

From Physical to Virtual Spaces: Business Marketing in the Era of Social Media amongst the Filipino Entrepreneurs in Qatar, A Phenomenology

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Abstract—Background: The use of social media is the current and modern way of life that many people use today. With a large and growing population that uses social media platforms, many businesses in Qatar have taken the opportunity to make use of social media and advertise their business by transitioning to the online market. This study mainly focuses on attaining a complete comprehension of the changes in using social media platforms for Filipino entrepreneurs in promoting their business. **Method:** This qualitative research utilized a phenomenological design to discover the lived experiences of Filipino entrepreneurs in Qatar as they are transitioning to the online platforms of social media relative to the central question, "How do Filipino entrepreneurs manage self-promotion of their business with regard to social media advertising?" The data were gathered through a forty-six semi-structured interview and were analyzed using an inductive approach in theme development. **Findings:** This study shows that there are different aspects that affect the business marketing strategy which are expressed in the themes: Social Sophistication, Digital Connection, and Economic Expansion. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that the business owners are able to adapt and step into an unfamiliar field to ensure the longevity of their business.

Index Terms—Social Media, Qualitative, Entrepreneurs, Qatar, Online Market, Online Platform

I. INTRODUCTION

A successful entrepreneur always has a strong sense of self-confidence and a healthy opinion of their skills and abilities. "Their personality is assertive and strong. They are always focused and do not really dilly dally with the issues at hand. This is what makes them different from the rest (Groco, 2019)." Entrepreneurs always seek a fortune as they progress their everyday life and will take every possible opportunity for their business to thrive. With the current technology,

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many people have been heavily influenced by the internet and social media and have become a part of their daily routine. "In little more than a decade, the impact of social media has gone from being an entertaining extra to a fully integrated part of nearly every aspect of daily life for many (Wharton University of Pennsylvania, 2019)."

Qatar's Filipino entrepreneurs, the thriving immigrants, represent hard work and courage in opening a business in a foreign country. According to Business Inquirer (2012), Manny Aligada stated that "Filipino entrepreneurs provide so much to the country's economy and provide livelihood to most of our workforce." Filipino entrepreneurs use their experience as a way for them to make decisions for their business. They are passionate in their business and they make sure that their products and services are able to meet their customers' wants.

Filipino entrepreneurs have used different strategies in order to promote their business. This includes the use of the internet when it was developed creating the idea of e-commerce. E-commerce dates back to the development of the internet. During this time, the internet was already opened for commercial use. Since then, with the different business owners using the internet, e-commerce has spread worldwide quickly.

Alongside e-commerce is Social media. "In this contemporary time, it has become the gateway of information. And for businesses it represents a marketing opportunity that transcends the traditional middleman and connects companies directly with customers (Neti, 2011)." "The rapid growth of E-commerce and social media has changed the nature of human activities, habitats, and interactions. Real-world social relationships have now moved to the virtual world, creating online communities that bring people together from all over the world (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014)."

"Digital connection is what brings people into e-commerce. It is vital for economic expansion as Digital commerce, as it is commonly called, is essential for everything related to product promotion, pricing, analytics, customer acquisition and retention, content development (Henery, 2020)." As everyone is connected by our phones and everyone is related to one another, it builds awareness to the industry that one business is growing and it's presence is getting the recognition that they receive through customer feedback and reviews. "The customers are essential in building a social sophistication that will be applied to the business that is thriving and surviving this industry, customer feedback is paramount when determining a customer's needs and tastes,

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particularly when a business introduces new products (Suttle, 2017).” Customer relation and attention helps the business to achieve short-term goals that also turn into long-term goals, while increasing the marketability of the products of the business.

Buying and selling around the world is becoming more prominent and as businesses go deeper into this technology era, usage of various resources to be more convenient in selling are one of the ways to be more proficient. “One of the resources is social media, social media networks as the conversation channels of the future (Maxey, 2014).” Small businesses alike use social media as a medium to showcase products and gain more customers. “Among the small businesses 20 out of 27 uses Facebook as their main social media site (He et al., 2015).” Social media platforms serve as an opportunity for businesses to expand and grow while gaining more profit along the way.

