

Impact of Social Media on SMEs of UK

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[Course]

Abstract

Background: SMEs have recognized the impact that social media can have on their businesses. In most advanced countries, most have at least one computer with access to the Internet. It can be seen how the use of social media in the B2C electronic commerce of SMEs is increasing, integrating RSS channels, blogs, forums, wikis, videos, fan pages on social media into their virtual stores, recommendation systems, sections to leave opinions and comments to help customers with their purchase decisions, since most online shoppers look for product reviews made by customers before buying.

Purpose: To find the impact of social media on SMEs in the United Kingdom. This study investigates how the marketing and internationalisation process of SMEs of UK is affected by the use of social media

Methodology: This research study uses documentary research or desk research methodology about social media to find how SMEs use it for promotion, marketing and internationalisation of their businesses

Conclusion: Social media is an optimal platform for SMEs in UK. However, the presence of these in the social media must obey clear communication objectives

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In present era ICT have rapidly changed the way companies conduct their activities (Wu and Hisa, 2008). ICT can be to improve the business processes, to increase competitiveness, as well as productivity, they are generating information in conjunction with the so-called platforms to support the development and dissemination of knowledge as a key resource for economic activities (Jenkins et al., 2018). Economists Hall and Khan (2013) explain that new technologies contribute to economic growth, if they are widely disseminated and used. That is why the importance of the Internet and ICT for the economy lies in its accessibility and wide dissemination.

The internet as the network of networks has generated a technological revolution that implies a real change in the economy. For OECD, ICT is used to perform different activities of digital economy (OECD, 2008). Beyond the internet, the infrastructure of SMEs has turned out to be advanced with the consistent development in its procedures and services (Burns, 2016). Bharadwaj et al. (2013) show that digital technologies are in a general sense changing business methodologies, business forms, the abilities of the organization, items and services and key connections between organizations in social networks expanded business. For Bharadwaj et al. (2013), the job of ICT should never again be viewed as a feature of a useful methodology, however lined up with the business technique.

Precisely, marketing is seen as a fundamental part of business strategy and has evolved rapidly in the use of Internet and ICT (De Swaan et al., 2014). Thus, social media marketing, digital marketing, Internet marketing or electronic marketing, which refers to the use of ICT in marketing practice (Chaffey and Smith, 2013). However, in SMEs digital marketing is hardly

seen as a key alternative, since they have particular characteristics that help their greater flexibility, but also hinder the development of a strategic vision. Studies such as Apak and Etai (2014), explain that SMEs have an advantage over large companies due to their structure and adaptability, since implementations are developed more flexibly (Nada, 2010), the approach of the staff it stimulates shared knowledge and new processes occur along with organizational learning.

SMEs are different to large companies in their strategic approach, while making investments in digital businesses (Resnick and Cheng, 2011; Reijonen, 2010; Meckel et al., 2004; Dholakia and Kshetri, 2004). SMEs are generally involved in online business with no vital examination (Meckel et al., 2004) and as far as promoting, there is small arranging and association of exercises (Resnick and Cheng, 2011).

1.2 Problem Statement

Since the first conference on Web 2.0, organized by Tim O'Reilly in 2004, the use of the term Web 2.0 has been popularized to describe an evolutionary phenomenon of the Web, a second phase or generation of the model of use of the WWW service or, a new and improved Web. The Web has gone from being unidirectional, passive or "read only", being used mainly as a means for the diffusion of information in one direction with very little interaction with the user to a multidirectional model or participative where not only is conversation, but also content is shared in multiple formats (videos, texts, audios, ...), which are usually generated by the users themselves.

Social media is characterized by the ability of people to collaborate and exchange information online (Cronin, 2009), representing a great change in the way in which individuals

communicate and collaborate with others (Cummings et al., 2009). Isa'ias et al. (2009) explain that these elements of success are user-centred and incorporate the interaction between users and users. applications, showing that Web 2.0 is being built on the principle of collaboration.

In most SMEs, internal conditions are determined by the entrepreneur's vision (Luo and Tan, 2005) and in the external environment, the circumstances of the environment dictate the adjustments that the employer makes in the strategy and structure of SMEs (Ginsberg and Buchholtz, 2014). So, while in most large companies there is a well-defined path to follow based on the identification of sustainable competitive advantages, in SMEs, there is no formal design of the strategy to be followed, or it is developed in very general (Schindehutte and Morris, 2011), ordinarily according to the vision of a sole administrator or the owner of the SME (Van den Hoof and Huysman, 2009). According to an investigation by the Foundation for the Strategic Analysis and Development of SMEs (Hillary, 2017), it is suggested that there are several problems that influence its development; First of all, those that have to do with financing stand out, but secondly, there is a lack of vision towards innovation and organizational and management issues.

Researchers' interest in social media impact on SMEs has only increased in recent years (McCann and Barlow, 2015). Highlighting the low cost and apparent simplicity of these tools, many authors have highlighted the importance of social media for SMEs (McCann and Barlow, 2015; Barnes et al., 2012; Michaelidou et al., 2011; Harris and Rae, 2010). Harris and Rae (2010), in particular, consider that the media and social networks will play an important role in the survival of small businesses. Studies on the use of social networks by SMEs have focused mainly on the benefits these companies derive from these tools.

According to Bell and Loane (2010), social media and networks enable SMEs to develop new communication practices that give them easier access to foreign markets. The development

of studies on this phenomenon are generally based on the networking of actors and resources (Zhao and Hsu, 2007).

According to Lazar (2007), social media offers real opportunities for collaboration and communication. Social media is helping companies to create an environment that fosters more collaboration, named by different authors (Turban et al., 2011; Coleman and Levine, 2008) as Collaboration 2.0. Social networking platforms could, in this context, be a powerful and economical tool to maintain relations between members of a network, provides marketing support to the SMEs and reduced their risks in case of internationalisation.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The basic aim of the study is to find the impact of social media on small and medium enterprises / business (SME's) in the United Kingdom. This study investigates how the marketing and internationalisation process of SMEs of UK is affected by the use of social media.

