

Social Media Impact on Young Entrepreneurs in Oman

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Received: 01stSeptember 2021

Revised: 14thSeptember 2021

Accepted: 08thSeptember 2021

Abstract: Social media has changed the way entrepreneurial activities are conducted. Technology-assisted mediums have changed the entrepreneurial landscape. Its presence has a powerful impact on people and communities, mediating through various platforms and becoming a part of the shared community life. This study is designed to investigate the use of social media to assess the impact on entrepreneurship activities. The structured questionnaire is designed and executed after careful checking of reliability and validity of the instruments after incorporation of a pilot study. The results endorse that entrepreneurs in Oman vastly increase their entrepreneurial activities through media promotion of products & services, globalising them, enhancing their business awareness, meeting the customer needs and demands, listening to their customers, and creating strong employment rates. The business locations are critical and statistically significant with the importance of social media in new forms of businesses due to the market environment and the lifestyle of different areas. The age of sales/income coming from social media has statistically significant differences with the importance of social media in new forms of businesses. Social media helps innovate new technology to improve business management efficiency, gain a good level of customer satisfaction and loyalty, and gain good feedback to business Customer services. The study recommended that policymakers increase awareness in using social media to boost further creativity, innovation, and technological development.

Keywords: social media, entrepreneurship, innovation, entrepreneurial development, Sultanate of Oman

JEL Codes: M12, M13

1. Introduction and background

The relationship of social media with entrepreneurship activities recognized in theory and the literature¹. Socio-cognitive theories confirm that in a typical society, people observe certain behaviors and attempt to act accordingly. The social presence theory also indicates that physical availability causes greater intimacy. Online personal communication, text messaging, advertisement, online activities, phone calls are another form of closeness that develops a different kind of intimacy. Literature also confirms social media helps entrepreneurs to reach out to their customers for their specific satisfaction, networking, and interactions in a non-traditional way (Shabbir, 2015; Gunther, 2009; Ancu, 2009; Cheung, 2010; Mangold, 2009). Technology has changed the entrepreneurial landscape and has a substantial magnetic impact and outreach. The fierce competition, along with technological, innovative, and dynamic in terms of customer satisfaction. These effects stem out from the shared experiences, news, and information flow on social media. Social media provides the platform for young people to explore the possibilities of starting up their new businesses. The popularity of social media in table 1 (in appendix) suggests the steep rise in its use in Oman (4.14 million by January 2021), amounting to 80.2 percent of the population (Kemp, 2021). Although, the popularity and the wide use of its various platforms are still at the early stage (Y-Magazine, 2015). Its popularity is proliferating (Times News Service, 2018). Social media is regarded as a significant growth factor for entrepreneurial development in the country, according to Samuel and Sarprasatha (2015) amplify essential skill sets that support entrepreneurship and contribute to enhancing employment prospects across the country (Samuel & Sarprasatha, 2016). Startups, particularly those established by less experienced entrepreneurs, require extensive research about their chosen business and social media to enable them to find information about almost everything through social media. The Sultanate of Oman is considered a young country, where the young population is the majority, in the age group of 18-35 years. The most frequent social media users belong to this age category, which translates to 78 percent of the total population having one or several user accounts (Tripathi & Al Shahri, 2016). The growth of entrepreneurship activities through social media widely encompasses an 88 utilization rate by small-medium enterprises, and 19 of these businesses are intensely using social media as a marketing tool (Samuel & Sarprasatha, 2016). This factor raises an interesting question to explore the extent of social media use, spread, and its likely impact on various entrepreneurial activities, such as new startups, innovation, and creative activities. These factors are possibly being influencing the younger population in engaging in business activities. These factors may be primarily induced by looking at business opportunities or compelling reasons for looking at some of the employment opportunities provided by these platforms. The rest of the study is organized as follows: the literature review is in section two, the methodology, results, and discussion follows sections three and four, and the conclusion contains a summary and recommendations.