In addition, consumers not only buy products but they also market them. “This is done by leaving reviews on online forums and social communities, and by word of mouth. The consumers would often share about the product quality, price, reliability, ease of use, and warranty claim procedures (Javed, 2013).” The use of social media has increased the capabilities a business can achieve which was very difficult compared to real life. It provided many ways for people to connect and become more aware of businesses as well as being able to track the current status of the business.

This research paper brings insight about the strategies and struggles of Filipino entrepreneurs in Qatar when it comes to the promotion of their business in different social media platforms. During this digital age, there are a lot of people who are using social media, which is why this research is relevant to give people more insight when it comes to the social media aspect in running a business. The study utilized a qualitative research design and phenomenological method to obtain results. The main reason is to have a profound understanding of the use of social media to the way of life of people, specifically Filipino entrepreneurs. The researchers utilized a semi-structured interview. “The respondents were given copies of the robotfoto before the actual interviews (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Garcia & Acosta, 2016).” This includes information about the demographics of the participants such as their name, gender, civil status, age, educational attainment, and occupation in their business.

Filipino entrepreneurs in Qatar have experienced different strategies that they use in taking their business to the social media market. They identify which social media platform has a lot of their target market, for example Facebook. “It is the most popular social media platform with the highest number of users (Beig, & Khan, 2018).” From there, they start creating ideas on what content material they should use that will relate to the preferences of their target market. They also rely on customer feedback. With the use of the comments section, they are able to find out the feedback of their customers in terms of their product or service quality, price, reliability, and others.

In addition, Filipino entrepreneurs also experience struggles in the social media market. One of which is the haters. “Hate speech has been an active research area in the sociology community. With the development of the internet and social media platforms, a recent study from UNESCO reviews the growing problem of hate speech in social networks (Mondal, Silva, & Benevenuto, 2017).” How they deal with them is by ignoring and still being respectful to what the hater had said. Some of their loyal customers would reply to the hater and help defend their company.

The study’s themes, together with their sub-themes are 1. social sophistication, 2. emotional foundation, 3. economic expansion, and 4. digital connection. Social sophistication talks about the interactions and the factors that influenced the company to utilize social media such as getting customer support, as well as how customer feedback inspires the improvement of the company. This also talks about the customers' awareness of the company and their products and services. Economic expansion focuses on the changes a business has obtained from using social media platforms, as well as talks about how long it took for the company to achieve their initial goals and the widening of their target market. It also talks about how being in the digital age makes it easier for them to use social media platforms when promoting their business. Lastly, digital connection is focused on the factors that became the reason why businesses started trying online platforms and it talks about the company’s online exposure and how they are able to reach out to more people through the social media platforms. These help the company gain more followers, and connections and opportunities for them to gain profit.

II. METHOD

A. Research Design

The study focuses on the lived experience of Filipino entrepreneurs. The researchers took a qualitative and phenomenological approach towards gathering the data used for the study. According to The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2013) “Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from a first-person point of view”. The phenomenological research aims to understand the experiences of Filipino entrepreneurs and how they transitioned their physical business onto the online market. The aim of a qualitative approach is to investigate and discover meaning or to build an understanding through empirical study. (Ren, 2016). Taking into consideration the different backgrounds of the chosen participants

B. Research locus and Sample

The use of qualitative research was used in this study thus settling for a small sample size of only seven (7) respondents. The participants in this study are Filipino entrepreneurs who are undergoing a transition to the online platform. When selected we considered their business industry, years of operation, educational attainment and which social media platform they are utilizing. This study was conducted at Philippine School Doha (PSD). Founded in 1992, Philippine School Doha is a learning institution renowned for its support by the Philippine community. Famous for its achievements and quality standard of education resulting in Philippine

School Doha being one of the leading Philippine schools in the Middle-East.

