The Application of Instagram as a Promotional and Communication Tool by Productive Families in the Kingdom of Bahrain

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate Instagram potentialities in the family business sector in Bahrain known as “Productive families”. The intention to adopt and use the tool to promote their products and support information sharing, cooperation, and actual communication, the actual benefits and use derived as a stand-alone tool, and the socio-economic payoffs for their businesses. An analytical and quantitative approach is used throughout the study. A survey was distributed to 253 participants consisting of a standard questionnaire divided into two main parts: the first part covered the demographic elements while the second part focused on two factors (Performance Expectancy and Effort Expectancy) of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology model (UTAUT). The analysis reveals that: (1) Instagram can be an important means of creating valuable opportunities for productive families to achieve their missions and goals in promoting and advertising their products; (2) the two factors analyzed (Performance expectancy and Effort expectancy) directly influence the families’ intention to use form which leads directly to the actual usage; (3) the families’ age, gender and level of education have indirect effects on their intention to adopt and use the platform; (4) most of the families use Instagram to promote their businesses, specifically handcrafts and services and have doing so for over two year; (5) The main financially supporter is Tamkeen, which backs 53% of the surveyed families. To our knowledge, this is the first in-depth study of the use of Instagram by Productive Bahraini families.

KEYWORDS

Communication, Instagram, Kingdom of Bahrain, Productive Families, Social Media

1. INTRODUCTION

Everywhere, families are considered the building blocks of society; the stability of later strongly correlated that of the former. In response to disparities and harsh conditions that some families struggle upon, countries prioritized strategies to help families overcome such barriers.

Like other Gulf countries, the Kingdom of Bahrain, and under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Development, was able to achieve its goal of maintaining the stability and happiness of its families through economic empowerment.

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The native Bahraini who lived on this very land thousands of years ago were dependent on crafting and agricultural activities, such as farming, fishing, pearl hunting, sewing and so on to make a living. Based on this tradition, the Ministry of Social Development initiated the “Productive Families” project, which allows families to use these inherited skills in harmony with the modern lifestyle in the ever-changing world, in order to earn a living from the time-honored activities carried out by their time-honored ancestors.

The project provides the participating families owned businesses with vocational and technical training, financing, production units, marketing for products, registering and licensing of productive families and seeking to introduce a design and innovation Centre.

The Ministry of Social Development strives through this project to achieve several objectives, which on a larger scale would contribute to the establishment of a production-friendly environment that encourages entrepreneurs and self-employed citizens to become active members of the community under the protection of a legal cover, with traditional production being given ample support.

Over the past few years, the Ministry has organized a number of “Productive Families’ fairs in various parts of the country, offer to sell their products to as many purchasers as possible.

There are also subprojects under the main heading of “Productive Families”, including “Made in my Home”, “Family Bank”, “Khatwa Home-Based Businesses” and “Inma’a Initiative”. All these initiatives complement each other in reaching towards a unified target of empowering productive families and improving their living standards.

HRH Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, President of the Supreme Council for Women, personally supports and admires the concept of families being productive and innovative in the community. As a sign of her encouragement and reassurance for such families, who put in effort and add value to the community, HRH Princess Sabeeka plans to promote these families through an approach that combines creativity, innovation, efforts and expertise reward outstanding families from all Arab world.

Looking closely at the current list of domestic entrepreneurs provided by the Ministry of Social Development, it may be noticed that it includes a total of 651 concerns of which 99 are owned by males while the remainder are in the hands of females. The types of activities range from handicraft, such as sewing, pottery, agricultural endeavors, such as fishing, farming, cooking dishes, preparing peppers and mixtures and finally to provision of services such as the distribution of tea and Arabic coffee on occasions, playing traditional music and folkloric dancing and so on.

Although productive families in the Kingdom of Bahrain are supported by the government, they must still expend efforts to assure their sustainability and success. Certainly, Instagram is one of the key tools that can positively enhance the families’ businesses and provide them with different opportunities to develop their relationships with their new clients, to approach more customers and to provide all with better services. In this study, a short literature review is presented in section II while the objectives of the study are expounded, in section III. A description of the survey was informed this analytical investigation and the model is given in section IV, taking in to account the responses of the productive families (the study population) who are actively involved in promoting their businesses on Instagram. The analyses, hypotheses and results are covered in sections V and VI, while conclusions and recommendations are provided in section VII.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Today’s electronic world facilitates communication, the processing of information, the marketing of businesses and so on. Shirky in his book (2008) declares how social tools, such as blogging software like Word Press and Twitter, file sharing platforms like Flickr, and online collaboration platforms like Wikipedia, support group conversation and group action in a way that previously
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