2. Literature Review

The relationship between social media and entrepreneurship has been well documented. Hossain and Rahman (2018) confirm the expansion of traditional business settings into a digital platform such as e-commerce. The specific developmental opportunities are being offered to women and establishing the users themselves as entrepreneurs (Hossain & Rahman, 2018). The transition from tradition to digital platforms

¹Entrepreneurship is defined as a set of activities such as starting a business, identifying the available opportunities, outlining the composition of assets, overseeing the operations, and accepting the risks and dangers of undertaking the tasks (Swanson, 2020).

usually faces barriers, obstacles, and challenges such as barriers to entry, lack of funding, and unavailability of suitable business spaces. These barriers can easily be overcome by switching from traditional to online space. For example, Facebook has introduced another kind of online space both for buyers and sellers regardless of size. Also, the media is not only a marketplace platform but also a network of users. It has become possible to reach out to a larger market and for future sales conversion through media. Alraja et al. (2020) suggest that social media is a precursor to entrepreneurship development in Oman. It was found that the variance of Facebook advertisements by SMEs in the platform translates to 44 business efficiency. Social media is found to be responsive, flexible, and efficient for SME businesses because its fundamental characteristics such as ease of use, brand awareness, interaction, and effective demographic targeting have enabled entrepreneurs to develop strategies leading to future growth (Alraja, Khan, Khashab, & Aldaas, 2020). The scope of use of social media has paved the way for the emergence of social media-based business models catering to entrepreneurs who lack digital skills (Samuel & Sarprasatha, 2016). Entrepreneurship development stems from the need to diversify an economy, particularly in countries like the Sultanate of Oman, dependent on fast depleting hydrocarbon resources. Entrepreneurship activities are generally being operated as shops, restaurants, and many other forms of exchange of value for goods and services, long before the concept of SME was known in the business contemporaries in Oman. The emergence of SMEs can be regarded as a new form of business following models and strategies that are different from the traditional business settings. Steiner, 2019 suggests that the new form of business and entrepreneurship development in countries such as Oman results from joint efforts by the private sector and the government to decentralize its economic policies. New businesses have emerged to cater to the needs of business owners to grow their businesses (Steiner, 2019). Examples of new business forms include digital marketing offered to entrepreneurs seeking support for establishing their brand in the digital space. Other forms of business also include hosting digital space for companies to set up shops online. The increasing number of online sales activities also leads to an increase in logistics demand. A majority of the online sales are delivered to consumers via couriers. More and more entrepreneurs are introduced to the SME ecosystem because of the knowledge-sharing activity. Yarahmadi & Magd, 2016 show that the entrepreneurship infrastructure and its continuous development are influenced by the increasing interest of the academic sector in researching concepts and methodologies about entrepreneurial management (Yarahmadi & Magd, 2016). The Vision 2040 of Oman also encompasses the plan to include entrepreneurial management in the higher education curriculum. In return, this approach has helped the entrepreneurship development in the country in terms of providing skills training, research, and innovation. The bottom-line objective of the entrepreneurship development and formation of new business in the case of Oman is to drive towards a post-oil economy (Calabrese, 2018). Flanigan & Obermier's 2016 study compares an environment that was more developed and organized to promote social marketing to reach target customers, unlike those in Oman and the other Gulf States. Their findings suggest a strong influence on customer preference, especially the creation of brand confidence and trust. The authors recommended creating a platform to attract and maintain clients and not developing a new client base that represents the process of entrepreneurship. The findings of this study, conducted in the US, cannot be generalized to contexts such as Oman, where there is little social media penetration (Flanigan & Obermier, 2016). In Ireland, the study by Durkin, McGowan, and McKeown (2013) focused on the impact of web-based social networking reception among small businesses and how it influenced business development. The findings were that hierarchical setting and staff competency levels were major success factors in ensuring business thrived online. The authors also noted

that businesses hesitate when the environment is unclear on the best approaches to win clients' trust and attention (Durkin, McGowan, & McKeown, 2013). A study by (Tuten & Solomon, 2017) on the use of social media strategies embraced by SMEs on client acquisition and retention noted that clients believe in the information presented on social media to a high degree, making social media platforms a business success for entrepreneurs across the world, including the Sultanate of Oman.