1.4 Research Objectives

- To investigate the impact of social media on marketing practices of SMEs;
- To determine the main strategies in the marketing of social networks used by SMEs in the world
- To explore the role of social media in brand awareness and product promotions of SMEs of UK
- To discuss how social media and networks can reduce the risks associated with distance in the process of internationalization of SMEs

1.4 Structure of the Paper

The second chapter of this dissertation is literature review section where the previous research conducted on this topic is reviewed. This chapter will review social media in general terms. This chapter will find gaps in existing literature.

Third Chapter is the methodology chapter where the research methodology, adopted to conduct this research study, is going to be discussed. This chapter will describe all the steps taken by the researcher to collect the data for this research and how the collected data will be analysed.

Fourth Chapter is Result and Discussion Chapter where the results of the dissertation are discussed in detail. This chapter further elaborates the results gained by analysing the collected data.

Finally, in the end, there is the conclusion part. In conclusion, all the research questions, posed in the first chapter of the dissertation, as well as the basic question of the research study, are going to be answered.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a large amount of research and literature is conducted, on the topic of utilization of social media by SMEs and the impact social media has on SMEs. The information gathered can be divided under different sub-headings that will help guide the reader. This chapter analyses how organisations use social media for their communication, promotion, marketing and advertising. This chapter will also review the use of Social media as a marketing and advertising tool by SMEs. It will be analysed here that how SMEs of UK are benefitted from the use of social media.

2.2 Strategic models for Social media marketing

For Boone and Kurtz (2011), social media marketing is a strategic process of providing marketing services by using different tools. Trainor et al. (2011) conceptualize social media for SMEs. Other authors have also positively associated social media with better performance and a competitive advantage for companies (Ryan, 2014; Chaffey and Smith, 2013; Stokes, 2013; Brodie et al., 2007).

Several marketing specialists, mainly consultants or agencies, and some academics, have developed strategic models to carry out the practice of social media marketing in SMEs. Some of these have a greater academic foundation and have been tested. Among these, Stokes (2013) together with specialists from the marketing agency Quirk, offer a landed model which has four different stages. The first stage is called "think", which is the planning stage. The second stage is called "create"; it is the stage where the website is designed and developed according to the requirements of the user. The third stage is called "hook". At this phase, different strategies and

tools were used on the website to generate traffic. Finally, the last stage is called “optimising” the website through Search Engine Optimization techniques.

Another strategic approach to social media role in marketing and business start-ups of SMEs is the seven-step guide developed by Chaffey and Smith (2013). The first step of this guide is to have a defined digital marketing strategy, supported by a plan that follows a method such as SOSTAC, which includes the analysis of the situation, the development of objectives, the definition of strategies, tactics, plan of action and control. The second step is to identify the best practices of current digital capabilities. The third is to define the best structure and workflow for marketing activities. The fourth step is to define the resource requirements to justify the investment. The fifth is to review the barriers to digital integration. The sixth is to manage the change for digital transformation and the last step focuses on digital agility and performance optimization between integrated channels.

On the other hand, De Swaan Arons et al. (2014) determine three types of marketers according to the new needs of the company: those who "think", who are those who apply analytical capabilities to tasks such as data mining and optimizing return on investment; those who "do" are those who develop content, as well as design and direct production; and those who "feel", which focus on the interaction with the consumer, as well as being involved in roles such as customer service, social networks and online communications.

Day (2011) also describes the marketing capabilities needed by the organizations. According to him the organizations need "adaptive" capabilities, which consist of a vigilant learning that deepens the knowledge of the market and stays alert to anticipate the needs of this; continuous experimentation in the market that increases learning; and an open marketing that

generates relationships with the different fronts of new technologies in media and social networks and mobilizes the skills of the partners.

2.3 Social media and SMEs

Social media is not just a new toy of technology but actually it is renewed use of existing technologies on the Internet. In this line, there are authors (Gerbaudo, 2018; Leonardi, 2017) who perceive social media not necessarily as a new generation of technologies, a technological revolution, but as a social revolution, which would consist, as indicated by Fuchs (2017), in stimulating participation through applications and services.

The tools of social media allow to improve the communication in the company both internally and externally, giving rise to the concept of Web2.0. Social media differs from other traditional tools due to its versatility to the business condition and its quick reaction to the changing needs of companies (McAfee, 2006). In addition, as a consequence of the active participation of users, social media has the potential for resolving common problems and for the emergence of shared creativity (Lindermann et al., 2009). According to McAfee (2006), the facts that allows the transition to the so-called 2.0 company is the convergence of three main trends:

1. The appearance of simple and free platforms for the expression of opinions, ideas and knowledge, such as blogs, wikis, social networks, etc.;
2. The emergence of structures that are built collaboratively rather than imposed; the paradigmatic example is Wikipedia;
3. The possibility of creating order from the chaos, due to the labelling system, the RSS channels and the automated aggregators

Thus, the modern SMEs assume the use of different Web 2.0 tools in its business processes, including the development of new bi-directional communication channels through web 2.0 tools, both internally and externally.

According to several studies (McKinsey and Company, 2008; Core Media and Berlecon Research, 2007), it has been observed that in business practice, the use of social media has been used mainly in the communications with clients and in the internal management of information and knowledge (Andriole, 2010).

As enterprise 2.0, SMEs 2.0 refer to the use of social media platforms for the SMEs and in the network they maintain with others, as well as the changes and organizational and social issues associated with it. However, the impact of social media on SMEs has not been fully explored yet, as reflected in the studies of De Saulles (2008) and Blinn et al. (2009). In fact, only 26.35% declare their presence in social media platforms to publicize the business and generate opportunities.

According to the results of the study by Andriole (2010), Web 2.0 and social media technologies have contributed to the enterprise 2.0, firstly in collaboration and communication and, later, in management of knowledge. Within this area, social media has contributed mainly in the tasks of sharing, recovering, organizing knowledge and, to a lesser extent, the leveraging of knowledge, for the resolution of problems.

