

# Crafting Success: A Strategic Exploration of Technical and Conceptual (Hard) Skills of Modern Social Media Managers

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## **Abstract**

The role of a social media manager in companies has evolved into a critical function for brand visibility and engagement. This article explores the technical and conceptual skills essential for success in this role. It begins by highlighting the increasing importance of social media in business strategies, identifies the challenges social media managers face, and then delves into the research gap regarding the nuanced skills required. The literature review examines the existing body of knowledge on both technical and conceptual skills, providing insights into their significance. The discussion section synthesizes this information, offering a holistic understanding of the skills necessary for effective social media management. The article concludes with recommendations for future studies to enhance the knowledge of this dynamic field.

**Keywords:** social media, technical, conceptual, skills, managers, social media manager, it, hard skills

## 1. Introduction

This essay explores the conceptual and technical skills social media managers need to navigate this challenging environment. The study of social media is still in its initial stages, but it has recently become a significant phenomenon for individuals and businesses. Nowadays, Businesses are paying much attention to social media practices on sites like Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and YouTube (Abbasi *et al.*, 2024). Eighty percent of the Standard and Poor's 500 index companies use social media regularly (Esposito *et al.*, 2023). According to Afridi *et al.* (2024), Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and forums are all used by 53%, 46%, 20%, and 11% of Fortune 500 companies, respectively, as essential parts of their business operations. Beyond simple engagement, social media can be strategically leveraged to improve a company's business operations and overall value (Barberá *et al.*, 2024). Corporate social media competency enables companies to recognize and capitalize on business possibilities and allows for reorganizing business resources (Ogunlana *et al.*, 2021). At the operational level, businesses use social media to improve customer relationships. This includes product interactions, brand engagement, and overall customer pleasure. This strategy promotes more consumer loyalty and higher brand trust, which raises the company's value (Alateya, 2024b; Daoud *et al.*, 2024).

A second field of study has conducted empirical research on how businesses' use of social media affects marketing initiatives that are carried out a phenomenon known as social media marketing. For example, Herman *et al.*'s (2019) study examines the connection between consumer and company activity on social media and finds that indirect remarks from knowledgeable and convincing customers influence purchases more than company messaging. In a similar vein, Lim *et al.*, (2022) find that customer interaction on social media increases shopping visits and boosts consumer profitability. A more constrained third block of empirical study contrasts the impact of social media on stock market performance with that of online traditional media, such as site traffic and Google search (Luo *et al.*, 2024). However, further study is still required to fully comprehend how businesses might use social media resources to create value for their operations (Agag *et al.*, 2024). Being pioneers in the field of personal branding, social media managers have an exceptional viewpoint for understanding personal branding tactics. They are monitoring these social media strategies both personally and professionally. These professionals operate at the nexus of social media users, consumers, professionals, and influencers because they actively interact with their target community and customers via social media. Social media managers play a crucial role in the rapidly developing field of social media management and are intimately aware of the difficulties posed by social media.

Though not much research has been done to examine social media management as a distinct career up to this point, the topic is expanding as an emerging profession. Shepherd and Shtern

interviewed these people to learn more about how digital strategists saw their role as "cultural intermediates" in the digital media economy (Thornton, 2024). Pharswan et al. (2020) determined the required skills for social media managers. Jacobson looked at job postings from the Spanish Association of Online Community Managers and Social Media Professionals, stressing that the primary responsibility of community managers is to update social media content.

Tørning et al. (2015) interviewed social media managers in Denmark to learn about their challenges with social media management and their thoughts on the Return on investment (ROI) of various social media initiatives. McCosker (2017) analyzed Australian employment advertisements and interviewed with social strategists. The results showed that social strategists are often employed in-house for a variety of companies, indicating the industry-wide nature of social media employment. Four hundred students at an American business school were surveyed by Kwon et al. (2013) to find out the skills needed for a social media coordinator. They said that universities should prepare their students for social media professions. When contemplating about how to become effective in the management of your social media sites, Bossio et al. (2022) explored the work conditions in social media and defined that social media managers are 'boundary setters'. Kanuri et al. (2018) used a survey of experts in the field to establish that Social media management companies employ experts that permitted them to determine the best time for releasing updates to social media platforms.

Social media managers may find themselves sometimes in a tough position of building corporate communication strategies targeting the external community and at the same time implementing employee-centric measures so that adherence to certain limits defined by, for example, the Sarbanes Oxley Act with specific rules regarding an employee's personal and business use of social media is ensured. According to Popat & Tarrant (2023), the use of social media technologies by the staff might have the differential impacts on some elements of the firm, including reputation, communication practices and culture. The employers of the staff members can either encourage or not encourage the use of social media, which can lead to the formulation of policies, bureaucratic measures and regulation as well as moderation of the social media account. Thus, developing and regulating communication within LM companies through social media accounts work as a new manner of governance. Organizations must actively manage and handle the possible effects on company culture, communication, and reputation due to the dynamic nature of employee participation in social media.

Although many of the studies that have already been done on new professions concentrate on certain industries or management viewpoints, there still needs to be more understanding regarding the professional identities and personal branding strategies used by social media managers. Social media managers are an essential professional category in the digital economy but have yet to receive much scholarly attention. Wingström et al. (2022) draw

attention to the paucity of research on the experiences of new media professionals, highlighting how crucial it is to comprehend their part in the economy's and the industry's evolution. Ju et al. (2023) contend that there is a shortage of scholarship on the production side of media industries. Despite being understudied in academic literature, studies on new media workers are receiving more attention, especially in the cultural and creative industries, as demonstrated by the EU joint research project (Madonna *et al.*, 2023). In response to Josephi & O'Donnell's (2023) request for research on new media workers, this study focuses on social media managers as digital producers. It also adds to the continuing research agenda on personal branding. This study intends to shed light on the professional experiences and personal branding practices owned by a social media manager by concentrating on their distinctive qualities, all within the larger framework of the evolving dynamics in the digital work environment.

