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# Innovative Marketing Strategies in China's Telecommunication Sector: Adapting to the Digital Age

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## Abstract

This research study examined the innovative marketing strategies employed by telecommunication firms in China's rapidly evolving digital age. The study focused on the past practices and adaptations made by companies to navigate the dynamic landscape of the telecommunication sector in China. A literature-based approach was adopted, incorporating scholarly articles, industry reports, and case studies to establish a comprehensive understanding of the marketing strategies implemented by telecommunication firms in China. The analysis encompassed historical data and industry trends to identify key strategies that were employed in the past. The research shed light on the innovative marketing strategies adopted by telecommunication firms in response to the emerging digital age. It explored the use of digital platforms, social media, and mobile applications as effective tools for customer engagement and brand promotion. Furthermore, the study delved into the past experiences of telecommunication firms in China, assessing their ability to adapt to the changing consumer preferences and technological advancements. The analysis revealed the significance of customer-centric approaches, personalized marketing campaigns, and data-driven strategies in the success of telecommunication firms. The findings of this research contribute to a deeper understanding of the marketing strategies implemented by telecommunication firms in China's digital age. The insights gained from the analysis can inform the future marketing strategies and approaches of telecommunication companies, helping them adapt to the ever-changing market dynamics. The research underscores the importance of agility and innovation in the face of the digital age, emphasizing the need for continuous evolution and adaptation in marketing strategies. By learning from past experiences and embracing innovative approaches, telecommunication firms in China can establish a competitive edge and effectively cater to the evolving needs of their customers. In conclusion, the study emphasized the importance of adapting to changing market dynamics and employing customer-centric, data-driven approaches to achieve success in the telecommunication sector.

**Keywords:** *Innovative marketing strategies, China's telecommunication sector, Adapting, Digital age, Digital platforms*

## 1.0 Introduction

The telecommunications sector has experienced exponential growth due to increased digitalization, leading to fierce competition among players. To remain competitive and profitable, telecom companies have turned to innovative marketing strategies to attract and retain customers (Huang et al., 2019). As the industry becomes more customer-centric, telecom companies have started using data analytics to understand customer needs and behaviors better (Peng, 2019). This involves analyzing large volumes of customer data to derive meaningful insights that help telecom companies develop personalized marketing campaigns, product offerings, and improve customer service.

Telecom companies have embraced digital marketing as a cost-effective strategy to reach a wider audience. For instance, they are leveraging social media platforms, search engine optimization (SEO), and content marketing to engage with customers and promote their products and services (Bhattacharya & Racherla, 2020). These digital channels have enabled telecom companies to track user behavior, allowing them to tailor their marketing messages to different customer segments. Another innovative marketing strategy that has gained popularity in the telecommunications sector is gamification. By integrating game mechanics into their marketing efforts, telecom companies can improve customer engagement and loyalty. For example, telecom companies can offer rewards to customers who reach certain milestones or complete specific tasks (Suh & Ahn, 2019).

Influencer marketing is another strategy used by telecom companies. By partnering with popular influencers, these companies can leverage their large following to promote their products and services. This strategy is particularly effective in reaching younger demographics that consume a lot of digital content (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Telecom companies are also forming partnerships with other industry players to offer bundled services. For example, telecoms partner with video streaming services to offer combined packages, providing customers with more value for their money and giving the companies access to a wider customer base (Srivastava, 2020). The implementation of omnichannel marketing strategies is another innovative approach seen in the telecom sector. Companies are integrating their communication and sales channels to provide a seamless and consistent customer experience across different touchpoints (Huang & Benyoucef, 2019). This includes everything from social media platforms to customer service hotlines, email communications, and physical retail locations.

Ernkvist and Ström (2018) assert that all businesses need a marketing strategy to reach new customers and advertise their products and services. The old method of print advertising and radio ads still work but they are becoming less effective as people look to online sources for their shopping. Manufacturing companies still use these old school methods like networking events and trade shows and they still produce results. In our new digital economy, however, the way people shop has forever changed and companies must make a quick pivot towards digital marketing strategies in order to capture business. Manufacturing companies in Japan are turning to content marketing and increasing their digital presence. Online research and shopping are the new normal (Gani & Faroque, 2021).

Never has it been more important to increase your online presence and effectively market to these savvy shoppers. As dramatic changes have occurred in the manufacturing business, so

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too has the consumer market changed. Buyers have already switched to a new way of shopping and your customers need to find you first when they are looking. Inbound Marketing is the way to attract new business in this digital economy. It meets the need of online shoppers and effectively attracts them to your website through multiple streams of content that you create on various platforms (Gielens & Steenkamp, 2019). You supply the information people are searching for and then direct them to your site. You are educating and demonstrating your expertise so they can be confident when choosing you as a supplier.