C. Data Collection and Ethical Consideration

The data that was used in the study were gathered with a robofoto which refers to the personal information of the participant. Included are data such as the name, gender, birth year, civil status, occupation, contact information, educational attainment, business industry, business name, and years of operation. This qualifies the participants in undertaking the research proper, which was followed by a forty-six (46) question semi-structured interview that guided the overall collection of necessary data for the study. With the use of the robofoto and interview, the researchers were able to get an in-depth understanding of the different experiences of Filipino entrepreneurs. In terms of confidentiality, the participants were given a consent letter before the interview proper that stated all the information needed for their participation and the researchers coordinated with the participants on when and where the interview proper will take place to consider the convenience of the task to the participant. This allows the researchers to attain the necessary and get accurate responses. The interview was done through an online platform for ease of communication between respondents and researchers. This allows the safety of both parties.

D. Data Analysis

The researchers' procedure of analyzing the collected data was; (1) through listening and re-listening fully comprehend and understand the main ideas of the respondents' responses'; (2) transcribing the date that was collected verbatimly through recording; "It created meanings from an event from the perspective of those who had experienced it" (Creswell, 2007; as cited by Jahangir et al., 2018); (3) Transforming the emic transcription into an etic transcription through the understanding of the researchers on the responses of the respondents; (4) organize the eticized data into categories and placing them into clusters to form four main groups via dendrogram; a dendrogram is a "two-dimensional diagram representing a tree of relationships, whatever their nature." (Caliński, 2014) (5) visualize the themes through a simulacrum; (6) To ensure the credibility of the study the researchers must undergo a member-checking and triangulation procedure.

III. RESULTS

This phenomenological study describes the utilization of social media amongst Filipino entrepreneurs to market their business to further expand their audience and earn more profit, relative to the central question "How do Filipino entrepreneurs manage self-promotion of their business with regard to social media advertising?". Based on the responses we have received; we are able to make note of three factors that contribute to usage of social media for business operations. As technology has greatly influenced the lifestyle of our current era, business marketing has further extended its role through social media to communicate and greatly improve customer reach and company expansion. Due to the increasing popularity of the use of social media, this set challenges for companies that are migrating from the

traditional physical business. *Social Sophistication*, an indicator that represents the appeal of the business towards society as a whole with the use of modern technology. *Economic Expansion* encompasses the effects of social media for commercial use and widen the range of potential customers. *Digital Connection*, a factor related to the modern technological use of communication and selling of business products and services through social media interaction. These three contributive factors of using social media directly leads and affects the decision-making of Filipino entrepreneurs as they operate their business.

Figure 3 shows the simulacrum centering on four major themes: social sophistication, digital connection, and economic expansion with three corresponding sub-themes under each subject. These highlights the transitional knowledge and experiences of Filipino entrepreneurs in establishing a social media identity for their business and its



Figure 3: Simulacrum

given challenges. Furthermore, these portray the interconnected adaptations and actualizations of entering a new environment in various aspects of social media.

SOCIAL SOPHISTICATION

Social sophistication is the ability to be aware of the current trends in social media for them to interact and be more relatable with their customers. Being in line with what is trending, businesses with improved facilities and more refined use of technology can gain customer support as people prefer businesses that are able to appeal and satisfy customers as indicated by the respondents:

"We use them as an inspiration to continue what we are doing. If the feedback is good then we are inspired to do better continuously. If the feedback is bad, we will also make this an inspiration to improve our services." (R3)

"I deal with it by analyzing what's on trend right now, what can be sold, what will be of interest to my customers. Social

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media is a constant move and every trend comes in and out I analyze what my customers buy more of and what buy less of.” (R5)

Having developed an in-depth relationship between entrepreneurs and customers allows them to gain inspiration to make their business better. This also brings business inspiration to a more accommodating and relatable business, wherein customers will want to visit or purchase from. Businesses are always prone to have competitors which leads them to plan and find the most ideal decision that can improve their capabilities and decrease their weaknesses as stated by the respondent:

“I will use the presence of my competitors to my advantage by knowing their weaknesses and strengths, I can apply their strengths and avoid their weaknesses in my business.” (R5)

By being knowledgeable with what the competitors are doing, Filipino entrepreneurs use this as a guide for them to improve their business. This contributes to applicable improvement and helps them to find out which strategies would work for their target market. The positive outlook of Filipino entrepreneurs is a large contributor that showcases the company's tenacity to operate in society.