However, the role of social media managers has evolved into one that is more demanding and complex as organizations realize the value of having a solid social media presence. The extant body of literature primarily focuses on technical or conceptual elements, leaving a gap in the current knowledge of how they meet. The creation of hiring practices and training initiatives that may adequately equip social media managers for their varied duties needs to be improved without a comprehensive framework. The study objective is to examine how businesses improve their social media skills and focus on identifying strategies that enable them to gain an advantage over their rivals. Although there is a wealth of research on the technical or conceptual skills of social media management, only some studies bridge these two domains, which makes it challenging to provide thorough guidelines for social media managers. This research gap needs to improve a comprehensive grasp of the skills necessary for success in this field. In a time where digital communication rules, social media has become a powerful tool for companies to engage with their customers. Social media managers are essential to the business's online identity, campaign supervision, and promoting engagement. The dynamic nature of online interactions and the swift development of social media platforms provide distinct challenges.

## **2. Research Questions**

1. How do the technical skills possessed by modern social media managers impact their ability to craft successful social media strategies and achieve organizational goals?
2. What are the critical conceptual (hard) skills that modern social media managers need to develop to effectively navigate the evolving landscape of social media marketing and contribute to organizational success?
3. How does the interplay between the technical and conceptual skills of social media managers influence their job performance, brand equity, and overall strategic success in the digital marketing domain?

### **3. Knowledge Gap**

Despite the existing literature on the skills required for modern social media managers, there must be a noticeable gap in understanding the interplay between technical and conceptual (hard) skills, specifically within this role. Studies have explored the importance of soft skills and practical intelligence in various professional domains (Joseph et al., 2010). Additionally, although there is recognition of the significance of HRM practices in enhancing creativity and job performance (Aloqaily, 2023; Alateya, 2023), there remains a dearth of studies that directly link these practices to the development and utilization of technical and conceptual skills among social media managers. Hence, the literature has not explored how women in particular face organisational barriers as IT workers, and what competencies project managers (Armstrong et al. , 2018; Abdelmasseh et al. , 2022) need to acquire to be successful in this particular line of work, let alone dealing with social media management, a rapidly-growing field. Thus, based on the identified gap in the literature and the analysis of the current state of studies, this research set the following objective: To enhance the understanding of the technical and conceptual competencies required for effective performance in social media management” thereby helping to fill the identified gap in the literature, and making a contribution to the development of the theoretical framework for the analysis of competencies required in this growing and highly important position in the contemporary media environment.

### **4. Literature Review**

Currently, due to the proliferation of social networks and their impact on many organizations, this position is considered one of the most vital in an organization. With organizations attempting to penetrate through the foliage of social media sites and attempt to unlock the strategic communication potential of Social Media ,the job title which has seen tremendous demand the World over, is that of social media managers who possess admirable hard skills alongside conceptual abilities. Thus, this literature review will examine the complexity of operation of contemporary social media managers in terms of interaction of the technical and conceptual modes for designing success in the field of social media marketing. The development of social media technology has greatly changed the business environment with yet stronger focus on business to consumer communication; therefore, the holder of this position requires to be versatile with vast technical, and strategic skills. Similar to the main idea of this paper, Leonardi et al. (2013) point out that enterprise social media are especially important in knowledge sharing and organisational innovation within CoPs. This emphasizes the need for technical competence in the process of how social technologies are used to foster teams in creating knowledge in organizations. Also, the study of Opstoel et al. (2019) focused on affective area and highlighted the role of personal and social development in PE, focusing on the significance of prosocial behavior for interpersonal development of individuals. Although the present study deals with a different field of research, it only serves as an additional confirmation of the importance of conceptual skills in the sphere of

communication and building relationships. This is especially so for social media managers who need to grow the engagement level and brand popularity. While organizations are adopting augmented reality and mixed reality in the training of their employees and new generation workforce, Vigliani et al. (2021) assert that more research is required to confirm the effectiveness of the simulators and their effectiveness on the subjects' performance when they are in the real world. This only reemphasizes the critical role of technical competencies in the utilization of new technologies and optimizing the users' interactions in the online environment. Considering the growing body of literature on social media utilization, Caton & Chapman (2016) conducted a systematic review and thematic analysis on the use of social media by individuals with intellectual disabilities, highlighting the nuanced considerations and ethical implications associated with social media engagement. This study underscores the importance of both technical proficiency and conceptual understanding in ensuring inclusive and ethical social media practices. By synthesizing insights from diverse research domains, this literature review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the technical and conceptual skills essential for modern social media managers to navigate the intricacies of social media marketing and drive organizational success. Through an exploration of existing literature, this review seeks to elucidate the multifaceted dimensions of technical and conceptual skills in shaping the strategic endeavors of social media managers in the digital age.

## **5. The Roles of Social Media Manager**

After presenting the theoretical framework targeting this Digital Marketing project, the following paragraph defines the working scope of the Social Media Manager. In its turn, Middle managers are in touch with the external stakeholders more often than top managers (Yaqub and Al-Sabban, 2023). They promote, facilitate, bargain, and explain relationships between the technical and operational tiers of the organization and its institutional plan (Alateya & Baskaran, 2023; Li et al., 2023). Four strategic roles for Middle managers, according to Floyd & Wooldridge, (1997). First, the conventional role is aligning activities with the current strategy. Second, they serve as synthesizers, interpreting and communicating data to upper management. Third, they play the role of advocates, promoting and reshaping the strategic notions of top management. Finally, they play the role of facilitators, and they foster idea generation and experimental efforts inside the company. Social media managers must convey the company's strategy to external stakeholders while responding to stakeholder feedback to avoid reputational problems (Alateya, 2024a; Del Punta, 2019).

