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The impact of Air Arabia Social Media Tactics on the Airline's Communication with Customers

Fatima Qambar Al-Maazmi(1)
Bouziane Zaid(2)

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Abstract:

Many global companies have turned to social media as critical marketing tools in reaching targeted consumers. Air Arabia is one of the companies that use social media to communicate with and engage its customers. This study evaluates the role of social media platforms in Air Arabia's effective online communication and consumer engagement. It aims to determine the airline's social media marketing strategy and analyze users' experience on its platforms to determine appropriate social media marketing strategic plans for both existing and potential customers. The data obtained from Air Arabia social media accounts reports between January and November 2019, including Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook reports, are systematically analyzed. The findings indicate that Air Arabia's strategic utility of social media channels provides the company with a competitive advantage over its rivals, as the employees came to believe that marketing through social media platforms contributed to increasing the company's revenues, according to statistics. The results further indicate that despite this advantage, the company still needs to improve the performance of its social media strategy, including the marketing approach, engagement, and customer loyalty.

Keywords: Air Arabia, airlines, social media, marketing strategies, UAE.

(1) College of Communication - University of Sharjah (Sharjah – U.A.E.)
u17105647@sharjah.ac.ae

(2) College of Communication - University of Sharjah (Sharjah – U.A.E.)

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Introduction

Social media networks are popular, widespread, and diverse across the globe. Approximately 4.5 billion people around the world use some form of social networking sites (Ang, 2021). The most widely used platforms include Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter. These platform benefits from increased used globally through increased revenue generation coming from advertisement fees for both small and big businesses. The platforms access to "big data" enables them to provide valuable targeted business marketing to potential customers. In turn, many organizations have turned to social media for brand promotion, direct customer interaction, and enhanced client engagement. Therefore, social media is a critical aspect to modern day organizations; marketing strategies, making the medium vital for the companies to invest in the platforms.

The current developments in communication, information technology, and marketing have resulted in new innovative business and consumption models, in which users of social media platforms have a leading role and are increasingly important in product and service purchase. However, online commerce has attracted significant competitions, all targeting specific audience. With the rapidly emerging social media platforms, customers expect companies to be present, interact, communicate, and advertise online. Considering that social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, facilitate day-to-day customer-company interactions, organizations stand out from their competitors by professionally managing their platforms (Zhong, 2018). Market leaders today understand that they must frame their social media platforms appropriately to distinguish themselves from competition. To stand out, companies need to consider the uniqueness of their posting patterns to understand their capacity to attract customers and facilitate enhanced interactions (Yates, 2018). Therefore, social media efficiencies allow companies to expand their audience base, improve their brand, and increase client loyalty, providing a variety of possibilities.

This paper investigates and evaluates the use of social media by Air Arabia and its effectiveness in the organization's communication and customer engagement. The airline boasts of a strong social media presence, which makes it ideal in assessing the efficiency of social media marketing strategies and quality of customer interactions on social media platforms. Therefore, this study's objective is to identify Air Arabia's social media marketing strategy and to assess the efficiency of its strategic plans for both current and future consumers. Accordingly, the paper aims to answer the following research questions:

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Research Question 1: What is Air Arabia's current social media strategy?

Research Question 2: How much effective is Air Arabia's social medial strategy in regards to customer communication for both current and future clients?

The significance of the study lies in the fact that it will help companies understand the different aspects of social media marketing and management that will make them more successful and effective. The competition for the attention of social media users is on the rise with more businesses seeking a competitive advantage on various platforms (Hovstad, 2018). This study explores the importance of having a social media strategy through the case study analysis of Air Arabia. The paper will explore the effectiveness of the current social media strategy in the airline and give suggestions on how to improve outreach and performance. The findings of this study can act as a guide for businesses that wish to effectively manage their social media presence.

After a review of the literature on social media strategy and marketing, customer engagement, and the use of social media in the aviation industry, we delineate the social media strategy cone as a theoretical framework. Then, we describe our methods and present our findings and analysis. Finally, we delineate our conclusion and recommendations.

Literature Review

Social media strategy

Effective social media marketing requires a proper strategy. (Effing & Spil, (2015) define social media strategy as a goal-directed planning process to develop user-generated content, supported by a variety of internet applications to offer a unique competitive edge. In other words, social media strategy is what one plans to do and intends to achieve on social media platforms, including channel choices, company resources, and target audiences, among others.

Creating an effective social media strategy requires the integration of such elements as target audience, channel choice, and goals. The business determines the target audience based on what it offers and consumers' preferences. Identifying an audience is critical to targeting specific populations through existing social media platforms. Effing and Spil (2015) posit that the target population may include stakeholders, groups, and cultures. Similarly, social media strategy also requires a suitable channel for reaching the targeted population. However, the selection of target audience and channel to use should be driven by company goals to be efficient.

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A company also needs other elements, including resources, policies, monitoring, and content activities to design an effective social media strategy. Human resources are essential for effective communication and social media activities monitoring. However, policies should first be in place to ensure that company's human resources department operates ethically to protect the reputation of the business. Thus, professionals in charge of a firm's social media accounts must understand the content to post on various platforms. Social media activities should also be continuously monitored to identify potential crises and areas that require improvements. Lastly, content activities are vital elements in any social media strategies because they encompass organizations' online posts and their scheduled posting time frames in various platforms.

