from Taiwan (Taiwan Internet Report 2020 and PIXNET Social Survey 2018). The preliminary data extracted by documentary analysis will be reduced or increased by experts/professionals in order to confirm the appropriateness of these preliminary data as experimental indices in the questionnaire. All the documents were reviewed and established the research framework of this study.

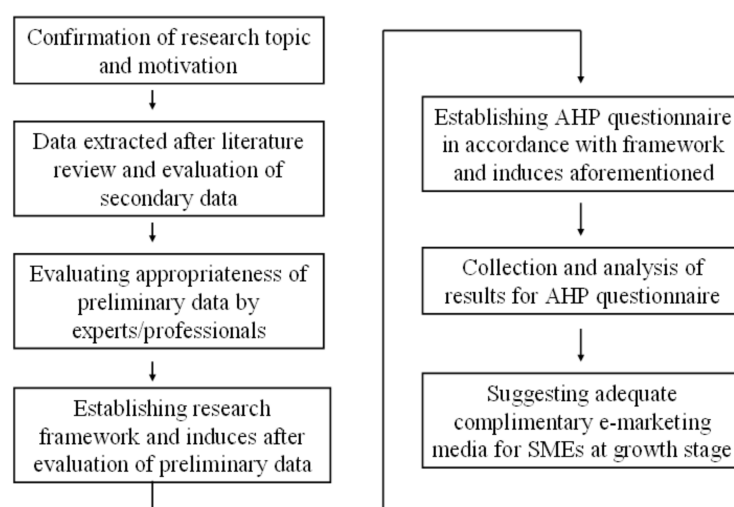


Figure 1. Research structure of this study.

2.3. Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) Analysis

The AHP theory was firstly mentioned by Saaty et al. in 1971 [39], and the AHP results can determine the decision criteria weight. Until now, the AHP application is widely used in the generation and evaluation of marketing strategies, the directions of new product development, and decision making for managerial issues. In this study, AHP will be used in determining the weights of marketing indices for SMEs at the growth stage and providing some suggestions for using appropriate complimentary social media to achieve the above marketing goals. The AHP questionnaire contains three marketing goals and six social media (shown in Figure 2). The three marketing goals are in the same layer (called indices), and the six social media are in the same sublayer (called subindices). All the indices or subindices were performed pairwise comparison (such as brand awareness vs. online purchase; brand awareness vs. sales potential; and online purchase vs. sales potential in the same layer; or Facebook vs. LINE; Facebook vs. Twitter; Facebook vs. Instagram . . . etc. in the same sublayer). The weights for the pairwise comparison were scored from 1 (equal importance) to 9 (absolute importance). For instance, if the score for brand awareness > online purchase is 1, this means that brand awareness and online purchase are equally important. If the score for brand awareness > online purchase is 9, this means that brand awareness is absolutely important compared to online purchase). Then the scores for each pairwise comparison can be converted to weights by software (such as Expert Choice).

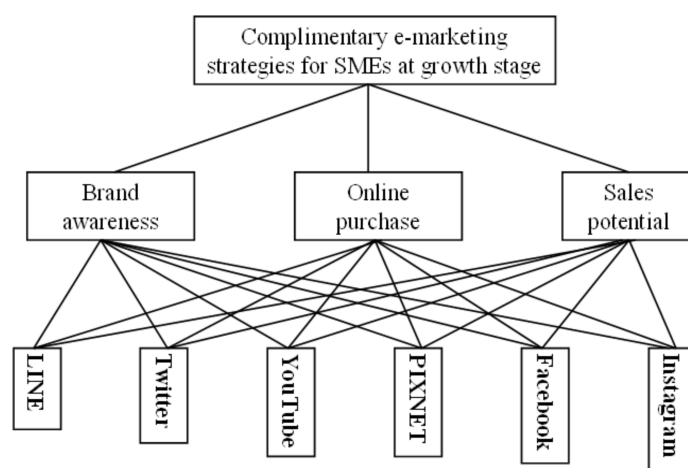


Figure 2. Research framework of this study.