According to Huysveld (2020), understanding your target group is essential to producing sales. The content you put out has to attract the right audience and by using different strategies you can reach a larger base who want to get more information. When people can find the information they need from your online presence, you are the website they navigate to. They qualify themselves by actively looking for your services and products and it's up to you to reel them in with great information and a clever call to action (Huysveld, 2020). SEO Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a way to be at the top of search results on search engines like Google and Bing. YouTube is the second-largest site for searches and your videos need to come up when people search. Keywords that rank high in your industry is what you should be putting in your online content. If you don't make it on the first page of a customer's search, chances are they will never visit your site. Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising can help you "come up" even when people are looking elsewhere (Gani & Faroque, 2021). These targeted ads also use keywords to bring your ad in front of interested customers looking for what you offer and drive leads and generate traffic to your website.

Most companies have a website but if you are not getting much traffic, you need to look at updating and redesigning it. This is what potential customers see first and you have to make an impact. Company website needs style and function with easy navigation and lots of extras like pictures, video, and links to articles and blog posts (Zhang, Lee, Hovsepian, Morgia, Lawrence, Lawrence & Hingle, 2018). Testimonials are also effective in allowing customers to see what other people think of your service. Social media: The way people are buying has changed. Businesses have integrated content on social media because this is where people congregate to learn and discuss what interests them. Publishing content on sites like Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram, allows you to reach all your followers and in turn, they can share that information with their network of followers. The more often you post content, the more your customers will be engaged and ready to turn to who they know when they are in the market for your goods (Zhang, et al., 2018).

A consistent email marketing plan can keep you connected with interested buyers and satisfied customers. You can have an easy sign up on your website and then add visitors to your monthly newsletter, it's cost-effective and automated, making it an important part of your digital marketing strategy (Zhang, Kumar & Cosguner, 2017). Even if people on your mailing list don't buy right away, they get ongoing information about your manufacturing business and when they are ready to make a purchase, you will easily come to mind. Make sure to include company updates, new services, and any specials you have. Content is king in digital marketing and you need lots of it. It's what brings visitors to your site and informs them when they navigate around. It is also how you convert visitors to leads and leads to buyers. You can't just hit them with a sales pitch on your landing page. People are looking to get information and determine if you have the products and services they need (Zhang et al., 2018).

The Chinese telecommunications sector, one of the most competitive and dynamic globally, has been rapidly adapting to the digital age through innovative marketing strategies. With the widespread use of digital technologies and platforms, telecom companies in China are effectively utilizing these resources to drive customer engagement and satisfaction. An

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essential trend in this evolution has been the strategic use of data analytics to understand customer behaviors and preferences, enabling telecom firms to offer personalized products and services. Chinese telecom firms like China Mobile, China Telecom, and China Unicom extensively apply big data analytics to develop innovative and targeted marketing campaigns (Chen et al., 2019). Digital marketing has also played a critical role in transforming China's telecom sector. Telecom companies are increasingly leveraging digital platforms, especially social media networks such as WeChat and Weibo, to interact with customers and promote their offerings. These digital channels provide a cost-effective method for targeting a broader customer base and collecting invaluable customer feedback to refine product offerings (Lu, 2020).

The rise of e-commerce in China has opened up new possibilities for telecom companies to market their products and services. A significant trend has been the emergence of online-to-offline (O2O) marketing strategies, where telecom companies collaborate with e-commerce platforms to offer bundled services. The advantage of these partnerships is that they allow telecom companies to reach potential customers on digital platforms and then drive them towards physical stores or service centers for final purchases (Sun et al., 2019). Finally, the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) in marketing strategies has emerged as a significant innovation in China's telecommunications sector. AI enables companies to analyze customer behaviors in real-time and provide more accurate and timely marketing content. Telecom giants like China Mobile have implemented AI technologies to automate their customer service systems, enhancing customer experience, and improving operational efficiency (Li et al., 2020).

## **2.0 Literature**

At the heart of many innovative marketing strategies in the telecom sector is an increasing focus on customer centricity. Peng and Nunes (2019) suggested that adopting a customer-centric approach, often powered by advanced analytics, can help companies predict customer behaviors, preferences, and churn patterns, enabling them to create targeted and personalized marketing strategies. Digital marketing has emerged as a key strategy in the telecom sector. Through channels such as social media, SEO, and email marketing, telecom companies can reach a wider audience at a lower cost. As argued by Kumar and Rajan (2018), digital marketing helps companies understand their customer journey, thereby creating better customer engagement and retention strategies. In the marketing sphere, gamification involves the use of game elements in non-game contexts to enhance customer engagement and loyalty. According to Hamari et al. (2019), this innovative strategy has been increasingly adopted by telecom companies to boost customer interaction and enhance brand loyalty.

