



The Impact of Social Media Marketing on the Performance of SMEs: The Case of Retailing Business in Tanzania

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1 Introduction

Throughout history, human beings have been known to interact with one another. The exact encounter as to when the first people started social networking using technology is, however, unknown. The early modern human beings lived in small groups and occasionally interacted with other groups. Rimskii (2011) reported that the earliest recorded social networking encounter goes back to 1792 when the telegraph system and telex machine were discovered. However, until the early 1900s, telephones and radios were the only means of social networking. It was during this same time when Emile Durkheim and Fernando Tonnies introduced the study of Sociology, hence, regarded as the fathers of sociology (Edosomwan et al. 2011).

The study conducted by DiNucci (1999) specified that the web revolution would interconnect devices like TVs, cellophanes, automobiles, and even microwaves and could be all controlled by an individual through the internet. In 2004, Tim O'Reilly and Dale Dougherty coined the term Web 2.0 in the first Web 2.0 Conference. In this conference, the speakers argued that Web 2.0 was not an update to Web 1.0, but as a change whereby the Web focuses

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on allowing users to interact and communicate with one another via social media.

From the year 2004, many organizations established their existence on different social media platforms. As of 2017, it is said that all the top 100 global companies have their existence in a number of social media platforms. It is due to this trend ever since a number of SMEs have started conducting social media marketing on various social media platforms. Today, it is obvious, for example, in Tanzania when visiting social media platforms especially on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, it is uncommon to see retailers and other traders advertising their products. In the modern economy, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a great role in the development of nations. For example, according to Ward (2017), more than 98% of all firms in USA and Europe are SMEs and contribute more than 50% of the countries' GDP. In Australia, 97% of all firms are SMEs and employ 49% in the private sector.

In recent years, social media's popularity has increased tremendously and has become a buzz in today's world. However, what was created as a platform for individuals to share ideas, opinions, feelings, and thoughts is increasingly adopted and used by corporations and enterprises in framing and setting marketing strategies (Meske and Stieglitz 2013). Because of the emerging importance of social media usage in the business world, a number of studies have been conducted to examine the importance of social media in business. However, much of the literature conducted in the past focused on social media strategies on large enterprises and organizations. It is important for SMEs to gain understanding and enjoy the benefits arising from using new marketing techniques and approaches like the use of social media marketing which has proved to promote growth, build good customer relations, and make the SME owners to have a clear understanding on how their customers can be served.

It is no secret, however, that SMEs struggle in adopting and using social media tools. A survey conducted by the Deluxe Corporation found that 49% of the SMEs Business owners' find the adoption of social media as one of their greatest challenges in reaching customers with limited resources (Small Business Trend 2011). However, due to the fact that social media tools are richly equipped with a number of marketing opportunities without the requirement of large investments, SMEs retailing businesses should look into adopting and using social media marketing since it utilizes less resources and less time consuming. The fact that SMEs are more prone to resource shortages (money and time) compared to large enterprises; the use of social media to market their products would help them reduce marketing costs

while targeting large masses. Social media would also provide a platform for business growth and provide an opportunity for the SMEs owners, not only regularly share their products with their customers, but also an opportunity to have direct communication with their customers and help them to know what their customers really want and to establish long-lasting relationships.

With the limited number of studies conducted on SMEs, they are largely based on how social media is used by SMEs (Cox 2012) and why or how SMEs adopt social media (Meske and Stieglitz 2013; Pentina et al. 2012; Ziller and Schauer 2011; Abed et al. 2015). None of the studies on SMEs social media usage covers how social media marketing can affect the performance of SMEs, especially in retailing businesses. Also, none of the studies conducted on SMEs have focused on the context reflecting the Third World countries which are rapidly adopting social media usage. Without proper knowledge of how social media platforms can be used to enhance the performance of businesses, SME retailers are less likely to enjoy the benefits derived from such a new marketing method. Thus, there emerges the need to examine and explore various social media practices and activities and their effect on the performance of retailing businesses is paramount.