In many ways, social media has changed the way entrepreneurs look at innovation in their businesses. The contemporary approaches in the SMEs' business operations now include social media in their marketing and customer relations activities. The impact of social media can be observed as a whole in terms of SME innovation in the way entrepreneurs engage their market consumers. In the study by (Basri, 2016), social media was identified as one of the critical segments of the business where it became a significant factor in business decision-making. For instance, innovations adopted by SMEs now include aspects of information and communication technologies to reduce operational cost, product/service price while maintaining quality and value and increase brand awareness (Basri, 2016). Social media is becoming an integral part of innovation by utilizing the reach capability of the platform in terms of exploring broader markets, targeting specific customer demographics, and gaining insights on consumer demands. Besides, SMEs' innovation potential can be further realized with the help of social media. For instance, establishing a more responsive and cost-effective customer service communication is easier on social media. This is because both business owners and customers can access social media on smart devices anytime and anywhere.

There is no constraint in time and place where the business can attend to the customer concerns because social media is accessible for many (Loanid, Deselnicu, & Militaru, 2018). Furthermore, social media have provided SMEs with an alternative avenue of creative marketing. Likewise, this is the reason that 86 percent of SMEs are now using social media as a marketing platform (Scuotto, Del Giudice, & Carayannis, 2016). There are three types of benefits derived from social media as an innovative tool for SMEs. The first one is enabling the SMEs to gain wider exposure with up to 89 efficiencies on targeting relevant markets (Scuotto, Del Giudice, & Carayannis, 2016). Second, social media can increase online traffic to the online front of the business. Similarly, this is equivalent to having more people coming all through the physical store. **Lastly, social media allow SMEs to conduct lead generation, which translates to keeping a record of potential customers that the business can target for future offerings.** For SMEs, the aforementioned benefits are crucial for business development, and future decision-making can be based on the available information from social media. Also, it will eventually result in lower production costs, faster product development, and increasing the value of products and services. However, although social media for entrepreneurial activities are prevalent, effectively utilizing its needs an objective understanding by considering the pros and cons that can impact the business and start-ups.

Despite mixed opinions, it is widely acknowledged that there are several positive impacts, such as breaking down the challenges between customers and the business, traditional business models are affected. Likewise, circumventing and disturbing the flow of the company, facilitating the target marketing and outreaching the public, improving the collaboration through internal social networking tools, leading to more cost-effective social networking (Economist, 2011b, Needleman, 2010). Social media has shown an advantage in creating a collaborative and conducive network to fostering innovation and entrepreneurial skills. This especially holds for start-up SMEs in developing economies due to the communication technologies that could build their businesses (Economist, 2010).

The marriage between creativity and technology results in inspiring the change referred to as innovation. Entrepreneurship is one of the prime economic drivers in which innovation is critical in achieving growth and sustainability. According to (Gupta, 2018), creativity is directly associated with innovation in developing products, services, and processes that benefit the business in terms of finding solutions to improve the business. In the case of Oman, innovation is fostered by creativity and technology in which new models and approaches to business are discovered and developed through various research initiatives. For example, the Knowledge Oasis in Oman is an initiative created in partnership with the government, the private sector, the academia, and the SME community, collaborating to find technological and practical methodologies to improve entrepreneurship in the county (Baporikar, 2015). The cornerstone of the described initiative is creativity where new business practices, technology, and strategies were derived from new ideas and concepts shared within the entrepreneurial community through open innovation (Shamsuzzoha, Al-Kindi, & Al-Hinai, 2018). For example, traditional advertising was innovated by applying interactive marketing concepts published using technology-based platforms such as social media; by interactive meaning, the audience sees or hears the marketing ads and can interact with them.

The formerly described context of creativity, innovation, and technology resonates with the study findings by (Pauceanu, 2016). The author stated that creativity, innovation, and technology are closely related to creating a direct impact towards ensuring the survivability and sustainability of every business. In the case of Oman, the survivability of SMEs depends on how businesses tackle the competition. One way in which a successful business in Oman can assure sustainability is to continuously seek new ideas to elevate their brand, use creativity in marketing, and apply technological tools to innovate their business process. The bottom line is that entrepreneurs will only achieve success if they understand the importance of delivering something new to the customers **with** an increment value than the rest of the similar **products or** services in the market. The process of adding value is to take queues from the market behaviors and apply new ideas to create new product concepts that best align with the demands of the observed market activity. Part of the process of implementing ideas is to use technology, which in return demonstrates entrepreneurial innovativeness.