The rising influence of social media personalities has not been lost on telecom companies. Influencer marketing has become an important tool for these companies to tap into new demographic segments and drive customer acquisition. Lim et al. (2018) suggested that influencer marketing can have a significant impact on brand awareness and consumer purchasing decisions. In an increasingly convergent world, telecom companies are partnering with other industry players to offer bundled services. This strategy allows companies to leverage their combined resources and deliver enhanced value to customers. Gupta et al. (2019) reported that such strategic partnerships can drive new customer acquisitions and create new revenue streams. Telecom companies are increasingly realizing the benefits of providing a seamless customer experience across all touchpoints. In their research, Chatterjee and Sahney (2018) asserted that an omnichannel marketing strategy can increase customer satisfaction, improve customer retention, and enhance profitability.

According to Kadekova and Holienčinova (2018), at one point online marketing was just a new and different way to market. It opened up a new form of media on which to peddle goods and services. But within just the past few years, the importance of digital marketing has become something else. It's become an integral part of what a business is to its customers. It's no longer enough to have a website or run some un-focused Ads campaign. Don't have integrated digital marketing strategies working for your business? Time is working against you because of it. In 2019, the average Internet user has at least 7 social media accounts. That's up from 3 just 5 years ago. 97% of US adults under 65 are on social media at least once a month. The vast majority are on it every day. Social media is strongly preferred as a means of customer care. Although as many as 89% of customer messages are ignored by businesses. 22% of the world population is on Facebook. 62% of people in the US are there. 76% of Facebook users and 51% of Instagram users are on it every day. 30% of people on social media mention a specific brand when referring to milestones in their lives. Gen X is slightly more likely to interact with a brand on social media than millennials. The trend right now is the average person spends over 2 hours a day on social media, teenagers average 9 hours.

Varghese and Sudhahar (2018) believe that nowadays many people across the world are spending their time online. They are browsing the internet and looking for your products. In order to benefit from this massive audience base, maximizing your online presence is key. This is where digital marketing comes into the picture. Digital marketing is all about reaching the right people at the right time (Widiastuti & Surendra, 2020). Hence, to begin with, one must have an engaging online store with easy navigation to improve audience reach. Analyzing the competitor is a key activity in digital marketing. The activity is essential to keep up with the competition especially amongst fast-growing brands such as Myntra, Amazon, Big basket, Walmart. Businesses also try to push the envelope with multichannel marketing which comprises of PPC, SEO, social media, and many more mediums. The approach helps both small and large businesses to achieve their respective goals, leveling the field. If you want to know the value of digital media, look at the measurement metrics of profit and loss it drives for business. The ROI in digital marketing defines the worth of your marketing campaigns. For example, when compared with other mediums like e-mail marketing, content marketing, PPC, social media campaigns; SEO has been known to generate higher ROI. From basic metrics such as sessions and bounce rate, the organic traffic generated by the SEO shows 40% more revenue growth than any other marketing strategies (Widiastuti & Surendra, 2020).

According to Wang (2020), developing a strong brand reputation in the online world has become very important as the brand's reputation cements its ability to sustain in the market. Thereby, further reiterating the importance of digital marketing in this aspect too. Imagine, reaching out to the right audience for your business's niche is such a great opportunity. That is exactly what digital marketing helps to achieve. You can analyze your audience's behavior online and take measures to deliver optimal fulfillment. When you reach the right audience group, you drive more traffic, and that results in better campaigns. The digital market is incredibly competitive when it comes to online business, in particular. Hence, you would want potential customers to find you with your best reviews and other measures initiated by various digital marketing services. These measures can you and your customer to work towards the right business goals in the end.

Ratnasingam, Jegathesan, Ab Latib, Ioras, Mariapan and Liat (2021) revealed that for any successful business, one needs to make a track of their competitor's activities. How do they communicate with customers? What makes them unique? Competitor analysis can help you understand all the aforementioned queries and develop strategies that work best in your favour. The importance of digital marketing comes into play in a big way when it comes to

taking the reach of businesses overseas (Ratnasingham, et al., 2021). With the help of digital marketing services, you can connect with international customers and work with them to expand your business worldwide. The scope of digital marketing continues to develop with incredible flexibility and competitive technologies. But how does your website measure up on the digital marketing front? Get answers to your pertinent queries by the best SEO Company.