2 Study Objectives

The study investigates the impact of social media marketing on the performance of SMEs in retailing businesses in Tanzania. Specifically, the study focuses on how Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter usage can bring about positive outcomes in SMEs retailing activities in the country. In other words, what is the performance differential between those companies which employ and leverage the platforms and those without. The results obtained from this study may provide a good understanding and insight of how and why SMEs retailing businesses should adopt and use social media in offering their goods and services, communicating with their customers, and building healthy long-lasting relationships and, therefore, realizing the benefits and experiencing other impacts of conducting business in the twenty-first century style. Social media marketing is the fastest growing marketing channel in the world (Chaffey 2018). In the USA alone, expenditures were predicted to reach USD 17.3 billion by 2019 (Forrester 2014).

The research question is *if there any performance differential between firms that embrace the use of social media marketing and those which do not?*

3 Review of Relevant Literatures

Overtime, Social media have played a very important role in enhancing communication and marketing at large corporations. In recent years, however, SMEs have started adopting the use of social media in their activities, realizing their importance. According to Constant Contact an American marketer, 24% of the SMEs use social media in a structured way while 20% of the SMEs use their social media in an informal way (Mielach 2012). According to Bitkom (2012), in Germany alone 47% of all firms use social media. Many of the academic literature incorporate based and give only a little emphasis to SMEs.

According to the EU (2010), SMEs make 99% of all firms in the continent. They employ half of the entire continent's population. Business practices have been made easy through technology. SMEs always tend to lag in adopting such technologies, despite the benefits that could be derived. Adoption of new technologies would help such firms to enjoy the business environment at the same level as large corporations (Richter and Koch 2008; Polach 2008) Adoption of new technologies has always been a challenge, not only to SMEs, but also large corporations. The truth, however, is that SMEs are at risk since a wrong decision made would tarnish their business. In another view, Hurley (2012) contends that more than 75% of the owners were put off companies because of an improper use of the newly adopted technologies. The studies undertaken by Constantinides (2014); Market et al. (2018); Fotis (2015) posit that given the limited amount of resources, SMEs are obliged to make well-conceived decisions regarding the adoption of new technologies such as social media.

Social media marketing has narrowed targeting approaches toward integration of the organization's communications. As opposed to online payment advertisement (Banners, Texts, search etc.), social media marketing involves the initiation of C2C communication, creating brand/organizations fan pages, and managing promotions and PR within the popular social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Evans 2009). Compared to large organizations, this marketing strategy may appear more advantageous to SMEs due to low costs and flexibility (Akehurst 2009; Berners-Lee 2007).

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) postulates that the decision to adopt new technologies within the organization lies entirely on the decision maker's perception of the ease and usefulness of the technology needed to be adopted in an organization. Due to the fact that the use of social media does not require any special skills, however, it is difficult to assess the factors responsible for the decision to adopt social media marketing according to

Pentina et al. (2012), who believe that social influences by experts, competitors' effects, and customers were the main drivers of adoption social media marketing by firms. These results align with earlier studies by Venkatesh and Davis (2000), Pangarkar (2000), Maslow (2011), and Lucas Jr and Spittler (1999) who argue that firms tend to adopt what their competitors do when they assess that their rivals' methods are cheaper than theirs. They do not want to be left behind when there are enough resources available to support the imitation.

Both Ziller and Schauer (2011) and Meske and Stieglitz (2013) argue that SMEs typically use a top-down strategy in adopting social media marketing. Meske and Stieglitz (2013), however, conclude that social media adoption is primarily associated with non-technical barriers and challenges including soft factors. These soft factors include management attitude and employee acceptance.

The use of social media has become so important that many companies have established their presence on various social media tools. It is due to this importance that it is no longer surprising that even the social media tools themselves (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) have official accounts on other sites to communicate with their users. It is due to this that even the largest global companies like Samsung, Apple, Coca-Cola, and Amazon have their official accounts on various social media sites. According to Marsteller (2010), 65% of the 100 fortune global companies have active account on Twitter, while Samsung, Apple, Coca-Cola, and Amazon have (54%, 50%, and 33%) active accounts on Facebook, YouTube, and corporate blogs, respectively. The use of social media has surpassed web searching and e-mailing as the most popular activity in the internet world. It is estimated that every one out of five minutes spent online, is used on social media. Studies also show that in US alone 98% of all active users spend most of their time on social media (Chaffey 2014; Senecal and Nantel 2004).