Every company needs a comprehensive guide to communicate on the social web. Effing and Spil (2015) propose the "Social Strategy Cone" as a new framework for social media strategies. This tool is effective in evaluating risks and opportunities embedded in a company's social media strategy. Although the framework has seven key elements of social media strategies, companies can use its levels of maturity of social media strategies to pay attention to the aforementioned elements. The levels include initiation, diffusion, and maturity. Channel selection and targeted audience encompass the initiation level, while goals, resources, and policies are grouped under the diffusion level. Monitoring and content activities elements are found in maturity levels (Effing & Spil, 2015). Many organizations fail in terms of what they communicate because their social media strategies are not well developed. Thus, the proposed social strategy cone is effective in examining the success of organizational social media practices and creating new corporate social media strategies.

Social Media marketing

Consumers' social media behaviors have increased social media marketing (SMM) in the business sector. Consumers increasingly use of social media to locate, collect information, evaluate, and purchase products. Thus, the growing significance of social media marketing has led to a new definition of social media marketing. Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch (2017) define social media marketing as cross-functional idea that utilizes social media to attain other organizational goals by generating stakeholder value. The authors propose a social media marketing framework, integrating four dimensions, including social media marketing governance, marketing scope, culture, and marketing structure. These dimensions allow organizations to position their operations consistent with their mission and objectives.

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The four dimensions are critical in developing strategic social media marketing. The social media marketing scope centers on SMM as and efficient tool for organizations, while social media marketing culture focused on advertising approaches, traditional marketing. The SMM structure is concerned with social media plans and strategies within a business. For instance, this type of social media marketing framework puts all employees in charge of social media marketing. Finally, the social media marketing governance focuses on marketing regulations and monitoring of SMM personnel, including ensuring that employees are not restricted on their responsibilities and communication. In other words, organizations need to balance all elements of the framework to maximize their operations.

Customer engagement

The airline's image is essential because it plays a critical role in customer attraction. The organization can set itself apart from its competition by showcasing unique qualities that define its identity in its client's perceptions (Lee et al., 2018). Besides, with social media engagement being a powerful service quality determinant in the aviation sector, organizations' online reputation is likely to affect their revenue. For instance, loyal customers are likely to regularly interaction with the company on social media platforms, providing an avenue where they can purchase tickets and refer to friends and family, increasing the value of the airline.

Companies find it difficult to manage corporate reputation, especially with uncontrollable online conversations. Thus, the ability to control a firm’s online activities determines how it acquires engaged customers. Dijkmans, Kerkhof, and Beukeboom (2014) assert that clients engagement with a specific brand or organization varies depending on the integration of three elements, including behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects. The first aspect entails being involved in the organization's performance, while the second involves curiosity concerning its performance, and the third one entails being affirmative towards the company’s performance. These factors determine how consumers are engaged in social media activities and how clients perceive corporate reputation.

Social media platforms are critical enablers of consumer engagement due to their distinction from traditional media avenues. These platforms provide a twin-way communication between companies' brands and their clients. A research by Harrigan, Miles, and Daly (2016) studied the conceptualization of client engagement based on 5 main dimensions, including attention (consumers' focus on an organization), identification, enthusiasm (consumers' excitement towards the

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organization), and absorption. The integration between enthusiasm and attention determines customer loyalty. Absorption refers to how deeply a client is involved with a particular brand, while interaction points to the communication between an organization and the consumer, including sharing thoughts and suggestions and promoting the organization. Finally, identification refers to how well the consumer identifies with some organizations (Harrigan et al., 2016). Thus, every company must evaluate how its customers are engaged with social media platforms and identify areas to improve enhance loyalty, trust, and brand evaluations.

With airlines falling in the category of the service industry, customer satisfaction is a critical success determinant. Satisfied clients are likely to benefit an organization by referring other people, including close associates, acquaintances, friends, and family to consider specific companies' services, turning regular clients to loyal consumers (Lee, Ng, Chan, Choy, Tai, & Choi, 2018). In doing so, the realized benefits enable companies to improve their revenue.

Company reputation

Many companies invest in social media marketing to create awareness and enhance brand recognition. All these efforts help in maintaining or improving the reputation of an organization. According to Dijkmans et al. (2014), reputation is the culmination of a company's exemplification in attitudes and results that determine its capability to attain outcomes that are desirable to all stakeholders. Drawing from this definition, companies value their reputation because it helps them attract and retain clients and offers them competitive advantages.

Social media platforms can be a boon or bane for business reputation. One of its advantages is that it offers direct communication between a seller and consumer. However, this two-way communication channel means that organizations no longer control what comments customers read or leave on their social media pages. Customers' feedback can sometimes be a setback to a company's reputation (Dijkmans et al., 2014). For example, when Gatwick Airport's information technology had a glitch in 2019, there were passengers' outbursts on social media regarding the handling of the crises (Marcelin, 2019). Thus, opinions from unsatisfied customers can jeopardize a good reputation that a firm built over time by confusing customers.