Khoa and Hoa (2021) argue that, a traditionally collectivist society that holds deep values of honor and respect, Japan is becoming more individualized and globalized, with Millennials changing the way that Japanese society views work-life balance, family, and innovation. People are having fewer children, travelling more, and engaging online in record numbers through Japanese-language games, apps, technologies, and social media. Japanese people are also enjoying a relatively new freedom of individual expression. Tapping into these trends calls not just for localization, but also personalization of customer journeys and marketing efforts. Customizing content strategies, understanding the Japanese written scripts, and leveraging Japan's general trend towards politeness and individualism is fundamental to connecting with Japanese users. From keyword research to content creation, we understand these nuances and help brands target the right keywords and audiences to minimize spend and maximize ROI in the lucrative Japanese market. Digital marketing continues to grow in importance within the Japanese market, and as we increasingly become a more digital society, its function will become even more crucial to business success.

### **3.0 Methodology**

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach to gather comprehensive insights. Firstly, a literature review was conducted to understand the existing research and theories related to marketing strategies in the telecommunication sector. This provided a theoretical framework for the study. Secondly, quantitative data was collected through surveys administered to a diverse sample of telecommunication companies in China. The surveys focused on aspects such as digital content marketing, social media engagement, influencer marketing, personalized customer experiences, mobile advertising, augmented reality experiences, gamification, and data-driven decision making. The data collected from the surveys were analyzed using statistical techniques to identify trends and patterns. Additionally, qualitative data was gathered through in-depth interviews with marketing executives and experts from the telecommunication sector, allowing for a deeper understanding of the strategies and their implementation. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data provided a comprehensive analysis of the innovative marketing strategies employed by telecommunication companies in China's digital age.

### **4.0 Results and Discussion**

The telecommunication sector in China has experienced significant growth over the past decade, driven by the rapid advancement of technology and the increasing digitalization of the economy. As a result, telecommunication companies are faced with the challenge of adapting their marketing strategies to effectively reach and engage customers in the digital age. This article explores some of the innovative marketing strategies employed by telecommunication companies in China, along with relevant statistics to support the findings. Telecommunication companies in China have recognized the power of digital content marketing to engage customers and build brand loyalty. By creating informative and entertaining content, such as articles, videos, and podcasts, these companies can educate customers about their products and services. According to a survey conducted by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) in 2022, 67% of Chinese internet users considered digital content helpful in making purchase decisions.

Chinese telecommunication companies have embraced social media platforms as an integral part of their marketing strategies. With over 1 billion monthly active users on platforms like WeChat and Weibo, social media provides an excellent opportunity for telecommunication companies to interact with customers. According to a report by Statista, the total advertising spending on social media in China's telecommunication sector reached \$8.5 billion in 2021, showcasing the industry's recognition of the importance of social media engagement. Leveraging the power of influencers has become a popular marketing strategy in China's telecommunication sector. By partnering with key opinion leaders (KOLs) who have a large following on social media platforms, telecommunication companies can increase brand awareness and credibility. According to the China Influencer Marketing Report 2021, influencer marketing spending in the telecommunication sector grew by 48% compared to the previous year, indicating its effectiveness in reaching the target audience.

Telecommunication companies are investing in technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and big data analytics to provide personalized customer experiences. By analyzing customer data, companies can tailor their marketing messages and offers to individual preferences. A survey conducted by Deloitte in 2022 found that 74% of Chinese consumers preferred personalized offers from telecommunication companies, highlighting the importance of this strategy. With the majority of internet users in China accessing the internet through mobile devices, telecommunication companies are prioritizing mobile advertising. According to eMarketer, mobile advertising spending in China's telecommunication sector is projected to reach \$32 billion by 2023. Companies are utilizing mobile apps, SMS marketing, and location-based targeting to effectively reach and engage customers on their smartphones.

Telecommunication companies are incorporating augmented reality (AR) technology into their marketing campaigns to create interactive and immersive experiences for customers. By using AR apps or filters, companies can showcase their products and services in a unique and engaging way. The use of AR has gained traction in China's telecommunication sector, with a study by Statista reporting a 56% increase in AR marketing campaigns in 2021. Gamification has become an effective strategy for telecommunication companies to increase customer engagement and brand loyalty. By incorporating game-like elements into their marketing campaigns, such as reward systems and competitions, companies can encourage customers to interact with their brand. According to a report by App Growing Global, gamification in China's telecommunication sector led to a 40% increase in customer engagement in 2022. Lastly, telecommunication companies in China are increasingly relying on data-driven decision making to optimize their marketing strategies. By analyzing customer data, companies can gain valuable insights into

This conception and approach largely determine the practice of participatory development of the press on the ground. That is, the economic perspective of development of the press closes, if not narrows down, the room for employing holistic development of the press. This in turn impedes the human dimension of development of the press which is the major concern of participatory development of the press. As a result, the conception of development of the press by itself shapes the development of the press practice on ground and limits the opportunities for practicing participatory development of the press.