For Jedd (2008), style 2.0 of knowledge sharing assumes that knowledge management becomes more transparent, decentralized and equal. There are studies on the effects of Web 2.0 on the intranets of companies, such as Ferron et al. (2011) or Tredinnick (2006), which argues that social media is not an innovation, yet the comprehension of the condition of the data, the

learning and the job of the client in the employments of the data is evolving. Control is step by step being given to clients, opening the likelihood of another stage, progressively equitable, and increasingly evaluative in the abuse of data inside organizations.

2.4 Social Media Marketing of SMEs

However, in relation to social media marketing, it has been found that SMEs have not yet understood its scope and potential (Gilmore et al., 2007), possibly due to the characteristics of SMEs, which have limited resources. Decision makers generally have a different way of thinking about conventional marketing (Gilmore et al., 2005). Regarding the strategic models of digital marketing, it is unknown if there is any developed in particular for SMEs or if they use a strategic model such as those already mentioned. The studies are insufficient, and even more so for the SMEs in UK context. The need to expand scientific research on this subject is evident.

O'Reilly (2009) showed that early innovators in the Web 2.0 era were those who had been able to effectively harness the power of the social networks. Web 2.0 provides the powerful content to the users with the interaction of users. This new mode of communication exceeds the unidirectional mode of communication of Web 1.0 because in Web 2.0, the user is fully active. According to Halliday (2016), through new interactive interfaces, the user becomes a creator of content in its own right and contributes to the production of information on the Web. Jin and Feenberg (2015) said that beyond traditional websites, individual expression naturally finds its place on new social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc. The emergence of these tools ensures the dissemination of information to every user, instead of the limited few; so social media have become essential platforms, with major economic stakes.

Indeed, several social networks have emerged, which have met with varying degrees of success, some falling completely into oblivion, others knowing how to constantly reinvent themselves to adapt to the new uses of Internet users.

According to Reed (2010), the Net surfer, by joining a network, introduced into subsets of users (according to circles of friendship, interest, etc.). Scott (2017) explains that in networks the value of the network is based on the creation of subgroups (of at least 2 people), and [that] the number of subgroups increases exponentially. This speciality gives rise to almost infinite combinations of exchanges. However, it is precisely the relationships that social media created, which partly explains the considerable success of social technologies.

The Internet-based content generation represents a promising activity; for example, as presented by Pires and Simon (2015), in 2013, seventy-two hours of videos were downloaded every minute on the YouTube platform, which was the proof of the abundant activity of Internet users. It is important to understand that this creative dynamic, as mentioned by Kumar et al. (2016), represents a considerable potential for economic activities in general. Behind the expression user-created content, actually hide different types of individual productions, which all represent a certain financial attraction for companies.

Jenkins et al. (2018) mention the OECD's Participatory Web Report, which lists five basic user contribution: i) using it for voluntary services, ii) paid content charge fee from the users, iii) marketing and promotion, (iv) third party content and (v) selling different services or goods.

Hartley (2017) said that the possibilities of publication and sharing, are all advantages for companies. It is essential to seize the opportunities offered by social technologies, in order to

exploit the financial potential, which they hold as tools for communication and management. About 80% of Internet users would interact regularly through social networks, while 70% of companies would currently use these technologies and 90% of these companies would say they could benefit from it (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016). From this perspective, the economic stakes are obvious. In addition, the gradual arrival of digital natives in the labour market and in the business world will certainly help to reinforce the trend of innovative business models to gradually replace traditional business models.

As explained by Wunsch-Vincent and Vickery (2007), the models of social media are in light of the decentralized imagination, authoritative development and new worth included models, which favours organizations, conventional scale points of interest and huge start-up speculations. For example, in the advertising and marketing sector, new strategies are naturally emerging. Data tracing, targeted advertising, "virality" and e-reputation are now the keywords of web marketing, which has become social in its mode of operation.

A multitude of SMEs have already begun the shift in social technologies, gradually integrating them into their mode of organization, realizing the power and potential underlying the content and tools of social media.

2.5 Social Media as Brand Awareness Tool

Brake (2014) said that Social Media give tools in the user's hands that allow them to create content, comment, share with other users and generate messages about brands of companies that are beyond their control. Contrary to what happened with traditional marketing, where the message was created by the company and sent abroad, in social media marketing, as opined by Mata & Quesada (2014), the public is the one who constructs, modifies and

disseminates the message through their opinions and experiences, which are increasingly taken into account by companies and other users. In fact, 50% of Internet users do their shopping based on the recommendations through forums and social networks.

According to Mata & Quesada (2014), by integrating the tools of Web 2.0 in communication and marketing, SMEs are expanding their messages through the social Web, while taking advantage of the participation of users and using Web 2.0 tools. Through them, the company can offer more relevant information to its customers, such as sales announcements, sales offers, promotions, contests or answers to their questions, in order to retain them. This makes the consumers feel part of the company and their requests and needs are taken into account.

Bughin (2007) was right in saying that it is this external perspective of the use of social media tools by companies, and especially by SMEs, which can lead to greater competitive advantages derived from better and faster cooperation with the outside world. Collaboration, both internally and externally, has become an essential element for increasing productivity and reducing costs due to working collaboratively, improving decision making when properly managing collective knowledge in the organization on favouring the creation of new products and services, derived from open innovation. In this sense, Social media offers SMEs the possibility of enhancing their brand awareness, their competitive advantage and a more collaborative experience among users (Isa'ias et al., 2009).

If a continuous SME 2.0 process is achieved, innovation can emerge from the collaboration. This is demonstrated in the work of Lindermann et al. (2009) where they propose a roadmap for open innovation based on social media of SME networks, exposing the ability of

social media applications to integrate groups of heterogeneous workers from different SMEs and make profits to collaborative creativity. SMEs that know how to take advantage of the social media tools can obtain brand awareness and competitive advantages through the intelligence and participation of all their members related, directly or indirectly, to the organization. Studies such as Andriole (2010) show that the implementation of social media tools in companies allow them to increase their efficiency in costs, productivity and competitive advantages.

