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## The Role of Social Networking Sites in Enhancing Customers' Satisfaction in UAE Institutions

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### Abstract

This study aims to identify the role of social networking sites in enhancing satisfaction among the customers of UAE institutions through the application of the study on the customers of the Roads and Transport Authority within the Emirate of Dubai. The researcher will use the descriptive analytical approach through the distribution of the questionnaire to a random sample of the public dealing with this body through their use of various means of social communication to find out the impact of these means on enhancing their confidence in the Authority. The study reached several recommendations, the most important of which is the need for continuous development of social networking sites in terms of form and content. It also recommended a need to invest in social media to enhance awareness and guidance towards enhancing respect for the laws and regulations of the Roads and Transport Authority.

**Keywords:** Customer, Satisfaction, UAE, Institutions

### Introduction

Social media plays a prominent and influential role in the life of institutions and bodies, in terms of its ability to enhance the confidence of those dealing with these institutions. It plays a major role not only in the course of the lives of individuals, but also in the course of organizations, institutions and companies. This requires us to recognise the impact of social networking sites in promoting Confidence among those dealing with institutions, especially government ones in the UAE, as many academic studies and researches tended to identify the role they play in our current era, as they have become one of the most important means through which the extent of public confidence dealing with the institution and the services it provides is measured. It also constitutes a value and a competitive advantage that attract customers and develop the degree of loyalty among those dealing with the institution.

Social networking sites are a new type of communication that originated in the internet environment and multimedia technology, as they play a role in the process of analyzing and exchanging news and information on a large scale and transform the process of communication with the institution into an interactive dialogue through the circulation of pictures, videos, news, and articles (Al-Ayasha, 2019).

Hence, interest in the issue of social media and its effects is increasing greatly due to the importance it plays in shaping public opinions, forming impressions, and enhancing their confidence towards institutions and organizations. These sites are a manifestation of the new media, due to their speed, interactivity and ease of the exchange of information between the interactors, which made institutions turn to it and work to benefit from it as a marketing tool, a platform to influence the public, and a means of communication and interaction (Sreedy, 2019).

In addition, modern institutions work to develop their reputation and enhance their trust and communication with the public, and at the same time they are keen to create a mental image about their reputation with others in order to find acceptance and confidence for their services on the widest scale (Elasrag, 2020). The quest to enhance the confidence of those dealing with institutions through social media is one of the basic objectives that many governmental and private institutions and agencies seek, as many of them relied on social media to enhance confidence over their competitors.

Social networking sites greatly enhance the confidence of the public dealing with government and private institutions, through their great use of these means and their constant communication with institutions through them. The researcher noticed the extent to which the customers used these means in their communication and dealings with the institutions, especially the body under study, as it is one of the most bodies that the public frequents to, and the mass media materials published by these sites that affect the public positively or negatively, and in a way that helps them achieve their objectives and enhance their audience's confidence in them.

In this regard, social networking sites constitute an opportunity for the public to exchange information and knowledge, which helps to bring people closer and establishes social relations between customers, especially within institutions, and at the same time raises the degree of their interaction. It also reduces a large amount of commercial, economic and service transactions and procedures. (Bushli, 2006).

Given that many institutions operate today in an intensely competitive environment as a result of the rapid technological development, and the changing behaviors of customers, the researcher finds that these institutions are keen to maintain their institutional reputation in front of the audience of customers by achieving customer satisfaction and gaining their loyalty.

Social communication is one of the most important means used between institutions and their customers, as they communicate through it at any time and place (Safa & Murad, 2019). From this standpoint, the idea of this study emerged. It attempts to highlight the impact of social networking sites in enhancing confidence among customers in light of technological development and the optimal use of means of communication in dealing with institutions. Through the above, the problem of this study can be raised through the following question: How can social networking sites affect the promotion of the satisfaction among customers?

### **Literature Review**

Social networking sites are defined, according to Al-Shehri's opinion, as "a system of electronic networks that allow the subscriber to create his own website, and then link it through an electronic social system with other members who have the same interests and tendencies or bring him together with his friends" (Al-Tayyar, 2014).

It is also known as a means of communication that appeared with the emergence of the second generation of the Web (web2) that allows communication between people in a virtual

environment that is established according to their interests and through the process of direct communication such as sending messages or viewing the personal files of others and getting acquainted with the news and information that is available. For display, which includes private and public topics such as writings, pictures, and movies (Shtwan, 2018).

