

Impact of social media on Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) in UAE

Written by:

Submitted to:

Executive Summary:

This report will concentrate on the impact of social media on SME in UAE. The research will start with an introduction about the role of social media in present day life and its impact on the SME. Thereafter the problem statement and research questions will be identified. The research will then move ahead with the literature review carrying vital information from prior studies. Research analysis will follow thereafter where in the research outcomes will be depicted. The next part will be research evaluation and recommendations. Finally the conclusion will be drawn wherein the summary of the research outcome will be depicted. The references will then follow.

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1. Introduction to Social Media and SME:

SME or Small and Medium Enterprises represent the businesses which are not too large with millions and billions dollars of returns, revenue generation and assets. Instead it includes the businesses which range from small scale shops to medium scale factories wherein a limited number of employees work and the area of operation is limited in particular region.

UAE has millions of SMEs which are very active in the social media. As per the research reports it is observed that more than 92 percent of the SMEs in the GCC are active on social media. This means the use of social media is made by Small and Medium enterprises in the UAE for reaching out to the target customers, displaying their products and services and thereby getting payment and delivery orders as the case may be (Pieri, 2016).

Together the SMEs in the UAE are making widespread use of social media for creating a brand image, reaching out to the target customers, getting their products and services noticed and gaining purchase and delivery orders from the customers.

2. Problem statement and research questions:

The problem statement is to find out the level of impact social media is making to help the SME, grow their businesses in UAE. The research questions are depicted as follows.

- a. Which are the top social media platforms that are applicable for the start-up of businesses in Dubai?
- b. What are the strength and weaknesses of Social Media Platforms?
- c. Identify the practices followed using social media platforms by the SME in Dubai?
- d. Has social media become a vital source of marketing and promotion of business?

- e. How can the SME can get benefitted by social media marketing methods?
- f. Is the future of SME dependent on the social media outcomes?

3. Research objectives:

This research is meant to achieve certain set of objectives including long term and short term.

The research objectives include the following.

- a. The short term objectives of this research is to recognize the various social media platforms that popular in the UAE and helps in promoting the new startups and other SMEs.
- b. The long term objectives of this research is
- c. Recognize the strength and weaknesses of the social media platform in delivering assistance in promoting business activities in UAE.
- d. Identify the prevailing practices that are applied by the SME of UAE through the social media platform.
- e. Is the future of SME bright and full of opportunities owing to the benefits and support offered by the social media platforms.

4. Significance of the research:

The significance of the research will be achieved for the new start ups and existing SMEs who are facing slow down in their business process. The outcome of the research study will compare the benefits of social media platform over the conventional methods of businesses and suggest

the best course of action that the SMEs in UAE needs to follow to ascertain steady growth and development of their businesses.

5. Literature review:

5.1 Theoretical background about Social Media:

Social Media is referred to the online social platform that has developed over a period of time wherein the people make efforts to take out time from their daily routine to stay connected with their friends, family members and other society members. Through social media the opportunities available to a common person is use of various technological breakthroughs to place latest pictures, activities, comments and even share the information with other members in their friend list. Businesses use social media for displaying their products and services so that the customers who came on the virtual platform for meeting with their social members can have a view of shopping opportunities available to them and could proceed with the product and service they would like to avail by making online order.

5.2 Prior Study:

The prior study has made huge contributions in researching for the benefits of social media platform that SMEs could gain. According to Shabbir et al. (2016), social media has proved itself to be market innovation especially for SME in the GCC wherein the customers are targeted for selling products and services. The top social platforms that are applicable for the start-up of businesses in Dubai are also identified as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and What's App. These are the top four most widely used social media platforms that helps the SMEs in Dubai to

advertise their products and services and gain purchase orders from the customers (Shabbir et al., 2016).

According to Kumar et al. (2020), the latest social media trends in Dubai is online video which is claimed to be used on an average of 72 minutes on daily basis by young people between age group of 15-24 years. Facebook is the most popular networking site which is used by 1.1 billion people in the Middle East. What's App is used by more than 7.84 million users in year 2019 in UAE which include 83% of the total population of the country. While Instagram and Twitter has become a business hub attracting huge investment from SMEs from the region with the purpose to generate benefits in millions (Kumar et al., 2020).

According to Ahmad et al. (2018), the SME are making widespread use of social media for reaching out to the customers. Since the recent trend has changed towards online shopping and home delivery, the time has come for the businesses to go online and offer variety of products and services to the customers at their home. This trend has developed due to rise in busy schedule of the people in their office, jobs and other work places. As a result the recent trend of the people has shifted towards avoid travel to distant places and then standing for hours for shopping and thereafter waiting in long cue for making payments (Ahmad et al., 2018).