3. Research Methodology

Several theories and frameworks are used to find out the effects of social media on entrepreneurship activities. The resource-based theory is utilized to address the cognitive ability of individual entrepreneurs (Olanrewaju, Hossain, Whiteside, & Mercieca, 2020). Technology-organization-environment (TOE) framework introduced by Tornatzky and Fleischer in 1990 was adopted to explain the entrepreneurs' interaction with customers through social media². **The quantitative framework provides enough tools to capture the fundamental nature of social media phenomena, their uses, and the very interaction process and its relationship with business activities** (Bhat, 2019). The conceptual framework suggests the mediums such as Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp related to various entrepreneurial activities that contribute some

² This framework suggests that the three factors technology, organization, and environmental factors are influenced the adoption and use of technology in firms. Technology factors refer to the internal and external technology that firms have. Organizational factor refers to the firm size, scope, structure, employee quality, etc. Environment factors refer to the film industry, target customer, regulations and policies, competitors, etc. (El-Den, Adikhari, & Adikhari, 2017).

form of commercial and business engagement. The form of new or old business, level of creativity, use of technology are prime determinants. These determinants suggest in a given situation and the use at the various platforms where new products are being introduced, with the new ways of doing business, methods of processing, packaging and the methods of delivery that involves several processes such as the level of use of technology, familiarity with the tools, connectivity and logistics and value-added. These aspects are intertwined in a very complex web of technology, supply chain, and different kinds and levels of skills.

The structured questionnaire is designed primarily to judge the respondents' responses. **The methods reduce the amount of thinking on the part of the respondents to undertake the complex tasks. The methods provide higher responses and accurate data collection. They are more straightforward in coding and analyzing to judge the specific trends. All the respondents express their views openly on the 5 points Likert scale. The method is easy to produce insights and depth on different questions. The questionnaire data is collected from the specifically targeted respondents who are engaged in entrepreneurship activities through a selection of businesses that are active on social media and are registered with the Public Authority for SME development in Oman. A pilot study is conducted to check and verify the questionnaire and the instruments to ensure reliability. The validity of the designed questionnaire is checked with the five experts' feedback. The initial 30 respondents and 2 entrepreneurs have provided essential feedback on the instruments' clarity, timing, and other aspects.** The feedback received from the participants and the development experts has properly been debated before being incorporated in finalizing the questionnaire before actually administering the survey. The reliability coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha suggests higher reliability. The necessary ethical procedures of data privacy, confidentiality, and informed consent are observed during the data collection exercise. The survey is translated into Arabic for ease of use of respondents. **The experts recheck the translation, and pilot users find no serious issue.**

A total of 171 participants from different regions were registered and filled the survey in the stipulated time (table 2 in the appendix). The demographic profiles, gender segregation, age, types of products, volume, nature, and attributes such as location and enterprises (Table 3). The data suggest 60:40 gender participants with 1-5 years of average engagement with half of the businesses are sole proprietorships. The data is found to be non-normal distribution based on Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. The exploratory factor coefficient interaction suggests a value of more than 0.5 (Al Harrasi, 2020). A monotonic relationship refers to the direction of the relationship whether positive or negative relationship (Laerd Statistics., 2019). Mann Whitney U test is helpful to test the shape of two populations as well as test the medians by comparing it with two populations (LaMorte, 2017). The demographic profiles of respondents, including gender, age, types of products, volume, nature, and attributes such as location and enterprises are provided in Table 3.

4. Results and Discussions

Table 4 and figure 1 indicates the social media in business; 94 percent of participants suggest that promoting products or services and globalizing the local products and services through social media are important in business followed by meet customer needs, wants, and demand (91.4 percent), business awareness and customer services (90.9 percent), customer satisfaction captures through listening to

customers (88 percent), the results show also that social media has a stronger relationship with employment rates (80.6 percent).

Table 4: Importance of Social Media in Business

S.L	Statements	Mo od	Medi an	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimp ortant	Very Unimpor tant
14	Customer Satisfaction	5	5	61.7	26.3	9.7	1.1	.6
16	Business awareness	5	5	64.6	26.3	6.3	1.7	0.0
17	“Listening” to costumers	5	5	58.9	30.9	8.6	1.1	0.0
18	Products or services	5	5	78.3	16.6	3.4	1.1	0.0
15	Customer services	5	5	61.7	29.1	7.4	1.1	0.0
13	Globalize local products & Services	5	5	76.6	17.7	3.4	1.7	0.0
12	Meets customer needs, wants & demand	5	5	60.6	30.9	6.3	1.7	0.0
10	Creates stronger employment rates	5	5	53.1	27.4	14.3	2.3	2.3