Aviation industry and social media

Airlines were initially skeptical when social media tools emerged. However, they have increasingly embraced social media platforms recently and used them as

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marketing tools to promote their brands. The international airline industry social media teams have grown in equal measure to social media budgets. Compared to airlines in the past, companies today are unique in the sense that their volume of social interactions and real-time client requests processed occur through social media platforms (Chamberlain, 2020). Thus, airlines are a suitable case study regarding the impact of social media strategies as well as measuring their efficacy for potential and existing customers.

There has been a significant evolution in how consumers interact with airline content on various social media platforms. It all began with posting static images on Instagram and moved to the use of Facebook to advertise and spread content. Snapchat and TikTok have also emerged as interesting channels through which airlines can reach business travelers. Essentially, this evolution has changed how players in the aviation industry use these platforms to engage with their customers. In a study measuring the effectiveness of Germany airline's utility of social media channels, Knoblich, Martin, Nash, & Stansbie (2016) found that German airline businesses appreciate the necessity to utilize various social media platforms for improved communication. The results indicate that majority of German airline companies use both Facebook alongside Twitter as a corporate professional account. Airlines must tap these tools to deploy the right content to the target audience.

Social media influences consumers' decision-making processes. Bigne, Andreu, and Hernandez (2018) explored the effect of social media on customer behavior, utilizing the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to investigate the relationship. Specifically, the researchers analyzed online consumer-to-consumer information exchange to pinpoint possible drivers of customers' desire or likelihood to purchase airline tickets. Therefore, airlines can rely on social networking sites to engage ticket purchasers, provide prompt information search, and influence post-purchase evaluation.

The function of social media within the budget airline industry has changed significantly over the years. The role of social media platforms in this sector is to influence online purchase intentions in low-cost settings. Leung, Schuckert, and Yeung (2013) analyzed reports from Air Asia, Easy Jet, and Jet Blue social media teams. The authors found that these companies utilize their social media channels for promotional communication, improve user experiences, and targeting new clients, as well as the distribution of information to potential customers. Specifically, these airlines utilize Facebook to invite users to engage in their activities. The research shows that many consumers leave comments on Facebook

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posts dated less than 48 hours (Leung et al., 2013). Thus, considering that social media tools facilitate consumer interactions, airlines should continually rely on them to promote their products and services and increase customer satisfaction.

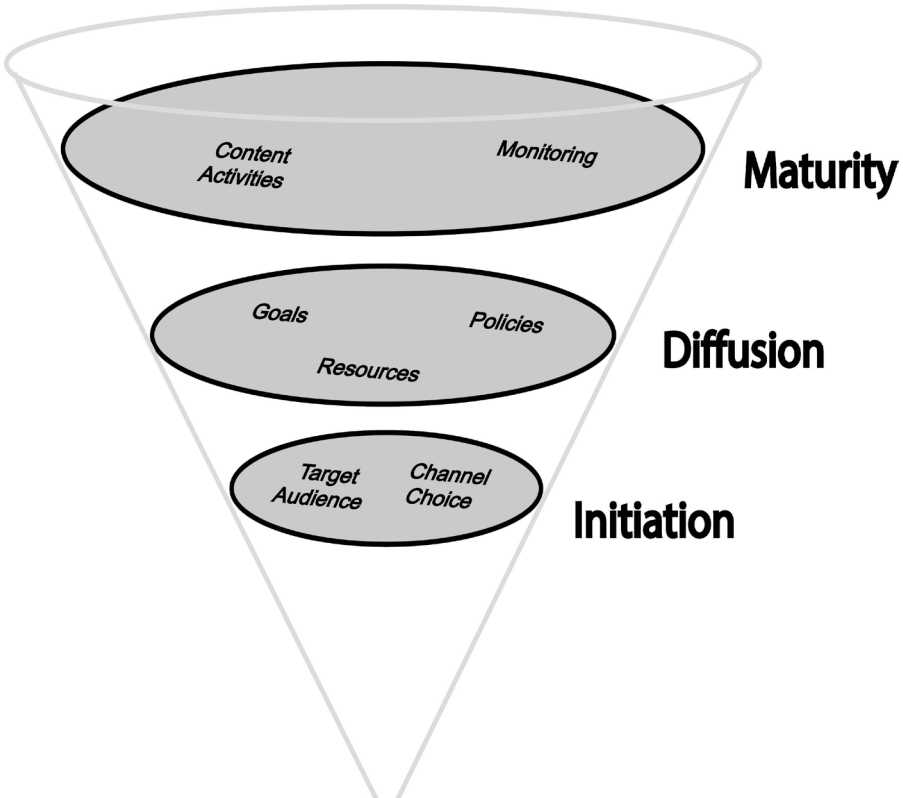
Theoretical Framework

Social Media Strategy Cone

Although social media activities are still emerging and there is a lack of attention to social media strategy in existing literature, studies show that the social media strategy cone framework is a critical tool towards evaluating organization use of social media strategy. Effing and Spil (2016) argue that the social media strategy cone provides an advantage in the evaluation of social media strategies, and also enables organizations to utilize any of the platforms to communicate their agendas to their target audiences. This theory contains three levels of social media maturity, including initiation, diffusion, and maturity. Each of these levels has different elements that influence the effectiveness of messaging on a company's social media campaigns. The model allows organizations to evaluate how a particular element is pivotal in reaching the target audience and influencing their use of a company's social media platforms. DiStaso and Mcorkindale (2013) posit that the social media strategy cone theory is premised on the idea that the use of social media is insufficient in achieving the desired organizational outcome. Thus, companies should adopt social media approaches that effectively support the execution of their activities.