Firms in almost all industries use social media to market and advertise their products and services. They also use social media to brand, promote, develop, and provide customer services, employee engagement, and even recruitment of new staff. A good example of such company is Infosys India which uses Twitter to address its customer and all activities mentioned above (Bhanot 2009). When companies join social media, they mainly focus on engaging with customers, keeping up with the industry's trend, reaching out for new customers, and recruiting and hiring top talents. Through social media, the companies also provide information to their customers such as about prices,

promotions, time with their services, answering customer queries, and products that are available and giving behind the curtain information (Ayarekar 2015).

According to Pempek et al. (2009), very few people predicted it would become one of the most successful and popular social media applications during the early stage of Instagram. According to the experts in the area of social media marketing, the Instagram has more than 800 million monthly active users and only tails behind Facebook and YouTube. It is believed that most of the Instagram users are female and 59% of its users are under 30 of age. The site continues by estimating that it has more than 25 million Instagram Business Profiles worldwide and more than 2 million advertisers use Instagram to share stories. The site estimates also that 200 million people visit Business Profiles on daily basis and on a survey conducted; it was found that 60% of the people asked admitted that they found the goods they had desired through Instagram (Market et al. 2018).

According to Macinnis and Folkes (2009); businesses use the app and post its content while their audience post and share photo images of them. Unlike a Normal Instagram, Business Instagram allows business owners to add up their business details (e.g. phone contacts, physical address, email, websites etc.) to their profile. The Business app also allows integration of WhatsApp with the Instagram app. Adding up such information helps Instagram to analyze various account activities like the number of likes impressions, website clicks, reach, followers, and video views.

Park et al. (2016) believe that Facebook advertising is not one way and tagging of friends and wall sharing plays a major role in Facebook advertising while paid ads provide a greater audience. According to Tranttner and Kappe (2013), social streaming by the use of Facebook helps in determining the number of normal and new customer visits to the business page, measures, if the ads posted, are revealing or not, thus determining potential buyers and the profit of the business.

In another development, Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) successful Facebook posts should be those posts that promote the products, add value to the posts, entertainment related, and share other pages. The business owners should also understand their targeted audience and have good knowledge on what strategy to adopt that could help gain benefits from Facebook use. Compared to other micro-blogs, Twitter is the fastest growing platform. When Twitter is compared to other social media platforms, however, it champions them in advantages. It offers ease of engagement between the business and their customers and enhances convenience and innovation. Many organizations use Twitter even for recruitment. Twitter also played a crucial role in

the political world in the 2008 US election and the 2011 Singapore election (Wamba and Carter 2013).

The literature suggests that Twitter has helped in the increase of sales through simply listening to their target audience, knowledge flow, relationship building, and best practices within the organizations. Organizations like Dell, Sony, and Ford Motors have used Twitter to their advantage (Aden-tunji and Carr 2016). Fisher (2010) claims that many organizations have proved that Twitter is the most powerful social media platform in the business world. According to Fisher (2010), 1500 Twitter users when offered by Sony to customize their laptop models with a reward of a 10% discount, the company's sales increased by 1.5 million USD. This offered the Twitter followers a more personalized shopping experience. The author also reports that in June 2009, Dell announced that it had traced back more than 3 million USD in sales from their official Twitter account.

Despite this fact, many studies were conducted to explore and describe social media marketing and most of the literature focuses on a large corporate environment. With the few available studies focusing on SMEs, their focus on why and how SMEs should adopt social media marketing practices is lacking especially in developing countries. None of the literature has placed a focus on how social media marketing can affect the performance of SMEs and gives a true picture of social media marketing in third world countries.

4 Methodology

This study uses online focus group discussion as the means or tool for collecting data from different participants. Focus groups are regarded as an established tool for collecting data in social sciences whereby people from diverse backgrounds and experiences are brought together to discuss a topic under investigation. (Morgan 1996). The technological advancements have seen more and more people capitalizing in conducting focus group discussions online. According to Fox et al. (2007), Gaiser (1997), Kenny (2005), focus group discussions normally take two forms synchronous, involving real-time live chat comparable to conversational interactions of face-to-face focus groups or asynchronous, using "static" text-based communication such as forums and email lists.

In this study, the qualitative online data collected from focus group discussion and documentation was coded, analyzed, and further analyzed using Excel. The qualitative data were generated from the daily reports of two shops were then summarized to obtain total sales for the duration of the

data collection; the revenue was further analyzed using a horizontal trend analysis to examine how the introduction of social media marketing to businesses which have not adopted this marketing technique would be affected. The qualitative data were thematically analyzed. The focus group transcripts were used to analyze data. The data for this study were coded by hand and analyzed. To carry this out, the researcher coded every five written word lines on participant conversation in order to identify the key words. In order to ensure the codes had qualitative richness, it was ensured that the codes were clear, concise, and clearly stated. To ensure the integrity of the codes, code validation was applied.