“I'm always looking at the things that are lacking in my competitors so I take that to my advantage and present it to the society and to show the people that I have something that my competitors do not have.” (R4)

Hence, observing the competition is one way for Filipino entrepreneurs to improve their business as it assists companies to evolve and make changes to create a better version of their business. They monitor what their competitors are doing and lacking in terms of marketing, and use that to their advantage to gain an edge. The Filipino entrepreneurs will use this to their advantage to show their target market that their business is different from their competitors.

Somehow, emotional foundation is built from social sophistication which covers the feelings and sentiments after expanding to the online market of social media which encourages a positive business mindset and increase of company position, and recognition of identity to the public.

ECONOMIC EXPANSION

Economic expansion is the utilization of social media which boosts engagement, ease of reach, and achievement of goals. Entrepreneurs are obliged to use tools that are available to the consumers leading to increased marketability as expressed by the respondents:

“It is eye-opening for me because I have reached more customers with social media marketing my products rather than the conventional way of marketing.” (R2)

“My business is based on social media and social media is the easiest way to reach people and promote my business to others.” (R5)

However, there are challenges in trying to grow one's market which has been voiced by R6: *“The most challenging for us is YouTube because it's a video. You need to create content that will engage people to watch it because on a video if the first five seconds don't interest them, then they wouldn't bother finishing the rest of it. You need to have creative content to encourage the viewers to watch the entire video”.*

Given the context, the use of social media networks (SNS) is of great help to introduce products as well as services to consumers but poses problems in keeping the interest and attention of the market. Social media has become the latest communication medium as it leads to easier connection and does not take a lot of time to start because of its short-term attainability which provides businesses an opportunity to reach larger profit and target markets in a quick time span according to the response of the respondents:

“Not much, it's just that everything is easier when we're having walk-in sales. Before, we were trying to promote sales activities, now everything is easier. The changes became easier because before when we were trying to promote our products and services...” (R3)

“Because knowing the fact that social media is the best avenue for reaching people. Again what are my expectations that I established before considering social media in promoting my business...” (R4)

Derived from the previous statements, there is an easier showcase of products and services to customers along with fewer time constraints being established upon practicing the use of social media for advertisements while being not too difficult to learn as they proceed. This easy coverage of advertisements allows entrepreneurs to promote themselves with ease given the various platforms' cost-effective adjustability.

“I will avail paid advertisement offered by these platforms which helps me boost the product that I want to highlight and eventually customers will avail and it will generate my income.” (R1)

“In the online market, you don't need to set a lot of expectations because all your target market is very easy to reach. It is so simple once you do it to everybody that you are targeting. Because simple as that, if you want to reach them then go online and you will reach your target market, you will be able to sell your products.” (R3)

Pertaining to the given information, marketing through social media applications is manageable and not too complicated for entrepreneurs to adapt to as they operate their business.

DIGITAL CONNECTION

When using social media or the internet, the sole purpose is to communicate and provide information to other people without directly speaking to them. A connection is a relation between two people or things and the use of social media platforms allows its users to tap into the digital world. Thus,

Digital Connection is the application of social media to communicate and promote products online, gain recognition from long distances, and advertise the business through the internet. Entrepreneurs maximize online exposure through online platforms to sell their products and services which leads to internet awareness as using the internet is the norm especially in today's era as mentioned by the respondent:

"People throughout the world, not just in Qatar, are using Instagram and Facebook every day. Most of the time people are on Facebook and Instagram, so might as well use the platforms so that our business is being advertised..." (R6)

Consequently, having a connection to online communities widens the potential target market for businesses and correlates with the people through social media. Businesses that have expanded online were able to assimilate the fast connection of social media to a wider audience resulting to a larger presence recognition of the business to the public demonstrating company awareness as proclaimed by the respondent:

"It affected us a lot because FlaminGo is a startup business. We only started last year but with the use of those social media platforms and marketing strategies, FlaminGo became well known not only throughout Doha but also throughout Qatar..." (R6)

"People love to look at their social media, they tend to find out that this business exists." (R7)

A large general population of people in Qatar and around many different places as distance communication is easily being applied as they traverse through the internet.