2.6 Social media and Internationalisation of SMEs

Many studies focus on the motivations and modes of location of SMEs that engage in international operations (Verdier et al., 2010). Indeed, these SMEs quickly understand the opportunities associated with international development (Ghauri and Cateora, 2014). The literature treats the concept of distance as a barrier to businesses crossing borders (Hakanson et al., 2016). SMEs operating in global niches are often required to quickly enter high psychic distance markets (Ojala, A., 2008). However, those who decide to internationalize and enter new markets face certain difficulties.

Many decisions must be taken within the company when it decides to internationalize (location, mode of entry, adaptation etc.). In addition, in a completely new environment, the company faces some challenges related to information gaps (Kuo and Fang 2009; Drogendijk and Slangen 2006). This lack of information is identified by Hymer (2010) as a "foreign firm handicap" which results from the lack of information related to the target country's business environment including the administrative, political, economic, social and economic system, competitive intensity and socio-cultural factors. The company must make the right decisions regarding its mode of entry in order to succeed in its internationalization.

Distance is one of the risk factors of internationalisation of SMEs which is widely discussed in literature (Beugelsdijk et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2016; Johanson and Vahlne, 2016; Kraus et al., 2015). This concept is then studied more generally as psychic distance. The psychic distance stipulates that in the face of the lack of information and knowledge of the new countries, the company will set up in psychically close markets. It is on this notion that the works of Johanson and Vahlne (2016) were born. Johanson and Vahlne (2016) define psychic distance as the sum of the factors that limit the circulation of information flows between the company and the host markets. These factors may be differences related to language, culture, economic, political, administrative systems, level of education etc. This definition gives a multidimensional character to the psychic distance (Child et al., 2009). Psychic distance cannot be reduced to cultural differences only (Brewer, 2007; Dow and Karunaratna, 2006; Sousa and Bradley 2006).

When deciding to expand into other markets, a decision-maker's subjective part is part of the decision-maker's perception of distance. The perception of the international is influenced by the experience. If the decision-maker has international experience, he or she will feel more confident and easier to build international relationships. However, most export managers do not work in the domestic market and therefore find it difficult to compare the differences between the local market and the foreign market of their company (Prime et al., 2009).

Once the company has acquired enough knowledge of internationalization, it will decide to operate with more distant countries (Ojala, 2008). However, although the psychic distance concept is often emphasized, SMEs whose business is or are dealing with High Tech knowledge are often forced to do business in countries at a great psychic distance. New communication tools such as social networks and social media are widely used in the marketing strategies of companies working in the field of high tech / digital. These tools would enable them to reach

more distant countries directly. For this reason, their market entry no longer follows the incremental routes or steps suggested by the traditional theories of internationalization. This could be interpreted as a sign that these traditional theories are out of date in explaining market choices in the current global economic environment (Ojala, 2008).

According to Okazaki and Taylor (2013) social media platforms are effective levers for an internationalization strategy. In the current state of the literature, only the results of Bell and Loane (2010) provide a first indication of their potential for internationalization, showing that Web 2.0 tools allow small businesses to intensify their collaborations with international partners. As such, Okazaki and Taylor (2013) call for further investigation into this issue in order to provide better managerial guidance to SMEs wishing to exploit the potential of social networks in terms of internationalization, and to on the other hand, to contribute to a more refined theorization of the phenomenon.

2.7 Conclusion

The promotion mix of SMEs consists of the specific composition of advertising, public relations, personal sales, sales promotion, internationalisation and direct marketing that the company uses to communicate value to the customer, persuasively and establish relationships with it.

Nonetheless, the devices and systems to speak with customers have changed essentially with the rise of Social Media. The substance, timing and recurrence of discussions in internet based life are presently outside the immediate control of supervisors, generating a great limitation since the traditional marketing is refuted with this limitation. Therefore, through a good strategy, SMEs must learn to market the company through social media, reduce internationalisation risks and shape and influence consumer discussions. Tools of social media

can help in the construction of brands, generating word of mouth communication among consumers as well as allows the co-creation of information with customers and also helps to maintain stronger relationships with them. Thus, SMEs were helped by social media in business promotion, brand awareness and internationalisation.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology adopted to conduct this study. This chapter discusses all the important steps of chosen methodology, which were taken, to conduct this study.

3.2 Research Philosophy

When in the development of a research the point of defining the methodological process is reached, generally and depending on the nature of the research itself, it is worked according to quantitative or qualitative purposes. Quantitative research determines clear, "objective", measurable and easily credible paths. It has a particular reception in the scientific field and does not need more argument at first sight.

Qualitative research, with broader and possibly speculative possibilities allows a better adaptation (Bryman, 2015). Qualitative research methodology is used when the researcher needs to explore the perception or opinion of the people about something. However, this paradoxical circumstance often reduces confidence and credibility in the most orthodox research contexts.

3.3 Research Approach

In this research study, the researcher collects the data from documentary sources about the use of social media as a tool for promoting SMEs and reducing their risks of internationalisation. Thus, it is a study which uses social media that how it is used for SMEs promotion and internationalisation purpose and for which the data is collected from secondary sources.

3.4 Types of Secondary Research

The documentary research of historical type is the review of historical documents that intend to understand a historical phenomenon. Secondary research, narrative review is a bibliographical investigation. It is a narrative report of individual research findings where the opinion of the reviewer dominates. They are not conclusive (Ziebland and Hunt, 2014).

Secondary research, qualitative meta-synthesis / meta-synthesis review is also a bibliographic research design strategy to synthesize qualitative research studies. Meta-study is a method of analysis and synthesis of findings from qualitative research that focuses interest on data, methods and theories and contains three levels of analysis. The first level of a meta-study is meta-analysis of data (meta-data-analysis) or reanalysis of data from original qualitative studies. The second level is the meta method which analyses the quality of the studies based on the methodological choices and their effect on the generation of the findings (Ziebland and Hunt, 2014). The third level is the meta-theory which explores the theoretical constructs used by researchers and their effects on the findings and interpretations of the data. The integration of the three levels is a meta-synthesis.