This was done to ensure that the codes were not misinterpreted, or biased when reviewed by another person other than the researcher. The researcher did a double crossing on data by reading it more than once to ensure consistency and validation. Through the integration of the codes, a codebook was created where the themes emerged. After the creation of the codebook, the researcher identified sub-themes and themes that had emerged from the coded data. These themes emerged from conversations, occurrences on frequency, and certain factors. The researcher was able to define each theme sufficiently to make it clear and understandable for others.

The description of each theme was named with a few words to help communicate its information from the focus groups and was then transcribed. For the unobtrusive method, the data were collected from September 1 to 30, 2018 from the boosted ads on Facebook and Instagram to perform the content analysis on the social media activity. By this method, the researcher was able to explore the conception that manifested the conversation. The data obtained were read repeatedly until the key concepts were captured. Like in the thematic analysis, the codes were sorted in groups depending on their relationships. Since the aim of the researcher is to examine and assess the impact of social media marketing on the performance of SMEs Retailing Business, the content analysis was done to evaluate the impact of social media on the performance of SMEs in terms of sales, engagement, and strategy.

Despite being an explorative study using qualitative method, the comparison of the monthly revenue trend can be analyzed by using accounting statistical methods. The horizontal Trend analysis compares trends between consecutive periods. Despite the fact that the Horizontal analysis uses the previous period trend as a base year to predict the next period revenue, (i.e. for the March calculation, the base month becomes February and for April Calculation, the base is March) the researcher decided to use the month of February as base month for both March and April. The researcher decided

to use February as base for both months simply because the February and March sales did not vary much and the researcher wanted to compare both sales months' revenue to the base month. For example:

Horizontal analysis = (New Month Date Revenue - Base Month Date Revenue) / Base Month Revenue

5 The Findings

The previous section examined the research methodologies used in this study. The section further described how data were collected and analyzed. Because this study employs a qualitative design as identified above, the data collecting methods include focus group discussions, observation, documentation, and unobtrusive method. The collected data are presented, analyzed, and interpreted in this section. The collected data were thematically analyzed from code books created by the researcher. The analysis and interpretation of the collected data is basically based on the objectives of this study described in the first section and second sections.

The analysis of the boutique shop revenues after the introduction of social media marketing as depicted in Fig. 1. The figure shows social media marketing has a significant negative impact on the sales of the business. From Fig. 1, the data show that despite the use of social media marketing, the business was not able to raise its revenue. The data also show that the sales

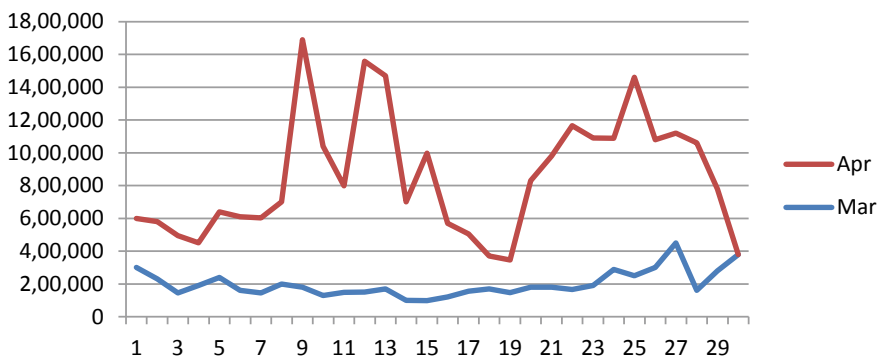


Fig. 1 Boutique Shop revenue analysis in Tanzania March-April 2018 (Source Author's own construct based on field data collected from online focus group discussion, 2018)

had decreased rapidly compared to the base month of February in which the business had not adopted social media marketing.

$$\text{Horizontal analysis} = \frac{\text{New Month Date Revenue} - \text{Base Month Date Revenue}}{\text{Base Month Revenue}}$$

For example, on March 10, if the sales of a Boutique shop are \$130,000 and the previous revenue was \$250,000, then

$$\text{Horizontal analysis} = \frac{130,000 - 250,000}{250,000} 0.48$$

This shows that the March 10 revenue decreased by 48% compared to previous February Revenue.