It is also defined as a set of terms that refer to the use of Internet technology through computers and mobile phones to invest in communications in an interactive dialogue through a set of applications linked to the internet and rely on a set of intellectual and technological systems, allowing the creation and exchange of content provided by its user, which are media for social interaction (Qandili, 2015)

Several researchers provided many definitions of the concept of satisfaction, including (Croninet al el., 2000) definition as “an evaluation of feelings, which reflects the extent to which the client believes that the service provider achieves positive feelings for him.” In another direction, Vavra (2002) defines satisfaction as “the emotional response of the client to the evaluation of opportunities between expectations and actual performance of the service. In the same way, (Kotler and Keller, 2006) defines satisfaction as “the customer’s feeling of joy as a result of comparing the performance of the product with his expectations,” the customer feels satisfied if the performance matches his expectations, “where the customer feels satisfied if the performance of the commodity matches his expectations. If the performance of the product or the service is greater than his expectations, it gives him a sense of satisfaction (Ahmed et al., 2022a; Alsharif et al., 2021b; Ahmed et al., 2022b; Alsharif et al., 2022).

Social media, through media and communication technology, has contributed to the development of means of exchange and societal visibility, or what Remy Reville calls “sociability” – in his book “Digital Revolution, Cultural Revolution?” as these sites allow easy communication between strangers. Therefore, the influential personality will access the personality of the other recipient, and thus influence it negatively or positively, given that this self-template represents a personal identity, linked to building a virtual base in its relationship with its followers, regardless of their personal and social hobbies. This will result in a set of self-repeated templates on a personal and therefore sociocultural level (Al Darmaki, 2022).

## Methodology

In order to achieve the objectives and answer questions of the study, the researcher used the descriptive analytical approach through which she attempted to describe the research phenomenon that is the subject of this study, analyse its data, highlight the relationship between the study variables, and clarify the opinions of the respondents and the effects that they produce. The descriptive approach is a form of organized interpretation and analysis of the study data, quantitatively and qualitatively, by collecting standardized data and information that illustrate the problem of the study, and at the same time analysing this data. The researcher used the questionnaire to collect the data, this study relied on two basic types of information and data, as follows:

- Primary data: it is related to the use of the questionnaire to collect data related to the study variables, and then analyse it through the use of the statistical program (SPSS) in order to reach indicators and answers to the study question.
- Secondary data: the researcher collected and reviewed literatures on the subject of the study, including books, research, studies, publications, and peer-reviewed periodicals, in order to enrich the theoretical aspect of the subject.

The population of this study consists of customers of the Roads and Transport Authority in the Emirate of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, as it provides direct services to all citizens and residents of the country. The sample of this study consists of 300 individuals from the public who deal with the Roads and Transport Authority from both genders and from different age groups. All of them were selected randomly.

## **Discussion**

### **Social media concept**

The idea of new media networks is based on activating community members on the Internet, where individuals use these sites to share their interests and activities through software that is programmed to support social connections. Social media achieves communication and interactions between two directions. Applications on phones allow the transmission and dissemination of digital information simply, and help users to find people who share the same interests, which is called virtual communities (Sawafi, 2015).

Social networking sites is a term that appeared at the end of the nineties of the last century and the beginning of the second millennium. It is a “combination through which people meet in a technology that has been invented by people or groups.” These sites provide services that support communication and sharing between members of social sites through the services and means provided such as: friendship, sharing, communication, and direct discussions. It also includes communication with others through videos, pictures, and software works (Kassas, 2019).

### **The Importance of Social Networking Sites**

New media sites have become an essential part of our daily lives, and are used to communicate between customers, individuals, and groups. We also use them to track current events and to entertain our lives, which made about 3.48 billion people at the present time use the new media. In other words: 45% of the world’s population use social sites, and there are more than a million people who join the new media every day. Individuals between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine are among the most keen to use these sites that are gradually changing the way people live, and the methods they use to perform their work.

Social media is a new form of communication, as the public has become a participant in building the image and name of different organizations. Only the receiving public has ended its role in the era of social media, so that the public has become the main pillar in determining the quality of services provided by the organization or organization.

Hence the importance of the media in sharing ideas, opinions and experiences, achieving continuous communication on events, reading stories and interacting with everything written on the social media pages of individuals, groups and public figures. It plays a vital role in marketing various services and products, and providing support and voluntary assistance. Hence, we can say that social media aims to achieve happiness and well-being for humanity and make life simpler and easier. The importance of social media can be summarised in the following (Al-Najjar, 2020)

1. **Promotion and Marketing:** Companies from all sectors are betting on the importance of new media in promoting or marketing companies’ services and products. Therefore, reports indicate that 94% of commercial and service companies use these sites in order to reach consumers, contribute to converting them from potential consumers to real ones, and communicate with them to find out their reactions about the services and products that are



provided. These sites also provide features to determine the interests of the audience, and guide them in the appropriate direction, each according to his interaction.