2.4. Measurement of Consistency and Weights for Indices

The consistency of indices plays a central role in AHP analysis. For instance, factor A is more important than factor B and factor B is more important than factor C. So logically, A is more important than C. This is called consistency. Some parameters can serve as indicators for the consistency of indices, including consistency index (CI) and consistency ratio (CR). CI can be calculated as $CI = (\lambda_{max} - n) / (n - 1)$ (λ_{max} is the largest Eigen value and n is the size of comparison matrix). CR can be calculated as $CR = CI / RI$ (RI is random consistency index). Professor Saaty suggested that both of the values for CI and CR should be less than 0.1. In this study, CI and CR were calculated by Microsoft Excel. In addition to CI and CR, the weights for the indices can be calculated by input of the results of pairwise comparison by using the software Expert Choice 2000 (www.expertchoice.com, accessed on 16 September 2021).

3. Results

3.1. Establishing Research Framework and Indices

Documentary analysis was used to extract preliminary data for developing the framework and indices of this study. After documentary analysis, 8 marketing goals for SMEs at the growth stage were extracted based on literature review, including (1) increased customer participation, (2) increased customer database, (3) customer service improvement, (4) increased brand awareness, (5) increased online purchases, (6) brand re-positioning, and (7) increased like button use and (8) increased sales potential. After evaluating these eight goals by experts/professionals (four experts in the online marketing field (ID number 3,6,7,9 in occupation-industrial in Table 1), two Professors in the e-marketing field (ID number 2,7 in occupation-academic in Table 1), and two online advertisement website owners (ID number 2,4 in occupation-industrial in Table 1)), three goals were suggested to play important roles for SMEs at the growth stage and served as experimental indices in this study, including (A) increased brand awareness, (B) increased online purchases, and (C) increased sales potential. In addition to marketing goals, complimentary social media were also evaluated by the above experts/professionals in Taiwan. After the evaluation, several popular social media sites were suggested for assessment in this study, including PIXNET™, Facebook™, Twitter™, Instagram™, YouTube™, and LINE™. Based on the above, the framework for the AHP analysis in this study can be shown as Figure 2.

Table 1. Interviewee information.

ID Number	Gender	Occupation-Industrial	* Seniority
1	Male	Head of Marketing Department in Media Technology Inc.	9 years
2	Male	Deputy Vice President of Creative Department in E-Commerce Company	11 years
3	Male	Director of Marketing Department in Media Company	10 years
4	Male	General Manager in Advertisement Company	17 years
5	Male	Vice General Manager in E-Commerce Company	12 years
6	Male	Managing Director of Marketing Department in E-Marketing Company	18 years
7	Female	Senior Marketing Officer in Media Company	13 years
8	Female	Vice General Manager in Public Relationship Company	10 years
9	Female	Head of Marketing Department in Social Media Company	13 years
10	Female	Senior Manager of Creative Department in E-Marketing Company	9 years
ID Number	Gender	Occupation-Academic	Seniority
1	Male	Associate Professor of Business Department in University	12 years
2	Male	Assistant Professor of Marketing Department in University	9 years
3	Male	Associate Professor of Business Department in University	20 years
4	Male	Associate Professor of Marketing Department in University	6 years
5	Male	Associate Professor of Business Department in University	8 years

Table 1. *Cont.*

ID Number	Gender	Occupation-Industrial	* Seniority
6	Female	Associate Professor of Marketing Department in University	5 years
7	Female	Assistant Professor of Marketing Department in University	6 years
8	Female	Associate Professor of Business Department in University	10 years
9	Female	Associate Professor of Management Department in University	6 years
10	Female	Assistant Professor of Business Department in University	20 years

* Seniority indicating that they have been in the workforce in general.