Through focus group discussions, it is revealed that the use of social media to market had no positive impact in boosting SMEs sales. As depicted above, businesses that opt to adopt social media are more likely to experience a decrease in their sales. The percentage change of sales revenue of sales could be resulted of the businesses being exposed to more customers who could not be reached physically, but the social media provide a platform which is less costly thus connecting the SMEs owners and their potential customers from the audience. It could not be ease to establish the reason as to why the sales revenue has gone down despite using social media marketing tools by traders. With regard to this, some of the respondents noted: The analysis of the building and construction shop revenues showed that social media marketing had little impact on influencing sales revenue as depicted in Fig. 2. This indicates that using social media marketing on this kind of business would bring little influence to raising revenue.

Moreover, the findings from the focus group discussion reveal, however, that although this is a qualitative study, for indicative purposes, 6 out of 10 respondents had their businesses already started before adopting social media marketing. This means that 60% of the respondents had already established their retailing businesses before adopting social media strategy. On the other hand, only 40% of the respondents had no business before adopting social media marketing. This means that their businesses were originally formed through social media marketing. These data would help determine if there exist differences in performance before and after adopting social media marketing. Other owners expressed that they were influenced to use social media in their marketing activities because they saw it as a new opportunity for making quick money.

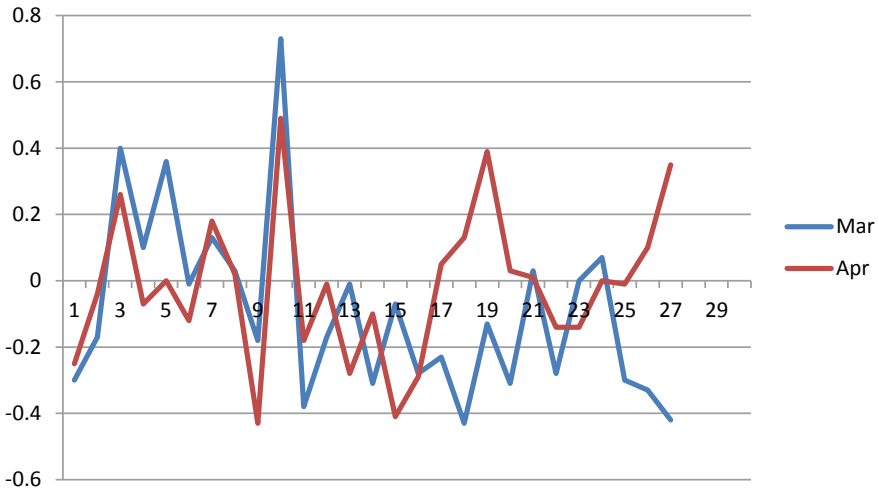


Fig. 2 Building and construction shop revenue analysis in Tanzania March–April 2018 (Source Author's own construct based on field data collected from online focus group discussion, 2018)

6 The Impact of Using Social Media Marketing on Performance of Retail SMEs

From the collected data, it is revealed that there exist a number of indicators that SMEs owners perceived as the measurement of their businesses performing well. The data also revealed that social media marketing helps business owners to forge relationships and networks with their customers. A number of respondents from the focus group discussions revealed one of the major benefits that could be realized through social media is the building of long last relationship with their customers:

Through social Media Marketing, I have created connections and friendships probably I wouldn't have forged without this strategy. (Salma, Focus Group 3)

Unlike with other marketing strategies, social media marketing allows one to be friend with someone just met online. That relationship may go to forming business relationship if trust emerges. (Safina, Focus Group 3)

As the field data above indicate, frequent social media activities on a business account would help increase the number of followers on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. When the Facebook and Instagram accounts were offered to boutique shop owner, the account had 3898 and 3908 friends and

followers on Facebook and Instagram, respectively, as of 31st of March 2018. On the other hand, the account that was offered to the building and construction shop owner had 4907 and 1678 followers on Facebook and Instagram, respectively. However, as of May 1st when the four accounts were checked, the boutique shop accounts had 5678 and 6389 on Facebook and Instagram had followers, respectively. While the building and construction shop accounts had 5045 and 1701 Facebook and Instagram followers, respectively. The collected data reveal that the use of social media for commercial purposes has a great effect in increasing the number of friends and followers on Facebook and Instagram. On the other hand, the focus group discussions revealed that the use of social media marketing had a great impact in increasing the number of followers and friends on Instagram and Facebook accounts as depicted by the two shops.