In this research, the recurring themes in the profiles supplied by previous authors were addressed and categorized into four groups: analysis, content creation, strategy, and community management. These groups best represent the primary social media manager's duties and responsibilities. To give a quick rundown of the four primary responsibilities and duties of a social media manager, we have labeled each group:



### *5.1 Social Analyst*

One of the most important responsibilities of Social Media Managers is monitoring and analyzing how well a social media program is creating positive buzz toward a company and its products or services (Liadeli et al., 2023). The field of "social media analytics" is increasingly important as it helps businesses measure and assess the effectiveness of their social media strategy and offers insightful information to improve overall strategy (Saura et al., 2023b). Diverse analytical tools are obtainable to gauge each social networking site's effectiveness.

### *5.2 Content Manager*

Content must be continuously dynamic and new to promote user relationships. Beyond only replying to negative comments, social media managers should hold conversations and urge consumers to become "prosumers" (Saura et al., 2023b).

### *5.3 Social Media Strategist*

Companies must establish guidelines appropriate for all social media platforms (Saura et al., 2023a). The Social Media Manager must have a well-defined strategy to respond to inquiries and manage crises.

### *5.4 Community Manager*

One of the basic roles of a social media manager is creating and overseeing the brand's community. This entails encouraging user involvement and loyalty by fostering favorable environments, replying to comments, and facilitating conversations. As the community's spokesperson, the Community Manager is essential to generating community excitement and maintaining a positive relationship between businesses and their communities. In this role, marketing initiatives are improved, events and products are promoted, and the organization's image is strengthened by fostering cooperation and engagement among diverse stakeholders. Additionally, the Community Manager helps to enhance "crowdsourcing" procedures at various points in the value chain. (Hornuf and Jeworrek, 2022)The dynamic and changing nature of the Web 2.0 era makes it difficult to provide a single, clear-cut definition of the manager in charge of social media since it requires a wide range of skills, expertise, and practices.

This systematic categorization of these roles aims to offer a comprehensive insight into the diverse tasks and responsibilities that Social Media Managers shoulder within their dynamic and multifaceted positions. This classification serves as a framework to elucidate the multifaceted nature of their responsibilities, highlighting the essential aspects that contribute to effective social media management. Many academics have noted that social media and conventional media must be integrated. Bruhn (2021) demonstrated that traditional media have a more pronounced impact on brand awareness, while social media significantly influences brand image. Thus, there are chances for further increased brand equity when

these various communication tools are used together (Bruhn, 2021). See Figure 1 and Table 1.



Figure 1. Infographic of the Roles of Social Media Manager

Source: Researcher’s Construct (2024)

Table 1. Classification of Social Media Managers

	(Frank Ojwang, 2020)	(Lewis and Molyneux, 2018)	(Kuchciak and Wiktorowicz, 2021)	Our classification
Analysis	Social Analyst: He is in charge of measuring and reporting for the overall program as well as for specific business units using brand monitoring, social analytics, web analytics, and traditional marketing techniques.	E-reputation manager manages and interprets linguistic and semantic aspects to specialize in the analysis of online word-of-mouth; A web analyst examines, assesses, and contrasts analyses to modify and enhance strategy and metrics; The project has the maximum online visibility thanks to SEO (Search	Since the web project manager oversees the entire project and plans and organizes all of the operations, they must continuously keep an eye on the budget, schedule, quality, risks, and outcomes.	Social Analyst



		Engine Optimizer), notably on search engines.		
Content	The Social Media Manager is responsible for organizing business units to initiate Social Media campaigns. The manager of social media may oversee both external and internal communications, allocate resources, and create program schedules.	The transmedia web editor oversees the website's content. His distinct voice and style are the result of continuous polishing efforts. The person in charge of gathering and filtering internet content is known as a content curator.	The Web Content Specialist handles text, multimedia, and content while keeping the intended audience and platform in mind. He must also keep an eye on consumer happiness and the website's usability.	Content Manager
Strategy	The corporate social strategist oversees overall strategy and investment accountability. The strategist rallies business units and works mostly inside.	The development of PR in the digital age is known as "digital PR." To establish and preserve relationships, he combines online and offline. While offline channels should be noticed, online promotion tools are the responsibility of the all-line advertiser.	Digital strategic planner assists senior management with their strategic decisions and provides feedback to other experts involved in the process.	Social Media Strategist
Community	The community manager is the manager in charge of the online community. He or she must cultivate empathy for the community to include and engage stakeholders.			Community Manager

## **6. Seven Top Skills Social Media Managers Share**

### *6.1 Copywriting*

Effective copywriting is a fundamental skill for social media marketing, applicable across various marketing domains (Mushtaq *et al.*, 2023). Social media manager's responsibilities, ranging from shaping social media profile descriptions to composing tweets and Facebook posts, necessitate proficient copywriting. Crafting compelling stories within the constraints of a social media post is crucial for driving engagement and clicks. Without strong copywriting skills, this task becomes challenging. To establish the proficiency in social media manager copywriting, it is advisable to familiarize with different copywriting formulas (Beachboard and Weidman, 2013). These formulas help as a guide to assist you in achieving creativity and result-oriented copy for your social media content. It is finding a formula for copywriting that works with your personality to greatly enhance output and enhance the entire standard of the content you post on the social media platforms (Zulkifly and Firdaus, 2014).

### *6.2 Design (Graphics and Videos)*

For the last few years, there has been a drastic transformation of social media from the bulletin-style update to a shift in concentrating on multimedia objects, specifically, images and videos (Zhussupova and Shadiev, 2023). Creativity is now one of the important skills of social media managers as they are expected to design and develop the appropriate visuals (Shen *et al.*, 2024). Various studies reveal that posts with pictures garners more attention especially on the social media platforms. The enthusiasts for increasing the amount of video content in the future were 43% of customers (Barri *et al.*, 2023). Such a change suggests the need to focus on aesthetics since more and more social media content needs to have bright visuals to attract and maintain the viewers' attention.