With technology being used every day, social media is no different as its network popularity became a norm not only to society but to the business world as well.

"Social media is a platform that everyone uses nowadays so it was not hard to make a decision on utilizing social media into my business." (R5)

"Social media is one of the best tools that you can use in advertising your business because it can easily catch the attention of the customers." (R7)

This explains that the various platforms of social media create a larger network that connects to everyone and assists in the advertisement of businesses to prospective customers seeking for products and services.

Certainly, social sophistication, economic expansion, and digital connection are all necessary factors that contribute to businesses being able to manage self-promotion through social media. These aspects influence the business industry with new possible opportunities for online business activities and eventually affect the company's position as a whole.

IV. DISCUSSION

Determining the perspectives of Filipino entrepreneurs who have performed the process of utilizing social media to promote their business to the online setting, this phenomenological study accentuates their overall comprehension of what they experience daily, which results in the development of the company that produces greater conditions and operational capabilities for the business. Social Sophistication involves their representation to society through its alignment with modern technology. Meanwhile, Economic Expansion displays the different benefits that boost their commercial activities. Digital Connection shows the implementation of social media and the internet to enhance communication for the business. Operating on the online market, entrepreneurs progress under the influence to produce more profit and gain exposure for their products and services

1. Social Sophistication

1.1. Customer Support

Support is one of the main functions to gaining and maintaining loyalty. Thus, customer support has become an important channel in a business by having that in-depth understanding between entrepreneurs and their customers. When customer support is encouraged, notable changes can be observed in the business (Sheth, J., Jain, V., & Ambika, A., 2020). When businesses socialize with their customers, this creates a profound effect on market decision-making and thus marketing strategy (Opreana, A., & Vinerean, S., 2015). Nuseir, M. T. (2016) stated that, for entrepreneurs to gain customer loyalty, they utilize social media to promote their business. This helps them personalize what marketing strategy works for their target market. In line with this, by focusing on their marketing strategy, the business gains the attention of previous and current customers encouraging them to keep purchasing from the business. Erdoğan, İ. E., & Cicek, M., (2012) mentioned that, by identifying which social media platforms to utilize, the customer's loyalty with the brand is affected, as customers are inclined to find a variety and different ways when it comes to engaging with the brand. Along with this, distinguishing what contents to share peaks the customers' interest in what the business provides. According to Freedman, M. (2022), gaining the loyalty of the customers makes them become the business' focus group. They take the time to share their thoughts with the business if they think that it can help. These loyal customers respond to surveys posted by the business with the hope that their submissions will help the business, because they want the business to keep going.

1.2. Business Inspiration

Businesses are in a never ending journey of finding what customers want and deliver it to them accurately in order to meet expectations. According to Soni, R. (2021), in order to achieve those expectations, businesses need to build a good relationship with their customers. This means seeking and acknowledging the feedback the business receives from the customers. This will result in continuous improvisation in order to understand how the customers' needs will be satisfied. In a different perspective, businesses who are responsive and understanding to their employees results in

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better customer service. This will decrease the agitation of customers and build on their loyalty towards the business. The business would then benefit from it by receiving customer feedback regarding the product or service the business provides (Taylor, M., 2014). Dragilev, D. (2021) stated that building a good relationship with customers increases sales, and delivers vital marketing for the business. When a business maintains a customer relationship alive, they will become the first option the customer seeks once they purchase a product or service again. With regards to the first statement, customers become a vital part of marketing the business. This occurs because of the proper customer relationship and service, which results in the customers putting in a good word about the business toward the people they know. In relation to, feedback from the customers provide critical observation about the business helping them in identifying what is working and not in terms of marketing. It is important to discover what works for the business' target market, and what they dislike and understand why it came to that result (Perzynska, K., 2021). In contradiction to, Trivette, H. (2019) stated that, negative feedbacks are arguably the most important kind of feedback. This kind of feedback allows the opportunity to grow and adapt the business to cater to the customers. It is stated that it's best to view negative feedback as an invitation about what the business could do better and to prevent similar events from happening.