3.5 The application of Secondary Research

The objective of documentary research is to develop a conceptual theoretical framework to form a body of ideas about the object of study and discover answers to specific inquiries through the utilization of narrative techniques. These techniques have been created so as to expand the level of assurance that the data gathered will be of interest to the members studied and that, in addition, meets the conditions of reliability and documentary objectivity (Brakewood and Poldrack, 2013). Documentary technique allows the collection of information to enunciate

the theories that support the study of phenomena and processes. It includes the use of instruments defined according to the documentary source referred to.

Once the subject has been defined and the research question has been raised, it is necessary to select the strategies to operate the problem in reality. For this it is necessary to consider three basic aspects from the methodological point of view: the approach, the type of research and the theoretical construction of the process.

The documentary research has a particular character from where its interpretative consideration comes. Try to read and give meaning to some documents that were written with an intention other than this within which you try to understand them. Try to systematize and make known a knowledge produced before the one you are trying to build now. In other words, part of proposals and systematic results, achieved in knowledge processes prior to the research that now tries to read and understand them (Ziebland and Hunt, 2014). It could be pointed out given the fact that it is a reconstructive investigation: with new questions it re-elaborates a knowledge that has produced previous results and knowledge and to this extent modifies the phenomena object of reflection.

The construction of knowledge from the sources is a way to ensure the tradition of the original thought and from that perspective, bring it to the present with a hermeneutic reading that favours the discussion by making new contributions to scientific development with proposals that can be permanently questioned but that they will always be oriented to reach new developments.

In theoretical construction what is sought is to discover not the intentions that traditionally accompany an author, in that and other documents, but specifically what is read in

various documents or source books, which could have been written even with other intentions. With this perspective one can see that documentary research is a sufficiently complex and delicate process that merits a vanguard position within the framework of the philosophy of research and its procedures (Brakewood and Poldrack, 2013).

It is necessary to make a documentary selection in number of documents consulted, coverage in time, specificity of the subject, and general descriptors on which the consultation will be developed. The instruments of consultation, where the contents obtained from the different sources are captured, need to be constructed according to the nature of study. The researcher could build a bibliographic record, (which is usually complemented with a topographic record) and an analytical file (Brakewood and Poldrack, 2013). It would be up to the researcher to include a visit card, especially if working with a team of co-researchers or students in training to avoid being consulted repeatedly the same sources. And finally a textual record, which would gather the faithful concepts given by the authors and that could help sustain or support various hypotheses arising during the investigation.

3.6 Data Collection Sources

In order to collect data for documentary research, one must detect, obtain and consult the appropriate bibliography according to the study purposes to extract and collect the information. The researcher distinguishes mainly three basic types of information sources to carry out the documentary research (Kumar, 2008):

- Primary sources (direct): They constitute the objective of the bibliographic research providing "first hand" data. These sources include books, dissertations, articles, expert testimonies, films, documentaries and videotapes (Methley, 2014);

- Secondary sources: They are compilations, summaries and lists of references published in a particular area of knowledge. For example: The Latin American Institute for Quality, National Association of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education, among others (Methley, 2014);
- Tertiary sources: These are documents that summarize the names and titles of journals and other periodicals, as well as bulletins, industrial and service associations, government reports, catalogues of books and institutions dedicated to research (Robson and McCartan, 2016).

3.7 Means of Data Collection

The data collection must be a systematic process well defined and specified in the design. one must mention the sources and how they were accessed. It can be a file, a newspaper library, or one or more databases (specify the strategies for searching and selecting documents).

3.7.1 Graphic Media

They are printed and mass circulation documents. They can be found in public and private libraries, bookstores and kiosks for sale. They are books in general, dictionaries and encyclopaedias. The ideal is to have permanent and unrestricted access to books - as well as to all printed documents - but when this is not possible, the researcher should at least try to photocopy the most interesting parts of the books, always identifying the technical data of the publication in order to include them in the bibliography (Thielen et al. 2016). This could contravene some legal provisions, but the truth is that not all books circulate freely to acquire them in the first bookstore that one comes across, nor do all the people have the resources to acquire them.

3.7.2 Electronic media

Among the computer sources in general should be distinguished those of rapid and permanent access (encyclopaedias, files in general and databases owned by the author of the study) of those of temporary access (Internet sites, files and databases of entities and particular). Although all the data are necessary to have a detailed view of the data obtained, the ones that are of most interest are those that can be extracted in textual form, the place of origin and the date (the month will suffice) in which the query was made (Thielen et al. 2016).

3.7.3 Newspaper Records

The newspaper records are those that allow the general identification of journalistic notes or technical-scientific articles published in newspapers and specialized magazines. Its design is similar to that of the bibliographic record, with the variants that the case merits. Thus, for example, to indicate an informative journalistic note the following data must be included, Name of the medium, Periodicity, Holder of the note, Date of publication of the note and corresponding number of the newspaper and Section and publication page (Thielen et al. 2016).

In case of journalistic opinions, the author of the opinion must be identified, and in the case of an editorial, this information must also be indicated. With these elements, the corresponding file is designed.

3.7.4 Information banks

The technological progress of recent years allows easy access to information from various sources through a computer connected to the so-called information banks. Nowadays it is possible to save time in the collection of information (and more in historical archives) on the

subject to be investigated by requesting a computerized bibliographic search (Featherstone et al., 2015).

The information banks include computerized files in which summaries are stored and bibliographic data of millions of articles, books, reports, monographs, presentations, etc. By means of a PC this information is easily collected and if a copy of the complete article is required, the same bank provides one with additional cost.

3.7.5 Vital statistics

It serves as a reference to the behaviour or record of information previously documented by a federal or particular institution or institution of a fact or phenomenon. They can also be used as historical archives.

3.8 Keywords and Databases

For the online searching of documents, the researcher uses databases such as Ebscohost and Cochrane by using the specific keywords such as “Social media”, “impact”, “SMEs”, “internationalisation” and “UK”. The keywords were utilized for the document search in numerous combinations, applying Boolean operators such as Not/and/or along with keywords to optimize the search outcomes.