### *6.3 Public Speaking (Confidence in Front of an Audience)*

Evaluating the social networks and new applications people can now broadcast live video on such services as Facebook Live, Instagram Live, and Periscope (Yusmiati, 2021). With 42% of marketers saying they want to produce more live videos, they are paying attention to this change (Tilwani *et al.*, 2022). Marketers are enthusiastic about live video due to two main factors: reach and engagement. Facebook Live videos, for instance, have a higher chance of showing up in the News Feed when they are live than when they are not, from the standpoint of reach (Tinh *et al.*, 2021). This real-time visibility expands the potential audience's reach. Concerning audience engagement, live content presents an exceptional chance for high-engagement events and one-on-one communication with viewers (Lapiente and Van de Walle, 2020). It facilitates quick communication and encourages a more sincere and lively interaction with viewers. Social media managers need the courage to go live on social media and interact with their followers to take advantage of the live video trend (Malecki *et al.*, 2021). In this situation, having the ability to speak in front of an audience becomes essential for managers. It allows them to conduct interviews, deliver ideas, answer spontaneous

inquiries, and communicate with subordinates in real-time (Mufidah and Roifah, 2020). This skill set enhances the ability to utilize live videos as an effective strategy of gaining the audience's trust and selling brands.

#### *6.4 Customer Service / Community Engagement*

More people are using social media platforms, including but not limited to Twitter and Facebook, to seek customer service, thus establishing social media as the primary form of customer service (Ho et al., 2020). However, despite more people showing a preference for using social media, only 21% of businesses currently use social media to provide customer service. This, therefore, is a substantial opportunity for companies to offer exceptional customer service. Social media managers are claimed to be the face of a company since they respond to inquiries and communicate with clients online. To engage clients online through sites like Facebook and Twitter, a social media manager must have excellent communication skills combined with empathy. This skill set could be essential in managing customer questions, solving issues, and motivating positive brand interactions (Naeem, 2021). Customer service and community involvement in social media management are similar. A skilled social media community manager is good at answering inquiries about the brand, business, or sector and posing the ideal questions to encourage participation (Akram and Kortam, 2020). This dual job necessitates empathy, conversational skills, and a deep comprehension of community dynamics to foster a supportive and engaging online community for the business.

#### *6.5 Behavioral Psychology*

You may learn about the kinds of social media posts that work effectively by using data and analytics, and behavioural psychology can help you understand the motivations behind user preferences (Bozzola et al., 2022). Utilising statistics to understand the "what," you may spot trends and duplicate effective strategies. However, understanding the "why" enables you to identify the underlying causes of these patterns and proactively shape future accomplishments (Izogo and Mpinganjira, 2020). For example, data may show that tweets with photos perform better than just text. With this knowledge, you can write more tweets featuring images. An influential psychological element could be your followers' inclination toward visual content (Saura et al., 2021). If you do not investigate the psychological underlying trends, you may pass up chances to investigate additional visual content formats like GIFs and videos. Although social media managers may not need a formal degree or an elevated level of experience in psychology, it is a valuable ability to be willing to learn and comprehend psychology on some level (Fang et al., 2020). This knowledge improves your capacity to analyze information, reach well-informed conclusions, and create content that speaks to the subtle psychological traits of your intended audience.

### 6.6 Analytics

Here, "analytics" is used broadly to refer to both corporate metrics and social media indicators (likes, comments, and shares) (e.g., traffic, leads, conversions, revenue) (Bazzaz Abkenar *et al.*, 2021). An adept social media manager can interpret and analyze both kinds of data, offering a comprehensive view of the organization's social media performance concerning corporate objectives. One of the principles of a social media manager is ensuring that they measure effectiveness across several social platforms. A social media manager has to understand the subtleties of social media analytics and be aware of which of those indicators are essential to the company (Choi *et al.*, 2020). For instance, the team can understand which content is driving traffic and sales via social media platforms by correlating traffic and conversions to channels and postings. The ability to understand and interpret data correctly is no longer a requirement; it has become an absolute necessity for social media managers. This enables them to plan, strategize, and map social media campaigns in synchronization with higher business objectives. In other words, the effective social media manager is capable of understanding social media cues and turning them into tangible business outcomes.

### 6.7 Budgeting

As a social media manager, it might also be tasked with budget-related responsibilities. Apart from the advertising cost, you might need to invest in other resources for the campaign, including a social media management tool, design resources, images, and training programs. Basic financial and budgeting knowledge can significantly assist your performance in this position. While becoming an Excel expert might be optional, having a solid understanding of Excel and its functionalities can be immensely valuable. Excel proficiency allows you to manage and track budget allocations, analyze financial data, and create meaningful reports. This feature enables you to manage your budget effectively and make wise decisions based on economic knowledge (Aydin *et al.*, 2021). A social media manager with financial literacy is better equipped to maximize the impact of allocated budgets, optimize resource allocation, and demonstrate a clear return on investment for the resources dedicated to social media activities (Pezzuti *et al.*, 2021). See Figure 2.



Figure 2. Infographic of Seven Top Skills Social Media Managers Share

Source: Researcher's Construct (2024)

## 7. Three Personality Traits Great Social Media Managers Exhibit

### 7.1 Curiosity

A socially inquisitive social media manager would deeply engage with the ever-evolving social media landscape, staying abreast of the latest developments, and actively experimenting with innovative social media marketing strategies (Shin and Lee, 2021). Brian Peters serves as an exemplary embodiment of this characteristic. Upon recognizing the huge rise in the popularity of videos, particularly live videos, on social media, Brian swiftly embraced this trend, intensifying his video production efforts on platforms like Facebook and Twitter (Niehoff and Oosterwijk, 2020). When Snap Inc. introduced Spectacles, Brian promptly acquired the product, driven by a desire to explore its potential applications in marketers' social media strategies. This proactive and exploratory approach embodies a social media manager's commitment to constantly adapting to emerging trends and technologies, ensuring a dynamic and effective brand's social media presence (Howard-Grenville, 2021).