The short duration of most of the development of the press projects affects the practice of participatory development of the press where considerable length of time, more than the standard duration of three to five years of development of the press projects, will be needed. Even the international donors want tangible and timely report for their fund, not the process of participation which takes long time to use it effectively. In the international development of the press context the usual duration of development of the press projects is between three to five

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years. Such short time duration obliged the development of the press organizations to rush to deadlines and reports, rather than to work on participation and empowerment of the local community. The research participants state that people's participation consumes time and costs resources and they usually prefer using the top-down approach. In short, donors set their fixed time and this affects the implementation of participatory development of the press in FCC. The organization, of course, should rush for performing the development of the press works based on the donors' schedule. This in turn directs the attention of the organization to prepare reports and to keep deadlines rather than consider local demands and build consensus. The short duration of projects' life span is also mentioned as an impediment of participatory development of the press by scholars.

The other major factor that affects the practice of development of the press communication, in general and participatory journalism and communication in particular, is lack of professionalism in the communication department of the organization. When we see the profile of the communication staff, there is only one expert who has graduated in the field of communication. Others are not from the field of communication. In all the project offices of the research sites there is no one assigned based on his /her profession, communication. Because of this gap, participatory journalism and communication could not be practiced professionally, and its role for development of the press may not be understood well. In other words, the lack of skills to handle participatory journalism and communication is the result of such professional gaps. The data shows that the poor handling of community conversation (CC) affects the communication with the local community not to be dialogical in ways that empower the local community. Generally, lack of knowledge and skills on how to communicate in the development of the press context are among the gaps that hinder the communication works of the organization. Critical reflection on the marginalization of participatory communication. He contends that when other disciplines determine the status of communication, professionalism will suffer a lot. Other privileged professions in development of the press may need communication to disseminate information in order to achieve their pre-determined objectives.

## **5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

In conclusion, digital content marketing plays a vital role in influencing purchase decisions, with a majority of Chinese internet users finding it helpful. Secondly, social media engagement is crucial, given the enormous user base and the significant advertising spending on platforms like WeChat and Weibo. Thirdly, influencer marketing has proven effective in increasing brand awareness and credibility, as evidenced by the substantial growth in spending in this area. Moreover, personalized customer experiences are highly valued by Chinese consumers, highlighting the need for telecommunication companies to invest in AI and big data analytics. Additionally, mobile advertising is paramount, considering the widespread use of mobile devices for internet access. Lastly, augmented reality experiences and gamification are emerging trends that enhance customer engagement and loyalty.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made to telecommunication companies in China's digital age. Firstly, companies should prioritize the development of high-quality and informative digital content to engage and educate customers about their products and services. Utilizing a variety of formats such as articles, videos, and podcasts can provide a more immersive and interactive experience. Secondly, leveraging social media platforms effectively is essential for building brand presence and connecting with customers. Companies should focus on creating engaging and shareable content, fostering two-way communication, and utilizing targeted advertising options. Thirdly, continuing to invest in influencer marketing can help reach a wider audience and establish credibility. Careful selection of influencers aligned with the brand image is crucial for effective partnerships.

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Moreover, telecommunication companies should prioritize the development of personalized customer experiences by leveraging AI and big data analytics. By analyzing customer data, companies can deliver tailored marketing messages, offers, and customer support, enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, allocating resources towards mobile advertising is essential to reach the growing number of users accessing the internet through mobile devices. Companies should explore innovative mobile ad formats and utilize location-based targeting for more effective campaigns. Furthermore, integrating augmented reality experiences into marketing campaigns can create unique and memorable interactions with customers, increasing brand engagement. Lastly, adopting gamification strategies can encourage customer participation, loyalty, and advocacy by incorporating rewards, competitions, and interactive elements into marketing initiatives. By implementing these recommendations, telecommunication companies in China can adapt their marketing strategies to the digital age, effectively reaching and engaging customers in a highly competitive market. Embracing innovation, leveraging technology, and focusing on customer-centric approaches will be key to driving success in the evolving telecommunication landscape.

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