3.2. Measuring Weights of Indices by AHP Analysis

Based on the previously mentioned research framework, the AHP questionnaire was established. The AHP questionnaires were delivered to 32 experts/professionals (16 university professors with research interests in e-marketing and 16 website owners with e-marketing experiences) and 27 questionnaires were collected. Seven questionnaires were invalid. Thus, 20 questionnaires (10 university professors and 10 e-marketing professionals) were processed with Expert Choice 2000 in order to calculate the weights for the experimental indices. The information of 20 interviewees is shown in Table 1.

The AHP analysis results are shown in the following tables. Table 2 expresses the results for brand awareness and complimentary social media after AHP analysis. In the Table, we can find that the weight for brand awareness was 0.470. The global weights for Facebook (F), PIXNET (P), Twitter (T), Instagram (I), YouTube (Y) and LINE (L) were 0.134, 0.094, 0.085, 0.072, 0.048, and 0.038, respectively.

Table 2. AHP brand awareness and complimentary social media analysis.

Marketing Goal	Weight	Indices	Local Weight	Global Weight
Brand awareness	0.470	Facebook (F)	0.285	0.134
		PIXNET (P)	0.200	0.094
		Twitter (T)	0.179	0.084
		Instagram (I)	0.154	0.072
		Youtube (Y)	0.102	0.048
		LINE (L)	0.080	0.038
Sum			1.000	0.470

CI < 0.01, CR < 0.01.

Table 3 indicates the results for online purchase and complimentary social media after AHP analysis. We can observe that the weight for online purchase was 0.350. The global weights for F, P, T, I, Y, and L were 0.121, 0.070, 0.050, 0.049, 0.033, and 0.027, respectively.

Table 3. AHP online purchase and complimentary social media analysis.

Marketing Goal	Weight	Indices	Local Weight	Global Weight
Online purchase	0.350	Facebook (F)	0.345	0.121
		PIXNET (P)	0.201	0.070
		Twitter (T)	0.143	0.050
		Instagram (I)	0.140	0.049
		Youtube (Y)	0.094	0.033
		LINE (L)	0.077	0.027
Sum			1.000	0.350

CI < 0.01, CR < 0.01.

Table 4 illustrates the results for sales potential and complimentary social media after AHP analysis. The weight for sales potential is 0.180. The global weights for F, P, T, I, Y and L are in the order of 0.059, 0.035, 0.026, 0.026, 0.019 and 0.015.

Table 4. AHP sales potential and complimentary social media analysis.

Marketing Goal	Weight	Indices	Local Weight	Global Weight
Sales potential	0.180	Facebook (F)	0.326	0.059
		PIXNET (P)	0.195	0.035
		Twitter (T)	0.144	0.026
		Instagram (I)	0.142	0.026
		Youtube (Y)	0.108	0.019
		LINE (L)	0.085	0.015
Sum			1.000	0.180

CI < 0.01, CR < 0.01.

3.3. Case Study

Haurtyi Paper Bag Inc. is one of the small-medium sized enterprises (130 employees) in Taipei Taiwan. The main product of Haurtyi Paper Bag Inc. is a stone paper bag. The stone paper bag is made by stone powder with degradable plastic materials to produce stone papers, and the stone papers are the raw materials for producing stone paper bags. So this paper bag uses stone powder to replace wood and reduce wood use to perform corporate social responsibility associated with environmental protection. This company is certified by the ISO quality control system, including ISO9001:2008 and ISO914001:2000. Clients for Haurtyi Paper Bag Inc. include Disney, GAP, ESTEE LAUDER, Starbucks, Adidas, PUMA, and Amway. The sales for Haurtyi Paper Bag Inc. are approximately 20 million bags per month.

The study results were modified into a score sheet in order to understand how complimentary e-marketing tools are capable of assisting Haurtyi Paper Bag Inc. to achieve marketing goals, including (A) increase in brand awareness, (B) increase in online purchase, and (C) increase in sales potential. The score sheet was delivered to the marketing department head of Haurtyi Paper Bag Inc., and the scores were given as 1 point (undo), 2 points (done), and 3 points (well done) based on the complimentary social media application for meeting the marketing goals. For example, undo means that the accounts for social media have not been created. Done means that the accounts for social media have been created, but the marketing goals (such as an increase of 1000 fans in 6 months) were not met. Well done means that all the marketing goals are were met. The results were recalculated in accordance with local weights and shown as Table 5.