Having large number of followers is a great advantage. To me it's an added advantage since I get paid for every post I make to support other businesses. (Halima, Focus Group 3)

My business account has more Instagram followers than my private account. (Hamisa, Focus Group 1)

Before I started business, I had very fewer followers but now I have more than 100,000 followers on my Instagram. That's my greatest achievement though it comes with perks. (Humaid, Focus Group 2)

The data collected also reveal that the use of social media helps businesses to get larger number of likes and comments. Further analysis, however, reveals that boosted ads fetch more likes, shares, and comments compared to those which are not boosted. This is supported by the fact that boosted posts on Boutique shops got more likes than those that were not boosted. From the focus group discussions, some respondents expressed:

My posts always get likes both on Instagram and Facebook. (Cynthia, Focus Group 3)

... Boosted ads are more likely to get more likes than those not boosted ... (Marina, Focus Group 3)

Social media has helped me get customers who contact me direct through my phone. My phone is always busy; sometimes I get calls during late nights ... (Hamisa, Focus Group 1)

Other participants from the focus group discussions attributed their popularity to using social media accounts for business:

I was jobless after completing my studies. I had no capital to start a big business. However, I had a large number of followers on Instagram and Facebook. I used the large number of friends and followers on my accounts to my advantage ... Seven years later I am the most popular Hair seller in the country. Who doesn't know (mentions a name) ... I am so popular. Through social media, I have personally met people I had never thought I could talk to. This business has taken me to places ... (Hamisa, Focus Group 1)

Instagram has helped me build a name ... (Isaac, Focus Group 2)

7 Problems Facing the Use of Social Media Marketing

Any successful business that has potential faces some challenges at different levels of its growth. Like any other phenomenon, social media marketing is subjected to the number of challenges which threaten the growth of this marketing strategy. From the analysis of the focus group discussion, it is revealed that the suggestions from the participants are similar in one way, or another. The challenges identified by the participants are similar enough and are grouped into six major categories namely operational challenges, resource-based challenges, strategic challenges, technological challenges, management challenges, and other challenges as shown below.

When the above challenges are further simplified as shown in Fig. 3, however, the challenges facing social media marketing include lack of proper knowledge to conduct social media marketing, high operational costs, poor infrastructure, and improper payment systems. The participants also mentioned online rivalry, phishing and identity theft as other challenges.

When the challenges are further analyzed, the data reveal that they are challenges which were faced during the initial stages of adoption of this strategy and others which occurred after one is fully comfortable with using this strategy. Due to their repetitive nature, these challenges can be grouped into: (1) Resource-based problems, (2) Management Based problems (3) Strategic problems (4) Operational Problems (5), and Technological Problems. The researcher identifies technological problems as all challenges that are associated with the use of the technology. In the focus group discussions, technological challenges were identified as one of the factors that hinder



Fig. 3 Broad challenges facing social media marketing in Tanzania March–April 2018 (Source Author's own construct based on field data collected from online focus group discussion, 2018)

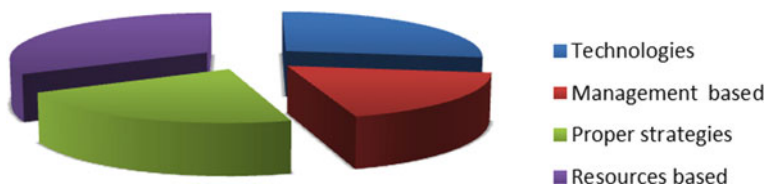


Fig. 4 Specific challenges facing social media marketing (Source Author's own construct based on field data collected from online focus group discussion, 2018)

SMEs owner to grow and other new owners not to engage in social media marketing.