The initial search of documents in the selected databases yield many documents, however, on the review of their titles, and abstracts it was found that not all of them meeting the above defined criteria. Hence application of inclusion criteria resulted in removing many documents as they were out-dated and not fully focusing the research question. A detail analysis of abstract resulted in excluding more documents.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria used for filtering the search process is given below

Inclusion	Exclusion
The studies discuss the use of social media and the impact it has on SME in the UK	Studies talking about other things in addition to use of social media and the impact it has on SME in the UK
Studies available in English language	Studies available in other languages
Published studies only Studies about UK SMEs only	Studies which are not published Studies about other Western countries other than UK
Studies conducted and published between 2000 to 2019	Studies conducted and published prior to 2000

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process that the researcher initiates with pre-reading. The data is analysed by using content analysis. The researcher continues with the reflective reading, trying to understand all the words that appear in the text. In case of any doubt, the researcher will write them separately and look for their meaning and in this way making a small vocabulary.

3.10 Conclusion

This research study uses case study desk research. For this purpose, it uses the secondary and documentary sources about social media to find how SMEs use it for promotion, marketing and internationalisation of their businesses.

Chapter 4 Discussion

This research study shows that Social media is the preferred channel of communication and sale for UK SMEs. On the one hand, it is intended to know the intention of users to use this social network as a marketing tool, and on the other hand, to evaluate the presence and use that companies currently make of their social media accounts.

Since the advent of different platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+ etc., the social networks have rapidly turned into a gathering place in which people identify with one another, establishing a sociological marvel, yet additionally speaking to a promoting opportunity that organizations are not willing to give up. It is a new ecosystem in which consumers move to play a new role in their relationship with companies. They are not passive consumers who receive information, but active, participative consumers, who create content, information about brands, think, share their experiences. Through online mouth-to-ear customers become the heroes of brand correspondence, not just in the job of disseminators of data, yet in addition as generators of new thoughts and advertisers of unwaveringness, or even dismissal, towards some of them.

With the right applications, UK SMEs can also create on social media a system that allows the secure closure of a commercial transaction, without needing to refer to the company's website or a physical store. In this sense, one understands e-commerce as the use of social media as a platform to enhance and even materialize any type of electronic transaction, so that this new commerce is a complement to e-commerce. Social media assumes a central job in the post-buy assessment, since it encourages the dispersal of procurement encounters, both positive and negative ones. Through the trading of sentiments in on-line spaces, known as e-WOM (on-line informal), SMEs make, together with the clients, the image of the brand.

After analysing the secondary sources on the use of social media by SMEs in UK, it is undeniable that platforms such as Facebook is the social network that commands in the field of SMEs, being the most chosen platform, with a margin much higher than the rest of social networks. The fame of this social network and its strong use in the private sphere means that it was placed in the first position (Gatautis et al., 2017). Since its birth in 2004, Facebook has undergone a great boom and has positioned itself in the online environment as the social network par excellence. It has millions of profiles currently open and it is not strange to think that SMEs choose it as the main platform to carry out promotion of their business and start-ups.

There are several researches that account for this (Booth, 2017; Berger & Thomas, 2016; Pollak and Dorcak, 2016) which place Facebook as the most well-known social network by users of social networks, this being known to all people who use social networks. The exploratory study on the use of social networks in UK SMEs (Ainin et al., 2015) positions Facebook as the social network preferred by SMEs in UK, since 41.5% of these companies have a presence in said social network. This study also shows Facebook as the social network with the highest frequency of publication.

To all this, the social network social media has to be managed correctly to make efficient commercial communication. Warren (2017) conducts an analysis of UK SMEs in the service sector on social media. This type of analysis aims to contemplate the circumstance of an organization by investigating its internal qualities (strengths and weaknesses) and the outer circumstance (threats and opportunities) and to be able to decide on the future. This analysis shows that social media can be very beneficial for SMEs, because it offers the opportunity to be visible in the online environment, create good and new relationships with customers, build loyalty and be able to spread the brand at a very low cost that the SME can face. However, social

media can present the threat of a bad online reputation and a very strong competition (Yong, 2016).

To obtain the necessary information, this research study uses the studies of many companies and has accessed each of their websites to check if they include links to social networks. With this it managed to update the sample of links to social networks on websites. This research has shown that the company has a presence on social media if the website includes the link to its page in the social network and that it works correctly. In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, first of all, all the publications made on social media by SMEs have been counted and subsequently they have been classified according to contents in different categories. The results will be analysed taking into account: 1) Number of publications generated by SMEs on their social network page, 2) Type of content most published by these companies in the social network.

4.1 Type of content published on social media by SMEs

Once the issue of the number of publications has been addressed, one should go into more specific matters such as the use that UK SMEs make of their social media posts. Not all publications are the same, they may have one intention or another in relation to the content that is published. The research of this study shows that the SMEs use social media for the following categories:

- Offer products or services: The intention of this type of publication is for the public to know what the company offers and perhaps create an intention to purchase;
- Have a direct communication channel with customers;

- Provide corporate information: provide corporate information of the company, without intention to offer us or show us any of its goods or services. They tell us about the organization itself and its characteristics. A large number of companies use social media to show their facilities, how they work in that company, what their production processes are like their facilities or where they are located. They intend to give an image of transparency and reliability to the public;
- Launch of special offers and promotions: Many companies make offers, special promotions and raffles that attract the attention of the public. In many cases they are intended to provoke a purchase or in others (especially raffles) they seek to draw attention in social networks to increase their followers;
- Direct sale;
- In order to reduce the risks caused due to distance in case of SMEs internationalisation
- Talk and reflect on the sector;
- Show the facilities.