### 7.2 Adaptability

Indeed, adaptability is a crucial complement to curiosity, especially in the dynamic landscape of social media (Pelly *et al.*, 2020). When a social media manager discovers something new or identifies an emerging trend, the ability to swiftly adapt becomes instrumental in staying ahead of the curve (Mardiana, 2020). For instance, the evolution of the most engaging types of social media content has shifted from text to images and now to videos. Fittingly, even Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg is reported to have said, in a Fast Company article, "Most of the content ten years ago was text, and then photos, and now it's quickly becoming videos." This comment by Zuckerberg validates why Facebook is strongly going ahead with video content

and emphasizes that change is inevitable in the online content consumption landscape. In that regard, a socially adaptable manager can switch strategies and create content in line with emerging preferences seamlessly (Juvonen et al., 2022). This proactive move ensures that one's social media presence resonates with the audience, thus reflecting the capacity of a manager to navigate transiting trends to maintain a competitive edge in the mutating social media landscape.

### *7.3 Business Savviness*

Mastering the art of getting likes and shares on social media is undoubtedly great. Still, true prowess for a social manager must lie in incorporating these digital victories into the tapestry of business strategy. Socially conscious managers are thus able to see the bigger picture and identify the indispensable role of social media in the organizational landscape. In their strategic dance, these managers can identify the metrics that rise above the level of vanity and grab hold of those that are deeply embedded in the tapestry of business success. Very much cognizant of the fact that social media can blow up these metrics substantially (Yaquub and Al-Sabban, 2023), they are enabled to do so. For example, a B2B social media maestro orchestrates lead-generation initiatives that work in harmony with the symphony of the sales team. In contrast, their counterpart in the B2C world orchestrates strategies aimed directly at amplifying customer purchases. In this symphony of strategy, their influence goes far beyond the realms of likes and shares, permeating the very essence of the entire company. This holistic grasp turns them into architects of influence, leveraging social media as a platform for engagement and a strategic instrument that orchestrates success across the organizational spectrum (Dolega et al., 2021).

## **8. Technical Skills for Social Media Managers**

There is no business today in the digitized landscape that cannot miss the importance of a well-designed social media strategy—not even start-ups. A well-skilled social media manager would be required to go about the world of social media successfully. The principal technical skills such a position requires include:

### *8.1 Familiarity With Diverse Social Media Platforms*

A social media manager needs to be able to move through the different social media platforms and understand the nuances of each (Nekmat, 2020). This, indeed, moves forward to posts creation and scheduling, data analysis, and comprehensive analytics tracking.

### *8.2 Content Creation and Copywriting Proficiency*

Crafting compelling, informative content that fits the target audience is a crucial ability (Reinhardt, 2020). This includes being able to produce clear and concise copies and create visually appealing images and videos.



### 8.3 Design Acumen

A good knowledge of design can come in handy in developing graphics and templates required for good social media posts (McClure and Seock, 2020). A social media manager who has an excellent working knowledge of design can make things look visually appealing and dynamic, thereby capturing the audience's interest and effective message communication. This augments the quality and the impact of a social media campaign, making it more provoking and unforgettable.

### 8.4 Analytics and Reporting Expertise

A social media manager ought to be able to analyze data effectively, tracking key metrics such as reach, engagement, and website traffic to evaluate the campaign's effectiveness. Analyzing these metrics helps in understanding how well the content is performing and allows for adjustments to improve future campaigns. This ability to interpret data and derive actionable insights is crucial for optimizing strategies and achieving business objectives (Reinhardt, 2020).

### 8.5 Project Management Proficiency

One usually has to multitask and attend to deadlines in such work. As a social media manager, you will get the chance to work with other team members, which includes designers and writers, to be able to organize and implement multiple social media campaigns simultaneously. Organizational skills coupled with multi-tasking abilities are needed in handling these many projects. It helps ensure that the campaigns are coherent, timely, and in line with the general marketing strategy (Eslami et al., 2021). See Figure 3.



Figure 3. Infographic of Technical Skills for Social Media Managers

Source: Researcher's Construct (2024)

In the end, besides technical skills, a social media manager will succeed if equipped with effective communication and interpersonal skills at work. Good interpersonal skills are necessary for developing relationships with audiences and working in an integrated fashion with teammates. It will help one to execute innovative ways of social media usage in reaching the stipulated objectives. Therefore, one needs to be possessed such technical skills if he would like to do well in a career in social media marketing. With the proper skill set, one can tap into the power of social media to drive business growth and create genuine relationships with customers (Khan et al., 2021).

## **9. Technical Skills in Social Media Management**

Technical skills in social media management encompass several abilities necessary at the core to deliver effectively in such a dynamic area. Fundamentally, these are the sound management of the platforms, data analytics, creation of content and design, and understanding of metrics. Mastering these technical skills is vital for a social media manager to understand the complexity of social media, prepare engaging content, and align strategies with business goals. Here are key technical skills crucial for social media managers:

### *9.1 Grade Point Average*

Although it is not a technical skill per se, a student's GPA may be used to gauge their performance and competency and get insight into how prepared they are for the workforce.(Cao and Ali, 2018).

### *9.2 Social Networking*

Mastery of various social media platforms, including blogs, video-sharing sites, and online communities, is essential. Proficiency in leveraging platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn is crucial for effective communication and marketing (Bu and Go, 2008).

### *9.3 Time Management Skills*

A subset of personal management skills, effective time management involves handling multiple demands, prioritizing tasks, and ensuring productivity. It is essential to the success of a company (Victor Ugochukwu et al., 2021).

### *9.4 Strategic Planning Skills*

Strategic planning is imperative in the competitive realm of hospitality management. The strategic planning skills include managing stakeholders and community concerns, comprehending client needs, and commitment to quality (Charest et al., 2016).