1.3. Applicable Movement

Successful entrepreneurs view their competitors as an opportunity to improve their business. Competitors help raise self-awareness in a business, and guide entrepreneurs to realize their own strengths and weaknesses (Kittaneh, F., 2015). Furthermore, if an entrepreneur has a rival business who's competing for the same market, they will be encouraged to stand out and gain a lead authority in the industry. Once they establish a lead in the industry, their customers will be inclined to choose their products and commend the entrepreneur's leadership for being able to direct customers to their business (Rangwala, M., 2017). If there is competition, under the same industry, it motivates them to think about what they can learn from what their competitors are lacking (Galiano, V., 5015). To add to that, entrepreneurs will analyze what strategies are working for their competitors and what aren't. This will help them identify which of their own strategies is advantageous for their business (Stambaugh, L., 2018). On the other hand, according to Drakes, J. (n.d.), competition drives entrepreneurs out of their comfort zone by being resourceful and creative when it comes to gaining an edge in the industry. Being in a competitive market forces the entrepreneurs to try and be the very best amongst other businesses. Entrepreneurs who are able to counter changes quickly will stay ahead of their competitors.

2. Economic Expansion

2.1. Increased Marketability

Marketability refers to the attractiveness and the appeal to potential customers. In every business, being able to achieve increased marketability is a beneficial dynamic that can help with the company's overall position in terms of profit. Pinheiro et. al. (2014) revealed that the second generation of

Internet-based applications enhances marketing efforts by allowing firms to implement innovative forms of communication and co-create content with their customers. Firms' digital marketing engagement can be categorized according to perceived benefits and digital marketing usage. To improve digital marketing engagement, marketers must focus on relationship-based interactions with their customers. Technology is becoming more relevant as many people have made use of their computers and smartphones to easily access information through social media platforms which also creates an opportunity for the consumer and business market when it comes to promoting their products and services.

Thereafter, the utilization of social media and the Internet has profoundly altered the customer decision-making process. Marketers used to assume that consumers began with a huge number of prospective brands in mind and gradually restricted their options until they found one they wanted to buy. Consumer engagements with brands were generally focused on the usage of the product or service after purchase (Husein et al. 2016). The market has now begun to change with the emergence of the internet as it leads to more users gaining access to different products as long as they can search for it.

Into the bargain, Marketing Insider Group (2021) mentioned it doesn't matter if you run a small local shop or a big national company. Social media is more than just a trend. It is an essential piece of your business marketing strategy.

But by itself, social media is not enough to drive business growth. Social platforms can help you connect with your customers, increase awareness about your brand, and boost your leads and sales. But you need to start with an always-on mindset and a solid content marketing strategy.

2.2. Short-term Attainability

There are many types of goals and objectives and they can be categorized into short-term or long term attainability. Businesses measure the effectiveness of their plan by looking if the goals that they set in mind are in line with the allotted amount of money and time by using social media platforms and other forms of media. According to Alisson (2013), short-term goals are specific objectives that your company aims to reach over several weeks or months, and no more than one year. Your short-term goals are smaller, subsets of goals that you set in order to achieve your long-term goal.

They should be easily obtainable, and easily measurable so that you can evaluate your progress towards the long-term goals. Gaines, T. (2021) stated that one of the most important ways to establish a business is through branding. In order to build that brand, the business must build on its online recognition. By creating branded contents, it will help connect to the customers the message that the business wants to relay. To continue, using social media consistently by posting regularly and to present a way for customers to engage with the business can help increase the brand awareness of a product or service resulting in an increase of market.