4.2 Use of Social media for SMEs internationalisation

While most people view social media as a new panacea for small businesses, because of their low cost and ease of use (Barne et al., 2012; Michaelidou et al., 2011; Bell and Loane, 2010; Harris and Rae, 2010), the results show that social networks are used by small and medium-sized enterprises as complementary tools to traditional tools in an internationalization strategy. Facebook is the network most used by the SMEs. It allows to display content on the company, products or services offered by it. It also allows SMEs to exchange videos and messages with other connected people. LinkedIn is the second most used network for SMEs, which is used as a professional network (search for partners, common contacts, service

providers, etc.). In third place, Youtube is used which is exploited as a video exchange platform to discover the activities or products of the company. Twitter for sending short messages is less used than others. It is noted that this network is more functional in digital companies. Despite the enthusiasm for these new technologies, human relationships still prevail in business relationships.

In a totally new environment, the company is facing some difficulties related to the lack of information (Kuo and Fang, 2009; Drogendijk and Slangen, 2006). Therefore, SME managers need to search for interesting and relevant information about the country in which they are likely to expand. Social networks allow companies to search (proactive approach) and to be informed (reactive approach), more easily on existing commercial opportunities abroad. These findings show that these tools contribute to the dynamics highlighted in the research of Zhao and Hsu (2007) and Che Senik et al. (2011). These authors highlight the ability of small businesses to obtain and manage information disseminated by members of their network internationally which is therefore a factor favouring their internationalization (Che Senik et al., 2011).

The information found on social networks can come from research done on competitors, new international trends, consumer habits, the credibility of partners or collaborators. The results of Stockdale et al. (2012) already showed that social networks were a gold mine rich in information. Followed by McCann and Barlow (2015), who had highlighted the recruitment of new clients through prospecting on different social media.

Theories on the internationalization of SMEs under the step-by-step approach highlight the progressive nature of enterprise development outside their home market. Perceived risk is a major obstacle to this development, slowing international momentum. The results of this work

show that the information collected on the different networks will reduce the perceived risk related to psychic distance.

Then, the results also show that due to social networks companies do not seek to first internationalize with psychically close countries. Indeed, language barriers, cultural distance, political differences, etc. no longer frighten leaders. The wealth of information available on social networks and the many translation tools make international collaborations more and more accessible. The revisited works of Johanson and Vahlne (2016) had already highlighted the changes related to networks. Other authors had also shown that SMEs would internationalize more easily and more quickly due to the quality of available resources, their networking, speed and risk-taking. However, the results do not allow to say that social networks can overcome all the concepts of psychic distance. Indeed, social networks can offset the geographical distance between two countries. Due to these different tools, the leaders must not move or send letters that often remain unanswered. Messages or communications made via social networks allow immediate contact.

4.3 Barriers to SME 2.0

SMEs are still reluctant to implement the Web 2.0 due to, among other reasons, ignorance of the opportunities they offer in the organizational environment; difficulty in identifying economic benefits; fear of losing control of communication; in addition, they have doubts about the security of these social applications; loss of privacy of information and intellectual property rights, lack of support from and there is a general lack of understanding about the possible value that social media can bring.

Of all these barriers, which are more than technological ones are cultural, the lack of a collaborative culture that encourages all levels of the company to collaborate and participate. With social media, SMEs have more to do with a new philosophy, a change in attitude in the company, than with a mere technological investment. For a correct implementation of the social media in the SME are prerequisites: a collaborative culture and a direction involved and really engaged in the participatory process.

Some choices will have to be made regarding the management of the presence on social networks. Each of these choices may involve an increase in the workload required to manage the company's presence on social networks. This shows that there needs to be good collaboration between the local market manager and the one who will work in the international markets (if they are different).

Conclusion

The UK SMEs, majority of them present a greater activity, with a daily or weekly publication rate of 70% on their social media accounts. However, the remaining 30% SMEs do not correctly manage their communication on social media in terms of periodicity and number of publications. This may be due to ignorance of the use of the social network and the need to share and publish content that require social networks to achieve visibility in this. Another reason may be the scarce specialization of the people in charge of the management of communication on Social media, SMEs do not have sufficient resources to manage this type of communication.

Perhaps some SMEs consider that communication in social networks is a mere complement to the general communication made by the company, and that perhaps it is only a passing fad in terms of commercial communication. They may also consider this type of communication unnecessary because of the characteristics of their company (very traditional, local, with a very loyal regular audience). The main use of publications made by SMEs of UK is to offer products and services, which are more than half of the total publications.

This is because SMEs conceive of social networks as a place to display their products or services as if they were a showcase and basically carry out commercial communication. For this reason, SMEs of UK have wanted to obtain a direct return from social networks, in order to sell their products or services quickly. They have not been able to see that social networks are more than a mere showcase, and that another type of communication, such as corporate communication, can benefit them in an indirect way by contributing to the improvement of intangible assets such as image, brand or reputation.

UK SMEs prefer to make a commercial communication to obtain a direct profitability, trying to provoke the sale directly. They do not have the sufficient conscience to know that this

type of communication in social networks is not the one that greater benefits can bring them. This may be due to the fact that they do not have a long history of communication in social networks, and that the personnel in charge of the management of this communication are unskilled personnel, capable of noticing this error.

Some of the SMEs did not have specialized personnel and those responsible for managing this communication were the company's own employees. Less than 30% hired specialized for their management. However, this scenario where commercial communication predominates is changing, and SMEs are opting to do more corporate communication and corporate image, which provide indirect benefits, which reinforce brand communication, as well as the intangibles of the SMEs.

The SMEs use social networks, such as LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook, mainly for their informational and relational benefits. The exploitation of these tools also seems to facilitate or accelerate internationalization efforts. Informational benefits mean that small businesses can pull out a lot of information from these tools. The data may relate to the political or economic context of the country in which they want to operate, information on potential consumers, their buying habits etc. All this information will help to identify international opportunities faster. Then, data such as experiences, recommendations, common contacts, etc. available on the profiles of companies and foreign partners allow managers to more easily ensure the credibility and reliability of new business relationships to internationally.

The presence of this information would therefore reduce the perceived risk of these opportunities and promote their realization. From a relational point of view, social networks make it possible to reduce the geographical distance by making it easier to make contact and by

ensuring the online visibility of the company and its employees. These features contribute to the development of new business relationships that can support the international development of the company. Even though social networks have become real marketing tools at a lower cost, the relationship aspect remains very important. Social networks mostly have an upstream goal to look for information both on the partners both in the market.