Table 5. Application of score sheet for examination of marketing goals for SMEs.

Marketing Goals	Indices (Local Weight)	Status (Undo = 1, Done = 2, Well Done = 3)	Score (Status × Local Weight)	Sum (Score)
Brand awareness	Facebook (0.285)	3	0.855	1.866
	PIXNET (0.200)	1	0.200	
	Twitter (0.179)	1	0.179	
	Instagram (0.154)	1	0.154	
	Youtube (0.102)	1	0.102	
	LINE (0.188)	2	0.376	
Online purchase	Facebook (0.345)	3	1.062	1.794
	PIXNET (0.201)	1	0.201	
	Twitter (0.143)	1	0.143	
	Instagram (0.140)	1	0.140	
	Youtube (0.094)	1	0.094	
	LINE (0.077)	2	0.154	

Table 5. Cont.

Marketing Goals	Indices (Local Weight)	Status (Undo = 1, Done = 2, Well Done = 3)	Score (Status \times Local Weight)	Sum (Score)
Sales potential	Facebook (0.326)	3	0.978	1.736
	PIXNET (0.195)	1	0.195	
	Twitter (0.144)	1	0.144	
	Instagram (0.142)	1	0.142	
	Youtube (0.107)	1	0.107	
	LINE (0.085)	2	0.170	

4. Discussion

4.1. Weights of Indices from AHP Analysis

Documentary analysis and the AHP were used in this study in order to find out the relationship between complimentary social media and appropriate marketing goals for SMEs at the growth phase. As previously mentioned, eight marketing goals were isolated using documentary analysis, and three marketing goals (including brand awareness, online purchase, and sales potential) were confirmed to be essential for SMEs at the growth phase by interview with experts. After confirmation of the three marketing goals, the order of the weight of social media associated with the three marketing goals was calculated by using AHP analysis. Thus, the combination of documentary analysis and AHP analysis successfully explored the relationship between complimentary social media and marketing goals for SMEs at the growth phase.

Brand awareness is the ability for a consumer to identify or remember the products/services of a company. Based on the above results, we can find that the order of marketing goals for SMEs at the growth stage follows the order of brand awareness (weight 0.470), online purchase (weight 0.350), and sales potential (0.180). The results indicate that the first priority for the marketing goals for SMEs at the growth stage is brand awareness. Hashemi et al. [46] pointed out that brand awareness is positively associated with consumer purchase intention. A low level of brand awareness leads to low intention of consumer purchase because the perceived risk is still high at this stage. Building a familiar brand plays a crucial role in enhancing a consumer's trust (decrease in perceived risk), resulting in an increase in purchase intention. Furthermore, interaction and sharing information between companies and consumers can increase the brand awareness of companies, leading to increased online purchase intention for consumers [47]. Besides, Bader et al. [48] stated that brand awareness shows a positive effect on sales potential in e-commerce. The major connection between brand awareness and sales is credibility. Enhancing brand awareness leads to increased credibility of the company brand, resulting in increased sales. This is the main reason why the weight of brand awareness is higher than that of online purchase and sales potential for SMEs at the growth stage, and research findings of this work are consistent with previous studies. Although the order of the weights for the three marketing goals is brand awareness > online purchase > sales potential, this does not mean that the success of brand awareness is equal to the survival of SMEs at the growth stage. We can find that the sum of the weight for three marketing goals is 1 (the summation of 0.47 for brand awareness, 0.35 for online purchase, and 0.18 for sales potential is 1). Thus, the success of brand awareness represents 47% of work done for the growth of SMEs. Furthermore, the success of all the three marketing goals represents 100% of SME growth.