### *9.5 Spreadsheet Skills*

Budgeting and administering a spreadsheet are the two crucial job requirements for all candidates. Budgeting can be described as financial reporting, scheduling, and monitoring of revenues and expenses. The function effectively assigns resources in the best way possible

and ensures proper financial control. Spreadsheets help to systemize data for its further use in budget preparation and the development of financial insights in support of decision-making (Arulogun et al., 2020).

#### *9.6 Communication (Oral and Written)*

Successful organizations require individuals to own both practical oral and written communication skills. Good communication is the cornerstone of working together, problem-solving, and having positive relationships with clients. Strong communication skills allow team members to speak clearly about their ideas, work through conflict, and build solid client relationships. These competencies help keep the work environment productive and catalyze organizational achievement (Jha et al., 2016).

#### *9.7 Analytics and Data Interpretation*

It is instrumental that social media managers have a command of popular analytics tools such as Google Analytics, which are now adopted by most social media analytics platforms. Social media managers should be able to interpret and refine strategy based on the data, measure campaign effectiveness, and identify areas for improvement (Syariah and Ilmu, 2016).

#### *9.8 Content Creation and Graphic Design*

The ability to create attention-grabbing content that is visually appealing is a technical skill. Knowledge and keeping updated with the use of graphic design tools in design trends are useful for engaging content creation. (Mitrović et al., 2020).

#### *9.9 Advertising and Paid Campaigns*

Paid advertising on social media platforms is a must to increase reach. Social media managers must develop and optimize paid campaigns on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn (Rahardja et al., 2020).

#### *9.10 Platform Management and Algorithm Understanding*

Various algorithms drive each of these social media platforms, so strategies should be constantly altered according to changes on the platform to maximize the visibility of content. (Alhajri and Mansour, 2018). These technical skills collectively empower social media managers to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of social media effectively. See Figure 4.

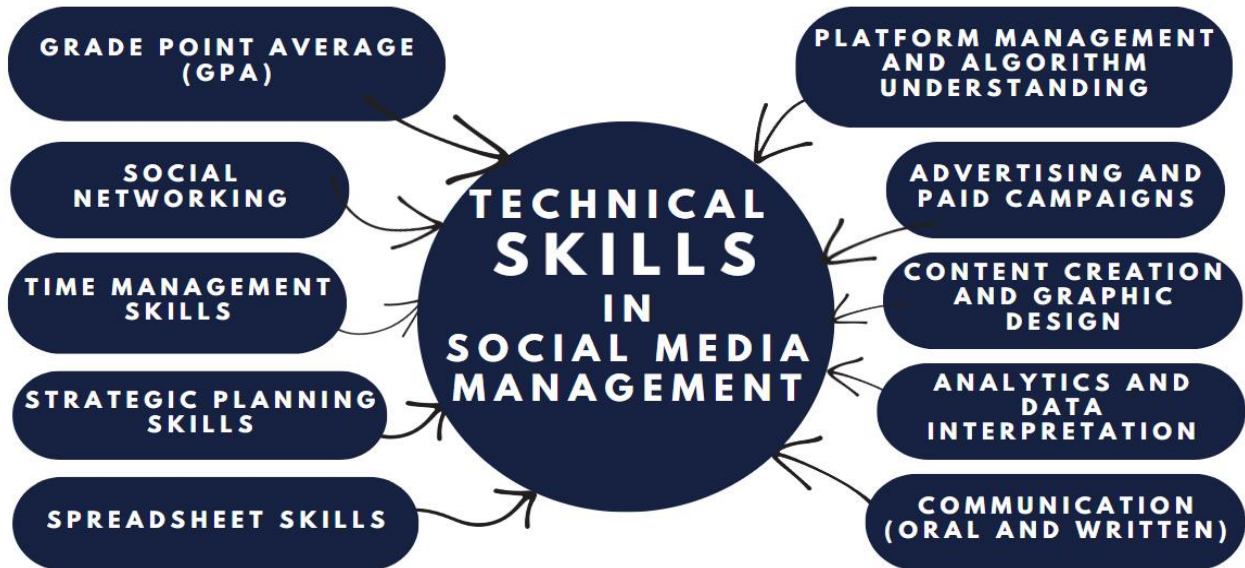


Figure 4. Infographic of Technical skills in social media management

Source: Researcher's Construct 2024

## 10. Conceptual Skills in Social Media Management

Conceptual skills are a set of cognitive abilities that enable individuals, particularly those in leadership and managerial roles, to think abstractly, comprehend intricate situations, and perceive the overarching context within an organizational or strategic framework (Vanwynsberghe et al., 2012). These skills play a pivotal role in making strategic decisions, discerning the interconnections between different elements, and proficiently steering the organization towards its objectives. Unlike technical skills, which are more practical and task-oriented, conceptual skills entail a higher level of thinking and analysis, emphasizing a broader and more strategic perspective (Alateya & Baskaran, 2024; Ancillai et al., 2019)

### 10.1 Decision-Making Skills

Decision-making skills are critical for swiftly and efficiently solving problems in various contexts, from collaborating with colleagues to addressing project-related challenges (Olaniyi et al., 2023). Proficient decision-making enhances managerial success, and individuals can cultivate these skills by honing their attention to detail, analytical capabilities, and resourcefulness. Exceptional team members and conceptual thinkers often excel at identifying potential issues that might impact the organization before they become widely apparent (Wong et al., 2023). This foresight may necessitate making decisions that yield long-term benefits for the company. Developing decision-making skills contributes significantly to effective problem-solving and managerial prowess.

## *10.2 Interpersonal Skills*

Interpersonal skills encompass a range of abilities related to interacting effectively with other individuals (Ratmono et al., 2023). Identifying interpersonal skills involves identifying practices that contribute to becoming a skilled leader. Here are some common traits associated with professionals who possess advanced interpersonal skills:

### *10.2.1 The Ability to Motivate Others*

A proficient leader leverages motivation to enhance employee satisfaction and productivity, setting a positive example for the standards that each team member in a business should adhere to (Kumar and Pandey, 2023).