My account with more than 200,000 Instagram followers was hacked twice. I am scared of losing this account. Losing this account means I am done. Getting this number of followers was not easy. (Jamal, Focus Group 2)

More than 75% of Tanzanians live in rural areas with no internet services. This limits us from reaching more potential customers. (Asimwe, Focus Group 1)

... We lack proper payment system ... (Flora, Focus Group 3)

Recently, Facebook has been accused of misusing their customers' data. If our data are not safe, we are at risk. This may mean boosted ads may be not realistic. (Humaid, Focus Group 2)

Another challenges highlighted by the participants in the Focus group were resource-based challenges. The resource-based challenges are all those problems associated with poor management of resources that is, time and money:

... boosting a single ad per day on Facebook and Instagram would cost you a dollar. The price may look cheap but during these hard times in business, it is a lot . . . Boosting ads is an additional cost ... (Bertha, Focus Group 1)

"Social media market needs a lot of time . . . this may lead to a person using a lot of time on social media surfing than marketing one's own products" (Rajabu, Focus Group 3)

Sometimes I spend more time on Instagram viewing unwanted things more than reading the comments section on my post. (Sakina, Focus Group 1)

The participants of the Focus group identified a lack of proper strategies as another challenge hindering the growth of SMEs using social media marketing. Strategies involved were how these participants were using social media for the future benefits.

We lack proper knowledge on how to use social media to our fruition. (Gerry, Focus Group 2)

Knowing when to post is something which most of us do not know. (Bertha, Focus Group 1)

Through observation of focus group discussions, the researcher identifies operational problems as all challenges faced by SME owners that were hindering smooth operation in social media activities:

My business depends on delivery . . . lack of postal address is a great challenge (Jacqueline, Focus Group 1)

Sometimes I get orders from customers from cross country regions where there are no buses from Dar. This limits my ability to reach more customers. (Asimwe, Focus Group 1)

I almost went bankrupt because I was swindled by my own followers. It very difficult to trust someone from Instagram. (Gerry, Focus Group 2)

There are more swindlers on social media and cheaters than anywhere else. There are fake people there waiting to take advantage of you. (Thompson, Focus Group 3)

8 Conclusion

A good marketing strategy always leads to a successful business. Any successful business should know how to segment its market, target its potential customers and position the product they offer in the minds of its customers. However, all that cannot be done without proper communication between SMEs owners and their customers. Communication fills such gaps and brings closer the customers to the sellers. The internet has facilitated that and through social media, the two parties are connected 24 h a day despite the disparity and distance of geographical locations. From the genesis of this study, efficient and effective use of social media is expected to be beneficial to businesses. However, the private use of social media is very different from commercial use.

Unlike the private use, the commercial use is not easy as it is thought because it requires a person to learn, not only what is the perfect time to post or engage, but it also requires the owners social commitment to the business and regular checking and engagement, decision which include making choices on what and how to post and what engaging strategy to adopt. From the literature and findings of this study, it is noted that SMEs using social media to market often lack proper use and strategies during the early periods of business. It is due to that factor that SMEs using social media marketing strategy should scrutinize and identify the purpose as to why they engage and what outcome should be expected. The creation of accounts on social media tools is not enough and randomly posting once a week, or so without checking on a regular basis. However, the business owners may take an initiative on regular posting and engaging to their customers whenever any issue of importance arises such as questions asked, or any other query which requires deep explanation from the owners themselves.

SMEs' owners should clearly understand the type of social media tool in which the target customers could be found and which strategy may be adopted since customers tend to differ from site to site. A good example is that female customers who are more likely to be found on Instagram because they prefer posting pictures on that site. For new business and their

owners, this type of marketing strategy may be a new endeavor. Learning through active participation for those lacking this type of skill should be an everyday norm. They should also learn how to effectively and efficiently use social media tools in engaging with customers and building long-lasting relationship which helps them grow their businesses.

Besides, from learning to master social media marketing strategy, the SMEs owners should be keen on their dealings since some of the problems such as online phishing, online identity theft, dishonest customers, and online rivalry which could tarnish the goodwill of the business rather than building it. Having only the knowledge of effective and efficient use of social media market to sell one's goods is not enough to boost one's sales and popularity on the social media. The SMEs owners should rather support each other through the sharing of items posted and recommending their customers to other SMEs owners. This will expand their customer bases. Depending on the organic growth of followers, it may also not be fruitful that SMEs owners should from time to time pay for the advertising service available on the social media tools. The use of social media advertising payment service eases the whole research phase. Through these services, the sites help their customers to target their interested customers for the ads to appear on their timelines even if the intended customers are not followers, or friends.

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