2. Gaining experience and knowledge: Social media is one of the most important means through which various modern information can be accessed. Users can acquire more skills and experiences by searching or by chance at other times. Social media familiarizes its users with the interests of other users from different communities.

3. Developing and expanding users' perceptions: Media allows users to expand concepts, develop themselves, provide the audience with speaking and communication skills through these sites, and learn ways of expression and correct writing. It also helps users to understand other people's customs and traditions, and expand their the knowledge and cultural perceptions.

4. Communication and direct interaction with consumers: Media is considered one of the most effective means that can be used in the process of communicating with others, as these means allow each business owner to communicate with the beneficiaries, know the quality of the services or products provided, and follow up the audience's reactions towards them.

5. Saving time and effort in obtaining suitable jobs: Social media saves users' time and effort in obtaining suitable jobs. It has become one of the necessary things in light of digital media. Individuals looking for jobs should enhance their presence on their own pages on social media to attract organizations looking for employees.

### **The Most Important Methods to Enhance Customer Satisfaction**

There are many ways to increase customer Satisfaction, most of them focus on dealing with customers in a good and suitable way treatment. Among these methods are the following:

1. Good attention to customers by the company and interaction with them through communication sites: Every company wants to increase its sales and achieve a lot of profits by marketing its products to a very large number of customers. This is of course the goal of every company and business in general, but the mistake that many companies make is that they are interested in increasing the number of their followers on social networking sites without paying attention to the desires of the followers. This company should treat followers carefully and provide them with answers to all their questions at the beginning. Then, these followers will be customers of the company, and trust will gradually begin to form between them and the company.

Organizations and institutions can interact with their customers in a large way through the use of advertising campaigns on several social media outlets in order to share its interactive activities with its customers. In this way, it creates great satisfaction and confidence with the existing customers who interact with it and with the new customers who will see the advertisement and realize that the company has the trust of many customers.

2. Quickly answering customers' questions and inquiries: The authority must allocate a lot of its time or employ a technical support team to respond very quickly to customers' questions and inquiries, whether through direct chat on the website or through social networking sites without having to wait a lot of time.

3. The Authority must enjoy full credibility and transparency in its dealings with its customers: Committing mistakes by the company is possible at any time, and this does not greatly affect customers' confidence and satisfaction, provided that it is honest and clear in announcing the mistakes it made. Apologizing to customers with whom these errors occurred and fixing them quickly would maintain their presence with the company for as long as possible.

4. Building relationships through attractive and interesting content: The appropriate content is the best and fastest way to gain the trust of customers, and even to convert this trust into a purchase process and a possibility to share the experience. Content marketing is not only a process of publishing and explaining the product, if you use it well, it will be your way to excellence in order to build a remarkable brand business and to win customers in a quick and effective way.

5. Professional use of social media: Gaining more customers through these platforms is indisputable. Rather, social media is imposed on all people, because there is often no one yet who does not have an account on social networking sites. Therefore, if you want to enhance customers' satisfaction and confidence in your organization, all you have to do is pay attention to the needs of existing customers and what other customers want, fulfill their desires, and provide the content they want and suit them, as mentioned earlier. It is imperative that you do not make most of your focus on direct selling, as you are now building long-term relationships through which you gain trust and loyalty.

### **Challenges of Enhancing Customers' Satisfaction**

The challenges of enhancing customers' satisfaction fall within the usual and common problems in different types of jobs, where each job has its own nature of problems that differ according to the quality of the profession or the job itself, as well as the surrounding work environment of individuals or places. Accordingly, all companies and agencies have a special section for customer service to ensure their comfort and satisfaction, and to enhance trust between them and the institution. Therefore, most authorities are exposed to many challenges, including (Hajar, 2022)

1. Not listening to customers: listening with focus to the customer will help the employee to understand and assimilate his complaint or problem, and accordingly he will provide him with support and assistance to solve it. This guarantees the enhancement of the satisfaction of the customer.

2. Loss of positive communication with others: Since it is necessary for this employee to be keen to speak with customers in a distinctive manner to convey information, it requires him to be fully aware of the manner and etiquette of dialogue, and he shall be careful and accurate in his speech in order to avoid making mistakes that may harm the interests of customers. The positive approach always has an effective effect in satisfying customers and enhancing their confidence.