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Figure 1. The social strategy cone



(Source: The social strategy cone: Towards a framework for evaluating social media strategies, p. 7)

The cone's hierarchical nature makes it an appropriate model to assess Air Arabia's social media strategies' implementation. The framework's division can facilitates the systematic stages undertaken by the company's social media team to promote its interests online via platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The framework cone categorizes small organizations at the bottom of the pyramid, representing the initiation stage. At this stage, the business is familiarizing itself with its target market, aiming to acquire a loyal clientele base, as well as determining the appropriate channels to reach them. Importantly, at this phase, the choice of the platform to utilize is critical to a company's capacity to gain a competitive advantage in the long run in regard to consumer engagement. As such, many companies at this stage chose Facebook as their preferred channel due to the platform's large subscriber base. Facebook is the most popular platform

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with about 2.9 billion users across the globe (Ang, 2021). However, each of these platforms appeals to a specific audience. For instance, Instagram is popular among young populations, whereas Twitter is widely used among business people. These factors should be considered when choosing the platform to use and should be driven by a company's target audience. Air Arabia, having been in the industry for a long time and has a strong presence on social media platforms, has passed the initiation stage.

The diffusion stage marks when companies implement policies, resources, and goals in their social media strategy. For Air Arabia, this phase entails incorporating the three elements in the social media plans and highlighting how these factors drive the value of their operations. The company should rely on these elements to analyze the performance of its social media strategy and assess how well consumers interact with the firm's message. The analysis will also reveal how many people visit the Air Arabia social media platforms.

At the maturity stage, companies utilize both monitoring and content activities to analyze their performance. Therefore, to comprehend the efficiency of Air Arabia's current strategy, the study will evaluate customers' interaction with the company's social media channels. The assessment will also analyze the potential impact of these interactions on consumers' perceptions towards its brand. Accordingly, success at this stage will be determined by the firm's capacity to maintain its brand image and apply social media strategies for business operations. Thus, the use of the social media cone in this study will highlight the effectiveness of Air Arabia's social media platforms to attract existing and potential clients.

Methodology

Content analysis facilitates the assessment and analysis of information to derive specific data insights. This approach follows a careful examination of a body of information and subsequent interpretation of the pinpointed patterns Berg (2007). This method is applied in the current study to analyze acquired data from various sources, including marketing reports from popular sites, including Air Arabia's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts. Considering that the airline commonly utilizes these platforms, the this research analyzes the major posts made by the airline, as well as evaluating the ones that attracted peak traffic in regards to interactions with its clients from January to November 2019.

The collected data is categorized thematically to assess, analyze, and understand the company's utility of its social media platforms. The study applied content analysis in the examination of Air Arabia's three main platforms. The

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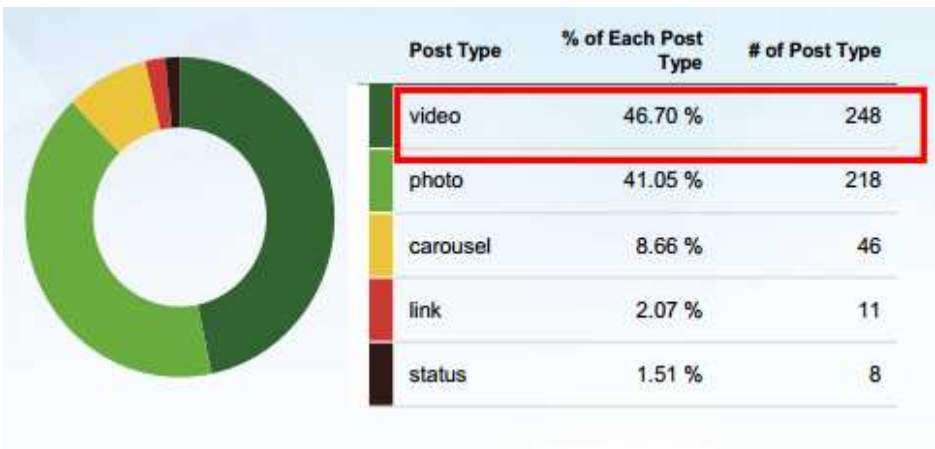
statistics provided by Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook were vital to investigating the airline's customer engagement. The channels provided relevant statistics regarding the impression that the company exhibits to its audience market through its social media posts, and the number of engagements formed.

Findings

The study found that Air Arabia uses different social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, to interact with customers. The results indicate that the airline preferred the three platforms as suitable avenues to communicate about critical issues affecting its operations. The company achieves this via unique posts, including pictures, carousel, links, and statuses. The culmination of the content from the three channels constituted a significant part of the whole thematic analysis. The gathered data indicated the emergence of the following themes regarding Air Arabia's utility of social media: The type of content used, the platform preferred, and the engagement with clients.