According to Griffin, T. (2022), social media is a tool that enables a business to learn about their target market. By taking the time to learn what social media platforms their audience mostly use, the easier it will be for them to personalize their marketing strategy. Social media, with the right strategies, can help grow a business in a short amount of time. By having that practice of consistency in posting and interacting with the customers, it becomes easy for the business to create their own reputation toward their audience.

2.3. Cost-Effective Adjustability

The use of social media is important especially to small business owners, this is a small way in order to grow their business and help the community find them through social media. It is also a great way to cut expenses to traditional marketing such as printing papers and handing it out. Dihn, T. et. al. (2013) cited that online social networks (OSNs) have become one of the most effective channels for marketing and advertising. Since users are often influenced by their friends, “word-of-mouth” exchanges, so-called viral marketing, in social networks can be used to increase product adoption or widely spread content over the network. The common perception of viral marketing about being cheap, easy, and massively effective makes it an ideal replacement of traditional advertising. Moreover, Frandsen et al. (2016) expressed that compared with traditional recruitment strategies such as print media, social media advertising has been shown to be favorable in terms of its reach (especially with hard-to-reach populations), cost-effectiveness, and usability. This new alternative for traditional marketing is more effective in spreading out the products while also being cheaper. Today marketing is more strategic, more effective, and in turn, cheaper. You’re also able to overlook the statistics and data, which makes the investment into social media much more valuable. Though you can pay for some advertising features, like on Facebook, social media is free. You can target those advertisements to reach people within a certain radius of your business. That means you don’t end up paying for advertising outside of your local customer base (Blakely, 2017).

A good example of this is cited by Granicus Marketing (n.d.), by using social media, USTDA is taking every opportunity to increase awareness of trade and development opportunities in a way that drives changes in behavior and inspires action. Doing so connects U.S. industry with business opportunities abroad and leads to sustainable development in our partner countries. We are proud of the progress we have made and we will continue using our online platforms as tools to attract new followers and publicize development opportunities for U.S. companies.

Furthermore, businesses are always trying new ways in order to lessen their expenses specifically in marketing without losing their customers and being efficient.

3. Digital Connection

3.1. Online Exposure

This study brings up the various reasons why Social media marketing may play a big role in the growth of a business. Facebook advertising offers users or consumers the

opportunity to interact actively with the adverts on their page allowing them to “like” and “share” and also view who else or which friends liked or shared the same adverts. According to some research, social media such as Facebook act as a check on the credibility of brands. (Dehghani, Tumer, 2015). Stephen (2016) Realized that using the internet, social media, mobile apps, and other digital communication technologies has become part of billions of people’s daily lives. On the other hand, Unlike traditional advertising media, social media affords new opportunities as well as challenges for marketers. (Zhu, Chen, 2021). Voorveld, Noort, Muntinga and, Bronner (2018) stated that it allowed people to correspond with others, to do or share something with others, and to be quickly informed and up to date. These techniques are believed and proved can make the store famous, gain many followers and have more transactions in a quite easy way and low cost. (Suciati, 2018). Being able to know the reasons behind transitioning and knowing your goals allow you to use this as a foundation to start growing.

3.2. Company Awareness

Furthermore, not only setting goals from the transition but also knowing various strategies that one must use to maximize the use of the platform. The service experience is also important, as various social media platforms can promote knowledge of the service and brand. Specifically, no significant money is invested with social media channels, but this marketing strategy can be important for startups, as value co-creation with users is an expected benefit. (Jim, Choi, 2019) Latiff, and Safiee (2015) said that the fact that Instagram has the ability to attract a bunch of famous people to set up their own account has become an advantage to these business sellers. The sellers then will engage all these famous Instagrammers to help them to advertise their product with a minimal fee. Social media can be useful for creating connections with those who might not otherwise know about the items or support or what the companies represent. (Sl, 2016). Additionally, as time passes, disruptions in society cause an orthodoxy to lose traction. Consumers begin searching for alternatives, which opens up an opportunity for innovative brands to push forward a new ideology in their categories. (Holt, 2016). Being able to utilize the platform to its fullest potential and the strategies that bring us there go hand in hand.