### *10.2.2 Professionalism in Your Role*

Professionalism entails conducting oneself with honesty and integrity, adhering to the highest standards in these areas, and serving as an exemplar for other team members to emulate (Ruparel et al., 2023).

### *10.2.3 An Innovative Approach*

Conceptual and interpersonal skills aid innovation (Barlatier et al., 2023). They empower individuals to devise fresh and improved solutions for customers, revamp procedures, and implement new systems to enhance functionality and productivity.

## *10.3 The Ability to Analyze*

Analysis skills are fundamental conceptual skills in management. It is crucial to have the ability to analyze different facets of business operations, ensuring that each department aligns with the overall goals of the organization (Ahmed, 2023). This analysis encompasses forecasting, diagnosing issues, understanding potential challenges, and devising strategies for business improvement. The skills associated with analysis include research proficiency, data analysis, creativity, and critical thinking (Soetekouw & Angelopoulos, 2022).

## *10.4 Strong Communicator*

Conceptual skills include the ability to provide clear communication solutions for the organization (Masciandaro et al., 2024). Taking the example of a coffee shop competitor, a manager with conceptual skills identifies potential solutions and communicates these insights to other managers and colleagues (High et al., 2023). Individuals with strong conceptual skills excel in communication, both verbally and through active listening. They prioritize understanding the needs of employees before formulating a comprehensive plan of action. Proficient communication skills within conceptual abilities include active listening, verbal and non-verbal communication, written communication, presentation skills, and the capacity to pose insightful questions (Alateya, 2024c, 2024d; Si et al., 2023).

### *10.5 Ability to Solve Problems*

Identifying and solving problems is a prime example of conceptual skills for management (Koehler and Vilarinho-Pereira, 2023). Proficiency in conceptual management skills involves the capacity to prompt decisions when necessary. Problem-solving skills within this realm encompass decision-making, critical thinking, logical reasoning, multitasking, and effective troubleshooting (Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2023).

### *10.6 Strategic Planning and Campaign Development*

Creating a comprehensive social media strategy is a conceptual skill that steers the overall trajectory of a brand's online presence. Studies, such as those by Al Adwan et al., (2023), underscore the significance of aligning social media goals with broader business objectives. This strategic approach necessitates a deep understanding of the target audience, industry trends, and competitive landscapes.

### *10.7 Brand Voice and Tone Management*

Ensuring a consistent brand voice and tone across various platforms is vital for cultivating brand identity. Research, such as that conducted by Santoso et al., (2023), highlights the influence of a unified brand communication strategy on audience perception. Conceptualizing and executing a brand's voice demands comprehension of the brand's values and awareness of the preferences held by the target audience.

### *10.8 Community Engagement and Relationship Building*

Cultivating a sense of community and establishing connections with the audience are conceptual skills that play a pivotal role in fostering long-term brand loyalty. Studies conducted by McCarthy & Bogers (2023) propose that social media managers should transcend message broadcasting and actively participate in engaging with their audience. Nurturing relationships encompasses responding to comments, encouraging discussions, and adapting strategies based on user feedback.

### *10.9 Crisis Management and Reputation Building*

Navigating through crises and effectively managing a brand's reputation is a conceptual skill that demands foresight and strategic thinking. Pakura and Rudeloff (2020) underscore the significant role of social media managers in proactively addressing potential crises and mitigating reputational damage. The conceptualization of crisis management entails the development of response protocols and vigilant monitoring of potential risks. See Figure 5.





Figure 5. Infographic of Types of conceptual skills in social media management

Source: Researcher’s Construct (2024)

## 11. Methodology and Research Design

The study will investigate the duties and obligations of social media managers using a qualitative research design. Using a qualitative inductive approach in research papers offers several advantages. This method allows researchers to explore a research problem deeply, moving beyond surface descriptions to comprehensively understand the subject (Neira et al., 2023). Qualitative inductive approaches are particularly useful for developing new concepts and ideas, as they involve bottom-up reasoning from specific observations to identify patterns, generate hypotheses, and build theories (Buetow, 2014). By employing qualitative rigor in inductive research, researchers can maintain the creative and revelatory potential inherent in such studies while ensuring the reliability and validity of their findings (Gioia et al., 2012). Furthermore, the inductive approach in qualitative research is valuable for generating new knowledge and consolidating it within a theoretical framework (Abouchadi et al., 2022). It enables researchers to extract themes and general statements from specific cases, contributing to developing richer and deeper theoretical perspectives (Ahadi & Kasraie, 2020). This approach is especially beneficial in fields like nursing research, where content analysis and thematic analysis are commonly used to analyze data and explore complex phenomena (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

## 12. Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews with Social Media Managers will be used to gather information to comprehend their viewpoints on their positions (Miswoni et al., 2023). In addition, literature

review searches will be performed to gather information on the stages of social media management implementation (Miswoni et al., 2023). This mixed-method approach will give a comprehensive understanding of the duties and difficulties faced by social media managers.

### **13. Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis will be utilized to find reoccurring themes in the document analysis and interview data (Miswoni et al., 2023). Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Naeem, 2023). This approach is applied by systematically organizing and interpreting textual or visual data to uncover meaningful insights (Ozuem et al., 2022). Thematic analysis typically consists of several key steps, including familiarizing oneself with the data, creating initial codes, identifying themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing a final report (Arslan, 2020; Haamann & Basten, 2019).

Researchers choose thematic analysis for various reasons. Firstly, thematic analysis allows for a detailed data exploration, enabling researchers to identify patterns and gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Labra et al., 2020). It provides a flexible and adaptable framework that can be applied across different research contexts and disciplines (Naeem & Ozuem, 2021). Additionally, thematic analysis is well-suited for synthesizing diverse data sources, such as online reviews, social media content, and interview transcripts (Nowell et al., 2017). Moreover, thematic analysis effectively examines different participants' perspectives, highlights similarities and differences, and generates new insights (Proudfoot, 2022).