Content Types

Figure 2. Post Types



(Source: Air Arabia, p. 5)

Data analysis of Air Arabia's three social media channels showed that the airline preferred the utility of videos to other content forms in its online communications. The results indicated that 46% of the organization's social media interactions

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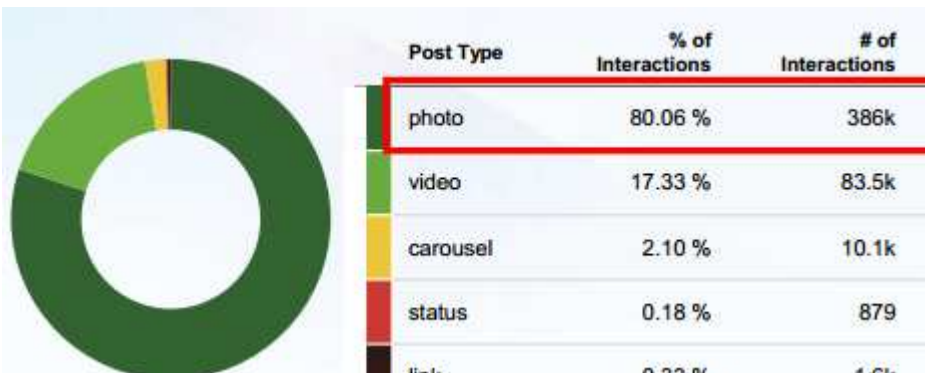
involved the use of videos, followed by images, carousels, and links and statuses respectively. Notably, the use of this medium was prevalent in its Instagram and Facebook accounts. The company's preference of videos is attributed to the content type's universality as communication and marketing tool, and its capacity to reach wider audiences regardless of language used. As such, airlines prefer the videos to effectively and clearly showcase their destinations since clients can judge the aesthetics of locations in a video ad even without understanding the language spoken. In employing the method, Air Arabia seeks to impact the behavior of its target consumer base by highlighting vides of various locations served by the airline, enabling it to recruit new customers via social media.

The use of pictures was the second preferred method prevalent in all three social media channels. Apart from displaying images of various destinations, images also allowed the airline to display accompanying messages in the form of captions, providing a double chance opportunity to communicate messages swiftly and efficiently. The last content type and the least used was text. Air Arabia's social media management team particularly utilizes short captions in their communication, whereby the posts are related to essential public announcements, or notice about changed flight schedules or various promotions.

Engagement

Air Arabia acknowledges the relevance of interactive company-consumer communication by utilizing engaging posts. This interactive approach enables increased interaction and allowing clients to share content.

Figure 3. Most Engaging Post Type

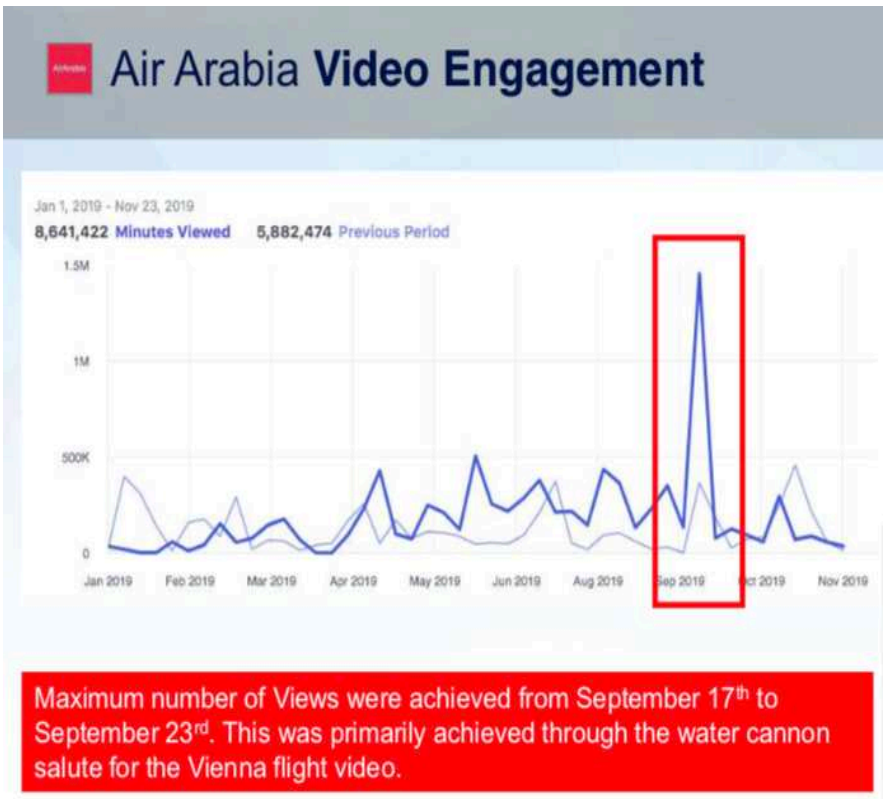


(Source: Air Arabia, p. 5)

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The findings showed that images generated the most customer engagement through features, including likes, shares, and comments. The results revealed that while the airline's three channels facilitated interactions with its clients, the use of images generated more conversations compared to videos, statuses, or links. Pictures shared across the airline's three social media channels generated an engagement of 80.06%, overshadowing that attracted by videos at 17.33%. Notably, the preference of pictures as suitable interaction tools stem from the content type's accessibility in regards to data consumption and time, whereby unlike photos, videos utilize more date for end-users to enjoy, explaining the higher level of consumer engagement using the former.