The results of this study show that the ease of access to information on social networks makes it easier for small and medium-sized businesses to enter foreign countries. Indeed, the information found on the profiles of the companies are rich and allow to know more about the different potential partners. Future employees have a lot of information about their profiles, such as their recommendations, experiences, CVs, common contacts, etc. all this information should be taken into account by small business leaders to assess the credibility of the partner.

However, properly managing social networks is not easy. SMEs find it extremely difficult to manage their working time and therefore abandon social networks. Lack of time, lack of staff and lack of technical knowledge are the main problems faced by our companies. Small businesses should therefore consider more thoughtfully the development of their presence on social networks. Choose the right social network based on your target and the country you would like to enter.

Since the psychic distance is quite subjective and depends mainly on the previous experiences, feelings, sensitivity, etc ... of the leader, the company wishing to export should perhaps recruit a manager who knows about the target country. Leaders can also improve their sensitivity with the foreign country by becoming familiar with the culture and language of the country through trade shows, international exhibitions. However, SMEs are often forced to enter

the international process as soon as they are created (increased competition, niche markets, etc.) and do not have the time to become familiar with these practices. Finally, the psychic distance to a country being different between companies, leaders can reduce it by improving their knowledge of the market.

Social networks are still tools that scare small and medium-sized businesses, so it seems appropriate to invite companies and researchers to consider even more the contribution of social networks to the creation and development of social networks. business that allows the company to create value by taking advantage of international business opportunities.

Recommendations

- A communication strategy must be developed by SMEs, which responds to a specific goal: gain prestige or reputation, increase the clientele, etc. In short, it is not about being without more, but about using social media for SMEs as a tool for communication and interaction, for the fulfilment of certain purposes;
- Build an action plan that allows the SMEs to achieve the objectives set when they use social media for business. The steps of said action plan must be followed and not "wandering" aimlessly and without direction through the social network. Planning a customized strategy adapted to the needs of each business is vital to achieve any goal that SMEs set. It is very important to establish to which public they are going, what objectives they intend to achieve and in which networks they must be present in their business. The latter is very important, because having a presence on social media does not mean opening profiles to the crazy because "you have to be in the networks". Like everything in this life, you have to do it with your head and common sense;
- Social media is an effective tool for SMEs, which must be controlled and updated daily. A fan page is useless, if SMEs abandon it and only take a look every two months. At least, they should publish a couple of times per week, although the ideal would be to publish every day, but often it is not possible. However, if they publish too often some social media platforms may penalize SMEs, and so will the fans, tired of having SMEs always on the timeline. But be clear that an abandoned fan page is synonymous with carelessness, and that is not the image we want to give of our business;
- It is advisable to create two sections in fan page. One of general access, for all the public, and another directed only to the customers. It is about offering complementary and additional information to all the people who have joined the community;

- The feed-back that is generated in social media for SMEs is a magnificent instrument, which allows them to detect the successes and mistakes made. Responding and enriching them with criticism, positive and negative, helps to prosper and strengthen any business initiative. If they correctly manage all the comments of their followers, they will gain in confidence and credibility. When a user takes the trouble to comment on any of their publications should receive, at least, a "like" in return, although the ideal would be to receive a response in conditions. If they also ask a question in the comment and never receive an answer, they will run away from the fan page to never return
- Social media requires quick decisions. If SMEs are to act, before any criticism or attention call, they must do it immediately. The pace of the Internet is vertiginous and unwarranted delays can damage the reputation and image of our business;
- The fan page on Facebook is a useful mechanism to increase traffic to commercial websites. If SMEs perform SMO (Social Media Optimization) actions, they will increase the number of visits to our site and, therefore, their profits
- The social media account should become one more section of the customer service of small business. Not in vain, through the fan page doubts are solved, comments are made and promotion of the products or services is carried out. Social media can be a powerful tool of customer service for SMEs that is characterized by the immediacy and the agility in the service they offer;
- SMEs should not use their fan page on social media such as Facebook as if it were a promotional brochure. The contents of social media are characterized by their dynamism, SMEs must seek to publish, periodically, information of interest to the followers, share content and promote promotions or contests. The fan page should not look like a

billboard. It is very good to use social media to promote news or offers from time to time, but it is not intended to publish exclusively the products or services. Do not forget the importance of sharing external content and not only internal. A company page is a space to share publications that contain relevant, useful and interesting information for users. If the sector is, for example, online marketing, SME should not only share the posts of its blog but also look for other sources of knowledge that speak of the same topic and share what it considers that may have value for the user

- Social media is, precisely, a space for SMEs, where personal opinions have no place. Even if it is a small family company, the fan page must be differentiated by its corporate nature. Although it is true that in social networks, companies like to show their more human side, with photos of equipment for example, but what they should not do under any circumstances is to express personal opinions on it, especially if they are political or religious. Keep in mind that the potential clients do not have to think like the SMEs and could be offended with the publication, it is not the place for personal matters and even if they agree with SMEs, they will think SMEs are unprofessional and this will probably lead them to leave the page

Limitations

This research does not escape certain limits. Indeed, the results of this study must be interpreted with caution. First of all, this study only worked with UK SMEs. It might be interesting to consider other European SMEs, especially French, German or Dutch speaking SMEs, to work in UK or other English speaking regions. This choice is based on the availability of the database and information of the SMEs. This study also need to be alert to potential problems of unobserved heterogeneity, because the fact that social networks can reach countries further afield from the beginning could be influenced by other unobserved factors such as

religion, administrative specificities, etc. This presence of heterogeneity would require the inclusion of other explanatory variables, not necessarily simple to measure.

In addition to that, the estimated relationship may be affected by a problem of endogeneity, i.e. not only reaching countries further afield from the beginning could be influenced by one or more independent variables but reverse is also possible. We sought to shed light on a new phenomenon that could benefit from further investigations, in particular by analyzing the intensity of use of social networks according to the internationalization phase in which the company is located.

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