From Tables 2–4, we can find that the local weights of social media for all three of the marketing goals follow the order of Facebook > PIXNET > Twitter > Instagram > YouTube > LINE. This means that Facebook is the most powerful complimentary media for all marketing goals. In accordance with the statistical report from Tankovska H. [49], there are roughly 2.85 billion monthly active users as of the first quarter of 2021, indicating that Facebook is the biggest social network worldwide. This should be the major reason why

Facebook plays an important role in all marketing goals. Although Facebook is the biggest social network, this does not mean that Facebook is the only one social media to assist SMEs in reaching the three marketing goals. For instance, the local weight of Facebook in brand awareness is 0.285 (shown in Table 2). This result indicates that the successful application of the complimentary functions of Facebook represents 28.5% of the work done in brand awareness. Application of the other five complimentary social media contributes the other 71.5% of the work done for brand awareness. Therefore, 100% work done can be reached when all the six complimentary social media are used. In Taiwan, the most popular social networks are Facebook (94.2%), Instagram (39.2%), LINE (35%), and Twitter (6.4%) [50]. For video platforms, YouTube (90.6%) and LINE (27.1%) are the most popular platforms to share videos [50]. In Taiwan, PIXNET is one of the most important platforms to exchange information, and 61% of the population made purchase decisions after sharing information from PIXNET [51]. In addition to Facebook, other social media also play important roles in connecting different groups of users in Taiwan due to their different characteristics. Therefore, integration and application of these complimentary social media should be one of the best policies to achieve the marketing goals for SMEs in Taiwan.

4.2. Industrial Application of Experimental Indices

Table 5 showed the case study for how to use these complimentary social media to meet the three marketing goals for SMEs in Taiwan. In the Table, 1 point is for unregistering any account for social media; 2 points is for registering accounts for social media and uploading company/product information as well as company links; and 3 points is for reaching the marketing goals (increase in fans/reputation for brand awareness; increase in sales for online purchase; increase in sales for estimating sales potential in the future) after introducing company/product information on social media.

We can find that Facebook has been used very well (well done, 3 points) in all three of the marketing goals. This is not surprising because Facebook is the biggest social network used in Taiwan. The second most popular social media used in this case study was LINE. In Taiwan, LINE is often used for sharing information, meeting people, and sharing videos. Multiple functions make LINE an important marketing tool in Taiwan. Although Facebook (3 points, well done) and LINE (2 points, done) were applied for reaching marketing goals in this case study, we can find that the final scores for brand awareness, online purchase, and sales potential were 1.866, 1.794, and 1.736, respectively. All the scores were between 1 (undo) and 2 (done). These results indicate that the application of Facebook and LINE was not capable of reaching the marketing goals very well. This is because the local weights of Facebook and LINE for the three marketing goals are less than 1. As mentioned previously, the other complimentary social media should be considered for application in this case study.

4.3. Research Limitations/Future Works

Some limitations of this research have to be noticed, including: (1) All the interviewees were Taiwanese, so the weights for the three marketing goals and six social media may vary based on the interviewees from different countries; and (2) Few papers mention that cybersecurity may play an important mediator for SMEs to perform marketing goals using social media [52,53]. Therefore, the involvement of cybersecurity between marketing goals and complimentary social media could be further studied in future work. (3) A survey of Taiwanese SMEs by using the score sheet should be followed in future works.

5. Conclusions

As mentioned previously, there was previously no evidence indicating what marketing goals are essential for SMEs at the growth phase and what social media should be used for reaching the marketing goals mentioned above. This is the first paper to provide the weights of marketing goals using AHP analysis, including brand awareness, online purchase, and sales potential for SMEs at the growth phase in Taiwan, and several complimentary social

media are suggested to accelerate reaching the marketing goals. For academic applications, these marketing goals and complimentary social media can be considered important factors to reach SME marketing goals in the growth phase. In practical applications, the score sheet derived from this study may assist SMEs in inspecting the use of complimentary social media to reach the marketing goals, leading to increased SME survival during the growth phase in Taiwan.

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