Fig 3.1: Graph showing Air Arabia's video engagement



(Source: Air Arabia, p. 7)

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The analysis found that Air Arabia's level of engagement via pictures is higher in its Facebook and Instagram pages. Importantly, Instagram had the highest engagement level because of the channel's dedication as a pictures and videos sharing application. On the other hand, videos attracted the second-highest amount of interactions. The low engagement levels were attributed to the variation of lengths and amount of data consumed to view the content type, making them accessible to a smaller number of users. Thus, suggestively, the high levels of interaction with pictures over video indicate a need for Air Arabia to increase its efforts to maintain the content type to reach a wider audience base.

Engagement across Platforms

The findings indicate that the airline managed to monitor its engagement with its target audience across various social media channels to gain a better understanding of the platforms' impact in improving consumers' connections with the company.

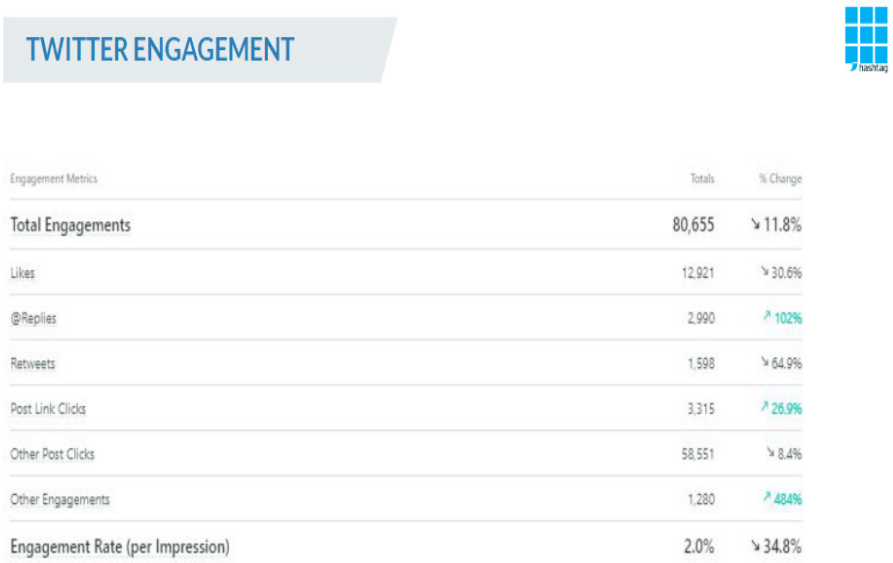
Figure 4. Engagement Metrics



(Source: Air Arabia, p. 2)

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Figure 5.1 Engagement Metrics (Twitter)

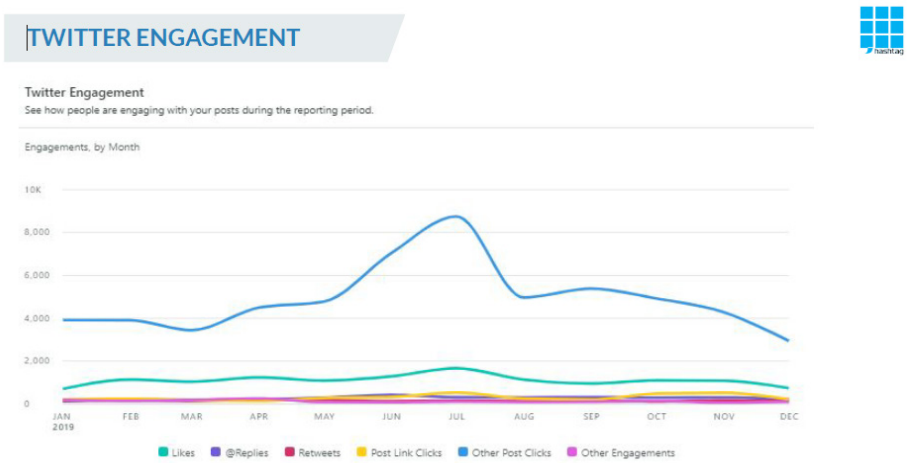


TWITTER ENGAGEMENT

Engagement Metrics	Totals	% Change
Total Engagements	80,655	↘ 11.8%
Likes	12,921	↘ 30.6%
@Replies	2,990	↗ 102%
Retweets	1,598	↘ 64.9%
Post Link Clicks	3,315	↗ 26.9%
Other Post Clicks	58,551	↘ 8.4%
Other Engagements	1,280	↗ 484%
Engagement Rate (per Impression)	2.0%	↘ 34.8%

(Source: Air Arabia)

Figure 5.2 Engagement Metrics (Twitter)



(Source: Air Arabia)

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Fig 5.3 User engagement and follower growth on Instagram



(Source: Air Arabia, p. 17)

The results showed that the airline's online communication has increased the organization's audience reach. However, the analysis revealed a variation in the level of outreach per channel. For example, Facebook has contributed to the increase in the company's fans at an average of over 330 persons a day since January to November 2019, culminating to over 108,180 fans by the end of the year, and 1,357,362 fans over the years. The platform's advantage results from a number of factors that make Air Arabia more successful. For instance, today, Facebook is the largest social media channel in the world with more than 2.7 billion registered users. The platform's versatility also allow users to post any type of messages, including statuses and links, making it a favorable tool to advance the company's brand promotion. Additionally, the channel utilizes artificial intelligence to target specific markets based on different companies' specifications, making it useful for airlines, such as Air Arabia. On the other hand, the engagement levels in both Instagram and Twitter are almost similar as the platforms allow users to share videos and photos or contact the airline to make inquiries regarding different issues addressed to customer care.