3. Inability to manage time: Time is of great importance to the individual, and therefore it is necessary for the employee who works in the customer service department to estimate how to preserve his time and the time of customers. Therefore, he shall ask the customer clear and specific questions, and if he is unable to find a suitable solution to one of the problems he shall seek the help of experienced people to save his time and the time of the customers.

4. Inability to deal with various situations: The person who provides service to customers shall be prepared to face all situations. For example, if he is exposed to a sudden situation, he shall have the ability to take the appropriate decision to deal with that situation.

5. Inability to negotiate and persuade: It is necessary for the employee to have the ability to influence customers. For example, if the company he works for offers a specific product, he shall be able to convincingly convey the advantages of the product.

6. The employee's lack of access to development and learning: the employee shall continuously develop his skills and abilities in order to ensure his continuity and success in his

work, because people who are unable to invest and improve their skills will be more likely to lose their jobs.

### **The Role of Social Networking Sites in Promoting Islamic Values among Customers**

Values are considered among the important topics in human life because they are the basis for understanding the attitudes, motives and tendencies of individuals. They aim to preserve customs and traditions and enhance the spirit of solidarity that binds individuals to each other. In addition, they contribute to the formation of a conservative society, due to its features and classifications. The role of social networking sites in promoting Islamic values among customers can be summarised in the following points (Al-Haddadi, 2016)

1. Spreading useful knowledge and good manners.
2. Recognising the conditions of Muslims in remote areas of the world and communicating with them.
3. Enhancing the possibility of contacting scholars to obtain fatwas on their behalf.
4. Contacting relatives by means of sound and image.
5. Searching for training and work opportunities in major institutions and companies to strengthen the economy and support trade through electronic commerce.
6. Contributing to the call to Islam through a group of forums that help memorize the Qur'an and benefit from some professions, handicrafts and traditional industries, methods of education, and the ideal home preparation.

### **Customers' Satisfaction**

Most bodies and organizations believe that there is a positive relationship between the high level of customer satisfaction and the frequency of their dealings with the organization, as those organizations believe that the higher the level of customer satisfaction, the higher the customer's spending in the deals that take place between him and the organization (Ahmed et al., 2021a; 2021b; Alsharif et al., 2021a; Alsharif et al., 2021).

However, this relationship cannot be relied upon today, given that high levels of satisfaction do not necessarily translate into numbers, sales and profits. So, it is not surprising that many organizations fail to reach a strong and permanent relationship with customers, and here a new measure of the organization's success in retaining its customers appears, which leads to the satisfaction and loyalty of customers. Bodies and organizations seek to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction through the diversity of services they provide. It should be noted here that satisfaction consists of the following components

1. Expectations: It is the aspirations or ideas of customers regarding the linking of product performance with professional characteristics and advantages that the customer expects to obtain from this service.
2. Actual performance: It is the perceived performance level of the customer when using the commodity or obtaining the service.
3. Expectations fulfilled/unfulfilled: The fulfillment of expectations occurs when the actual performance of the product is equal to the expectations. As for the non-fulfillment of expectations, it is a deviation of the service performance from the expected way (Vavra, 2002).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The Roads and Transport Authority in the Emirate of Dubai is always seeking to develop its reputation and enhance its trust and communication with the public dealing with the authority. Therefore, the Roads and Transport Authority has been keen to make the most of



social media in order to enhance the satisfaction of those dealing with the authority, which will lead to the development of the authority. All this prompted the researcher to study this subject scientifically in order to urge and invite governmental institutions, especially the Roads and Transport Authority in the Emirate of Dubai, to make the most of these sites, which helps to deal positively with the authority and then improve its image with the public. The study was keen to highlight the impact of social networking sites in enhancing confidence among customers, and this is all in light of technological development and the optimal use of means of communication in dealing with institutions.

This research reached several recommendations, the most important of which are:

1. The need for a continuous development of the Authority's social networking sites in terms of form and content.
2. There shall be a process of investing social media to enhance of awareness and guidance towards enhancing respect for the laws and regulations of the Roads and Transport Authority.
3. Permanent invitation to citizens and residents to use the easy and fast ways to communicate their observations and suggestions, and to complete their transactions via social media.
4. Continuous implementation of research and studies aimed at identifying the obstacles that prevent using social media while dealing with the Authority.
- 5 Holding awareness seminars and educational programs that explain to customers the ways and means of their use of the authority's social media, in order to create interaction and feedback.
6. Paying more attention to the data and information contained in the Authority's social media. As the texts, pictures and videos help the authority to increase customer satisfaction.

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