According to Ameen et al. (2020), the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and thereafter lockdown of cities have led to the rise in online business activities. In fact the other businesses which were earlier avoiding the social media platform are now preferring the same for selling their products and services. This is because of the social distancing guidelines issued by the UAE Government that requires the customers to stay at home and keep distance from people. As a results

customers cannot move out of home and thus prefer to make online purchase of requirements for goods and services using the links from the social media platforms (Ameen et al., 2020).

According to Ahmad and Khalid (2017), the social media platform has offered a new range of opportunities to the new entrants. Earlier to that the new entrants had to arrange for fund for buying shop or renting it and then decide on keeping the stock with the rest of the amount.

However, the social media platform is used by the SMEs to take orders online and then arrange for the products from market without caring for any prior investment in the form of buying shop or arranging for stocks. Thus latest variety products, with warranties and competitive pricing are offered to the customers. Thus the top social media platforms are applicable for the start-up of businesses in Dubai but with various strength and weaknesses of Social Media Platforms.

Various practices are followed using social media platforms by the SME in Dubai which helps in marketing and promotion of business. This way the SME can get benefitted by social media marketing methods and the future of SME dependent on the social media outcomes (Ahmad & Khalid, 2017).

6. Research methodology:

The research methodology used will be the mixture of primary research and secondary research. The secondary research will be first initiated under which the efforts will be made to gather vital and relevant information from different reliable sources such as prior studies, research articles, government website information, magazines and journal articles which could offer indepth view of the outcomes of prior studies. Later the application of the primary research will be done using quantitative research method. However, the second task of primary research will be done only

after the end of lockdown and killing of the Covid-19 pandemic as without it there will be by no way to reach out to the respondents and get inputs for the research work.

7. Research evaluation and Recommendations:

The research evaluations will be based on the outcomes received through data inputs and analysis process using the Microsoft tools which will help in depicting the outcomes in the for of graphs and tables to support the decision making process. The recommendations will follow to help the new entrant as well as existing SMEs to avail the benefits of social media platform and achieve success and growth in the business process.

8. Milestones:

The milestones include the accomplishments that will be needed to be attained during the research process and that too within stipulated time frame so that the most desired outcome in the form of final research can be achieved. The details of the milestones can be displayed as follows.

Chapter 1 – Introduction of the Master Thesis

1 st May – 7 th May	Writing the Introduction
8 th May – 10 th May	Submission for Checking
11 th May – 15 th May	Finalizing this Chapter
16 th May – 18 th May	Submission for this Chapter

19 th May – 23 rd May	Final Review of the Research Paper
24 th May – 31 st May	Final Submission
31 Days	TOTAL

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

1 st June – 25 th June	Information gathering from prior research, literature review, case studies and magazines.
26 th June – 27 th June	Submission of Literature Review for approval purposes.
28 th June – 29 th June	Finalizing of Literature Review
30 th June	Submission of the Final Literature Review
30 Days	TOTAL

Chapter 3 – Methodology

1 st July – 15 th July	Conducting Meeting and Interviews
16 th July – 20 th July	Methodology Submission (for Checking)
21 st July – 25 th July	Finalizing Period

26 th July – 31 st July	Submission of this Chapter
31 days	TOTAL

Chapter 4 – Discussions and Result

1 st August – 15 th August	Writing Discussions and Result
16 th August – 20 th August	Submission for Checking
21 st August – 25 th August	Finalizing
26 th August – 31 st August	Submission
31 Days	TOTAL

Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendation and Chapter 6 – Bibliography

1 st September – 10 th September	Writing Conclusion and Recommendation Along with the Bibliography Chapter
11 th September – 15 th September	Submission for Checking
16 th September – 20 th September	Finalizing
21 st September – 30 th September	Submission
30 Days	TOTAL

This way total 153 days will be consumed to complete the research report with in-depth analysis and most desired outcomes.

9. Conclusion:

In conclusion, the research made on the role of social media platform in developing the business of SMEs in UAE has been revealed. The research outcome reveals that the social media has played vital role in the past and will continue to expand the business practices owing to the considerate changes in the business scenario. Especially in the present day cases when their has been a consistent rise of Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. Thus social media platform offers such business practices wherein the customers can follow the lockdown rules in which by staying at home they can get their desired products.

10. References:

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