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Figure 6. Growth of Fans



(Source: Air Arabia, p. 3)

Notably, the findings indicated that the growth in fans resulted from a high number of followers in countries, including Egypt, UAE, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia. The company's Instagram number jumped from 98,697 in December 2018 to 156,000 in November 2019. With over 227,000 views and 66,000 engagements, the organizations has experienced a tremendous growth considering that the airline did not place direct ads on Instagram to influence users' viewership or engagement. While most of the frequent posts made on Instagram include videos and images, static posts, especially images received more engagement.

Figure 7. Top Instagram Posts



(Source: Air Arabia, p. 19)

A general observation of consumer behavior indicated exceptional performance by posts across the social media platforms. The airline effectively communicated with its clients through brand posts as analyzed through the number of shares, comments, and reactions. For instance, the post "Air Arabia souhaite tout le succès à l'équipe Nationale Tunisienne pour les 1⁄4 de finale" garnered an overwhelming engagement from customers with 24,300 interactions, 22,700 reactions, 778 comments, 799 shares, and 18.48 interactions per 1000 followers.

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Discussion

Social Networks and Air Arabia

Organizations today incorporate social media activities in their day-to-day operations. Leading organizational leaders currently rely on social media to communicate to clients and other stakeholders and advertise company products and services. The findings of this research show the direct impact of social networks on the achievement of Air Arabia's goals and objectives.

The study findings indicate that social media enable businesses to create content based on products and services they offer and share the information on company social networks pages. Relevant company's professionals run these sites and determine the information to share online and identify the market segment to be reached. For instance, Air Arabia's market segments include Europe, Morocco, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Experts analyze user visits of the company's social media sites from these markets, evaluate customers' feedback and comments, and contact dissatisfied clients with a solution for their problem. In other words, companies such as Air Arabia not only advertise their products and services but also enhance customer loyalty and improve competitive advantage. Reputation is another critical aspect that the company strives to protect by expanding its customer base and amassing a competitive edge over industry rivals. Therefore, Air Arabia protects its brand by evaluating all controversial situations with customers and resolving existing disputes.

The majority of Air Arabia's online customers use Facebook, thanks to many people who use the application. The airline relies on big data collected from the platform to analyze its consumer behavior and target a specific audience. Instagram is a critical application used as a tool to target customers likely to book tickets. The company uses the platform mainly to post existing products and services, as well as appeal to existing and potential clients to purchase tickets. Air Arabia boasts of significant success on this platform, whereby about 80% of its customers interact with business-related photos.

Many people are being connected to social media, giving businesses the opportunities to target social networking sites as the new platforms to reach clients and boost consumer relationships. Air Arabia captures this advantage, enabling the company to post creative commercials on their platforms to positively influence their target customers' decisions to utilize its services. The promotion of the company's products through distributed advertisements allows the airline to utilize social media to attract a broader customer base where the 'word of mouth' yields

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less significant results (Lee et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the level of performance enabled by the method depends on individual entrepreneurs' capability to utilize suitable communication approaches with their end-users. Air Arabia performs well on its social media platforms by effectively delivering messages and influencing people's decisions to purchase the products or services being advertised.

Customer Relations

Customer relations entail promoting customer satisfaction and enhancing loyalty. Its basic ideas involve controlling company communications with customers and resolving client disputes cordially. Social media is considered the modern tool in linking a company to its customers, creating a positive relationship with consumers, and enabling firms to reach potential customers (Kelly, 2010). Because of this significance, many organizations turn to social media networks to improve their interactions with existing and potential clients and notify customers of new products, services, events, or policies. The goal of these strategies is to boost the effectiveness of communication approaches and make customers feel valued, especially when they are the first people to be contacted about any changes in business orientation. Every modern company understands that a satisfied customer will remain loyal to the organization, recommend its products to friends and family members, and generate revenue for the company.

Air Arabia is one of the companies in the aviation industry that has tapped the power of social media users to improve its performance. This widespread use of such social media platforms as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter should be an incentive for Air Arabia to target customers and encourage them to participate in its product and service development. It begins with selecting the right social media channel that will enable the company to actively and effectively engage with existing and potential clients. Evidence suggests that organizations' communication effectiveness can be assessed by evaluating its online engagement through features, such as likes, posts, and followers (Knoblich et al., 2015). These elements provide critical insights regarding the efficiency of online presence. The use of social media channels allows the company to get involved with its audience, fostering customer loyalty and allegiance to its operations. Therefore, client engagement enables expansion and growth of organization's products and services by facilitating the development of brand attachment.

Effectiveness

Air Arabia airline utilizes social media channels to expand its audience reach

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and respond to its current consumers' concerns. Based on the analysis of the Social Media Cone theory, Air Arabia is at the mature stage of social media strategy. As such, the organization posts reviewed and appropriate online content. The organizations' improved online engagements across its social media channels indicate the success of its approaches in attracting new markets. The companies' online channels enable the promotion of its policies and advancement of its culture, allowing its users to familiarize themselves with its services. Nonetheless, the discrepancy concerning engagement levels between pictures and videos raises the inquiry of the most effective content type for Air Arabia. The evidence indicates that pictures are more positively received and explored compared to videos despite the popularity of video as suitable content types across the media channels. On account of the results, Air Arabia could boost its performance by increasing its picture posts on its social media platforms.