3.3. Network Popularity

Ultimately, being able to tap a market that is not easily available from conventional forms of advertising. reaching out to a wider audience allows the business to gain customers and generate money from business operations. Best practices for brand posts to increase their popularity suggests that posts should be vivid, practical, interesting, personalized, and interactive. (Lin, Swarna, Bruning, 2017). Similarly, Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) discovered that all interviewed managers consider social media as the fastest internet trend that continuously gains popularity among people. Thus, trying to keep up with the technologic. Sponsored Stories allow advertisers to reach a much more targeted audience, and accompany the message with the human capital value of users. Audience labor here involves constructing segmented channels and targeted audiences, and mobilizing human capital to promote a brand or product.

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(Fisher, 2014). Creating opportunities from these forms of capturing the market it is evident that these strategies offer a wider and broader market to reach and increase the name that the business has built on these platforms.

V. CONCLUSION

This research has laid the groundwork from which future research may be built. The apparent and determined reality in the lived-experience of Filipino entrepreneurs in the use of social media demonstrates that the introduction of social media is a breakthrough in business as a gateway in marketing to a wider and greater market. Social media is a collective hub where users may post, share, create, and transact. This serves as a platform to connect users to each other as a virtual meeting place of people with differing or similar interests. The Filipino entrepreneurs have imposed various strategies in utilizing the platform in distinguishing themselves from their competitors in an effort to tap a market that was out of reach from conventional marketing. Primarily the use of social media is advertisement but also a form of virtual space for commerce and transaction. If they are able to solidify their position virtually, they can utilize their position in generating greater inflow and accumulating a bigger market. It is evident that although social media has its advantages, it also has its shortcomings as any user without warning may post conflicting ideas from the business owners and this may cause other users to turn away or neglect the business as a whole. The Filipino entrepreneurs' ability to cope and adapt to various hurdles can hone and sharpen their ability to utilize the platform as a tool to benefit the business.

This study aims to create encapsulation on the contributing factors of transitioning from physical to virtual spaces by Filipino entrepreneurs in Qatar. Social Sophistication, Digital Connection, Economic expansion and, Emotional Foundation have been factors in the utilization of social media as a form of generating inflow and creating virtual spaces as a form of e-commerce. Within the factor of social sophistication is being able to create bonds with customers that allows the business to determine its goals and grow towards it. Digital Connection helps in familiarizing themselves in the vast space of the internet and gaining the exposure that boosts the business' popularity. Lastly, Economic expansion demonstrates the gains that entrepreneurs can acquire within a short period of time with minimal adjustments to ensure a quick and simple way of creating income.

The findings highlighted shows that a business owner is determined to adjust and step into an unfamiliar field just to increase and ensure the longevity of its business, despite the complications that may arise from technical or issues with the platform or complications that occur from the varying opinions of the users present in the platform. This research has been a foundation where future research can be based upon. The themes demonstrated in this research shows how a business owner adapts, innovates, and creates different opportunities for the business to expand and reach a greater target market. Having the mental capacity to overcome, the knowledge to navigate the platform, the mind to innovate, and the intuition to read the market. Because of the

breakthrough of technology, the businesses have been able to create their spot in the list of growing businesses that were able to maximize the platform. Through the findings aspiring entrepreneurs will be more knowledgeable of the market and how the market continually changes each and every day and how to utilize these changes for greater business growth. Future investigations may improve upon the groundwork of this investigation is to use a greater sample of businesses in different industries to really capture the market as a whole as the market does not revolve around a small sample size. With this they should also be firm in collecting data from the sample in order to have valid and reputable data to contribute to the investigation.

This preliminary investigation can be a great help to aspiring entrepreneurs as this can be a substructure that they can build upon to learn different strategies in marketing. This allows better management and operation of a business. As the market constantly expands, it is vital to adjust and adapt sooner to be able to gain a head start in the field.

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