Furthermore, thematic analysis is chosen for its usability and applicability in research concerning people's experiences and perceptions (Attride-Stirling, 2001). It is not bound to a specific epistemological approach, allowing researchers to approach analysis within various paradigms (Kapoulitsas & Corcoran, 2014). Thematic analysis also enables researchers to identify and organize relevant themes and subthemes, facilitating detailed re-readings of the data to explore emerging concepts (Weil, 2022). This method will assist in dividing the main duties of social media managers into discrete positions like community manager, social analyst, content manager, and social media strategist (Oweis, 2021). A thorough understanding of the responsibilities of social media managers will be attained through methodically examining the data.

### **14. Integration of Findings**

The conceptual framework will be combined with the results of the document analysis and interviews to give a thorough grasp of the responsibilities of social media managers. The research will investigate how the abilities and attributes discovered match the real-world situations and difficulties that Social Media Managers encounter daily (Franck & Dampérat, 2023).

## 15. Implications and Recommendations

The research findings will be used to examine the implications for practice. Suggestions will be given to businesses wishing to improve their social media management procedures. The study intends to add to the body of knowledge already available on social media management and provide suggestions for enhancing social media managers' efficacy in organizational contexts.

## 16. Discussion

### *16.1 The Interplay of Technical and Conceptual Skills*

The effective execution of social media management requires a delicate balance between technical proficiency and conceptual understanding (Kayode-Ajala, 2023). Technical skills provide the tools necessary for implementation, while conceptual skills guide the strategic decision-making process. For instance, the ability to interpret analytics (technical) informs the strategic refinement of content and campaigns (conceptual). Similarly, the conceptual skill of strategic planning informs the technical execution of advertising campaigns. As social media platforms evolve, so must the skills of social media managers. Research by Tao (2023) indicates that the dynamic nature of the digital landscape requires social media managers to keep their technical skills up to date to keep up with platform modifications. The evolving nature of online interactions also necessitates ongoing development of conceptual skills to adapt strategies to emerging trends and audience preferences. The integration of technical and conceptual skills directly influences business outcomes. Research by Geissinger et al., (2023) indicates that a comprehensive skill set in social media management contributes to increased brand exposure, engagement, and ROI. The interdependence of technical and conceptual skills is evident in their collective impact on achieving business objectives through effective online presence. As explored earlier, social media strategy development can be perceived as a widespread practice that has reached a level of diffusion on the S-shaped curve but has not yet reached institutionalization.

Social Media Managers, whether working as consultants, part of the communication/marketing team within the organization, or operating as freelancers, play a crucial role in transforming traditional practices and providing opportunities for enhanced interaction with diverse stakeholders (Ren *et al.*, 2023). The analysis and classification of Social Media Manager roles have identified competencies that characterize these figures. Due to resource limitations, social media is frequently handled by a single individual in many small and medium-sized businesses. Despite the challenges, Social Media Managers assume a pivotal role as middle managers, acting as filters between the company and stakeholders, representing a bridge for communication (Satar *et al.*, 2023). Addressing reputational risks associated with social media involves distinct roles. The Social Media Manager monitors stakeholder perceptions through analysis of online conversations, acting promptly to manage misunderstandings and implement efficient strategies. The social media manager customizes

content for each social media channel, ensuring consistent underlying messages while adapting to the unique characteristics of each platform. The social media manager, guided by frameworks like Sakas et al., (2023) develops strategies by considering the risks and benefits connected to different social media platforms. As social media managers play a significant role, it would be valuable to explore their impact on customer loyalty, stakeholder relations, financial performance, and attractiveness to potential employees.

## **17. Future Studies**

The rapid evolution of technology, including augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), presents new opportunities for social media engagement. Future studies could explore how social media managers integrate these technologies into their strategies and campaigns, highlighting the technical and conceptual adaptations required. Research can evaluate the effectiveness of training programs in developing technical and conceptual skills among social media managers. Evaluating the impact of these programs on job performance, employee satisfaction, and business outcomes would contribute to the field's understanding of skill development. Comparative studies across industries could provide insights into how social media managers' technical and conceptual skills vary based on the nature of the business. Exploring the unique challenges and opportunities in different sectors would enhance the specificity of skill recommendations. A longitudinal study could investigate the long-term impact of conceptual skills, such as community engagement and relationship building on brand loyalty. Understanding the sustained effects of these skills would contribute to a deeper comprehension of their significance in social media management. Future research paths could include investigating the training processes of Social Media Managers and understanding how firms manage and control these roles. Exploring elements involved in effective training, such as dependency relations, industrial experience, and involvement in various social media projects, can enhance a more in-depth understanding of the role. Moreover, understanding the organizational position of Social Media Managers, whether internal, part of an agency or freelancers, is essential for effective management. Exploring the impact of their organizational role on the outcomes of a Social Media strategy can provide valuable insights. Additionally, the relationship between Social Media Managers and clients, especially in the transition from agency to freelance, warrants further investigation. This paper marks the initial step in an explorative process, and future research aims to delve deeper into empirical implications in these areas. The lack of databases on professional figures like Social Media Managers poses challenges, but targeted research through interviews and observed participation can offer valuable insights into this evolving role. The identified areas of empirical research present exciting opportunities for further understanding the multifaceted role of social media managers in the dynamic landscape of communication and business.

## **18. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the social media manager's technical and conceptual skills are integral to navigating the complexities of the digital landscape. Technical proficiency in analytics,

content creation, advertising, and platform management must be enhanced by conceptual skills in strategic planning, brand communication, community engagement, and crisis management. The interplay between these skills shapes a social media manager's ability to drive brand visibility, engagement, and business success. Recognizing this intersection is essential to developing training programs, recruitment strategies, and ongoing professional development initiatives in the social media management field. As social media continues to evolve, understanding and enhancing these skills will be crucial for companies striving to maintain a competitive edge in the digital realm.

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**Data sharing statement**

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