Conclusion and recommendations

This exploration investigated the extent to which Air Arabia's social media marketing strategies effectively communicate and enhance engagement with current and potential clients. Social media is one of the influential and virtual spaces that are used not only for virtual networking but also to advertise brands and products digitally. A company with a widespread customer base can easily tap the power of these tools to reach a large number of people within seconds and reduce costs that come with traditional advertising. The study shows that Air Arabia is not isolated in terms of exploring the potential of social media advertisements.

Many social media users spent a lot of time online on any of the existing social networking sites. Businesses can benefit by making the most out of these customer behaviors. A company can effectively use these platforms to reach out to the targeted audience, showcase its products or brand to potential customers, and feed customers the right information. These advantages have made businesses rely on social media to make the most out of their social media strategies and experience their performances through the clients' perspective.

The study had some limitations despite the researcher's attempt to demonstrate the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies for Air Arabia Airlines. First, Air Arabia cited strict confidential regulations that made it difficult to access the airline's sensitive information, especially data on the company's social media management operations. Because the competition for the attention of social media users has significantly increased among businesses, it would have been critical to gain executives' opinion on how they counter this challenge and put Air Arabia

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above its rivals in the industry (Hovstad, 2018). Therefore, future studies should incorporate their valuable insights into the assessment of the effectiveness of various social media marketing strategies for the company.

Online presence on any social media forums is a necessary way for any business to interact with its audience and connect with consumers on a personal level. Although Air Arabia has achieved this functionality of social media platforms, it still needs to improve its marketing approach, client engagement, and customer retention. First, the airline should leverage the potential of social media influencers such as sports icons, movie stars, and pop artists to expand its reach. Many airlines that have leveraged services of international celebrities have recorded significant performance in terms of brand promotion, increased revenue, and brand loyalty. Air Arabia could utilize brand advocates, especially its existing clients and workers to spread awareness concerning its services and products. Positive reviews from its customers will be vital to promoting its brand since buyers rely on previous clients' experiences to determine whether to make a purchase. Besides, brand ambassadors could reduce the traditional advertising costs for the airline. Second, the airline should create a fan base to increase customer loyalty. Fans can easily transmit information about the airline's services, make inquiries regarding Air Arabia's market performance, provide feedback concerning its services, and share different opinions collected with the company. Such data can be used to design customer-targeted content, monitor various marketing strategies, and develop efficient marketing plans for different market segments. However, it will be difficult for the company to achieve this feat without engaging content specialists who can create quality content, post it at the right time, and monitor online reactions. This approach will ensure that customers are engaged with Air Arabia's social media platforms all the time and purchase the company services.

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مدى تأثير استراتيجيات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على تواصل شركات الطيران مع العملاء في العربية للطيران

فاطمة قمبر المازمي[1]

بوزيان زايد[2]

ملخص البحث:

تلجأ العديد من الشركات العالمية لاستخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي كأدوات تسويقية عصرية فعّالة تمكّنها من الوصول لأكبر شريحة ممكنة من الجمهور المستهدف. وتعد «العربية للطيران» من الشركات الرائدة التي تعزّزت خبرتها في هذا المجال للتواصل والتفاعل مع عملائها. ويقّيم هذا البحث دور منصّات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في قنوات الاتصال الفعّال للعربية للطيران وكذلك تفاعل الجمهور والعملاء معها. وتهدف الدراسة إلى تحديد استراتيجية التسويق الرقمي للعربية للطيران وكذلك تحليل تجربة المستخدمين على منصاتها، الأمر الذي يسهم في تمكينها من وضع الخطط الاستراتيجية المناسبة للتسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي سواء للعملاء الحاليين أو المحتملين. وقد تم تحليل البيانات بشكل ممنهج من خلال تقارير حسابات العربية للطيران على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي بما فيها تويتر، وفيسبوك، وإنستغرام للفترة ما بين يناير وحتى نوفمبر من عام 2019.

لقد أظهرت النتائج أن الجدوى الاستراتيجية لاستخدام العربية للطيران لوسائل التواصل الاجتماعي منحها ميزة تنافسية على مثيلاتها، لا سيما أنه أصبح لدى موظّفيها قناعة واعتقاد بأنّ التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ساهم في زيادة إيرادات الشركة. ومن جهة أخرى، تشير النتائج إلى أنه على الرغم من هذه الميزة، إلا أنه لا تزال الشركة بحاجة إلى تحسين أداء استراتيجيتها الخاصة بوسائل التواصل الاجتماعي بما في ذلك نهج التسويق، والمشاركة، وولاء العملاء.

الكلمات الدالة: العربية للطيران، شركات الطيران، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، استراتيجيات التسويق.

(1) كلية الاتصال - جامعة الشارقة (الشارقة - الإمارات العربية المتحدة)

u17105647@sharjah.ac.ae

(2) كلية الاتصال - جامعة الشارقة (الشارقة - الإمارات العربية المتحدة)

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