Source: Authors' findings

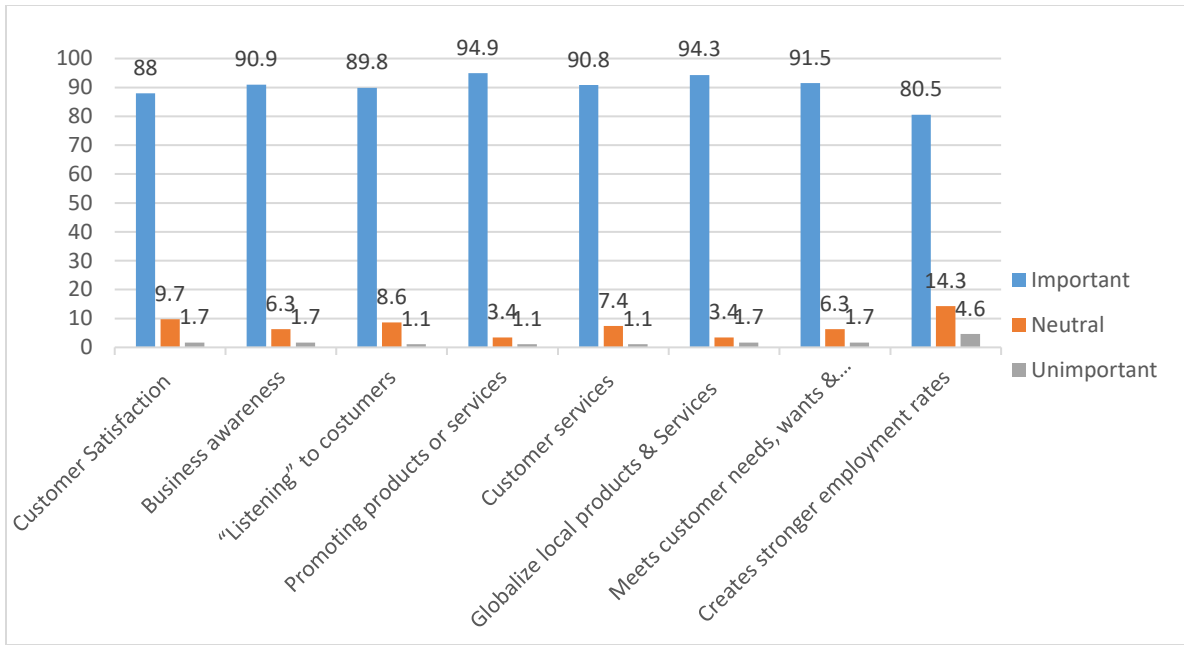


Figure1: Importance of Social Media in Business

Table 5 and Figure 2 show Creativity, Innovation, and Technological Development through social media, the results indicate that 93.1 percent of participants agree with the help of social media in innovating new products or services, followed by innovating new media marketing and smoothly managing the customer relationship (90.3 percent). The results further suggest that social media plays a significant role in gaining a good level of customer satisfaction and loyalty (88 percent), innovating new technology which improves business management efficiency (84 percent). 80 percent of participants also agree that social media helps in generating business income.

Table 5: Creativity, Innovation, and Technological Development

S. L	Statements	N	Mo od	Media n	Strongl y Agree	Agre e	Neutral	Disag ree	Stron gl y Disag ree
22	Since I start using social media, My business income has increased.	174	5	4	42.3	37.7	16.0	2.3	1.1
19	Social media helps me in innovating new products or services.	174	4	4	46.3	46.9	3.4	1.7	1.1
24	Since I start using social media, I gained acceptable feedback from my business Customer services	174	4	4	32.0	53.7	11.4	.6	1.7

21	Social Media helps me in innovating new technology which improves my business management efficiency	174	4	4	41.1	42.9	12.0	3.4	0
20	Social Media helps me in innovating new marketing methods and Customer relationship management	174	5	5	50.9	39.4	6.3	2.9	0
23	Since I start using social media, I gained a good level of Customer Satisfaction and loyalty	174	4	4	39.4	48.6	10.3	1.1	0

Source: Authors' findings

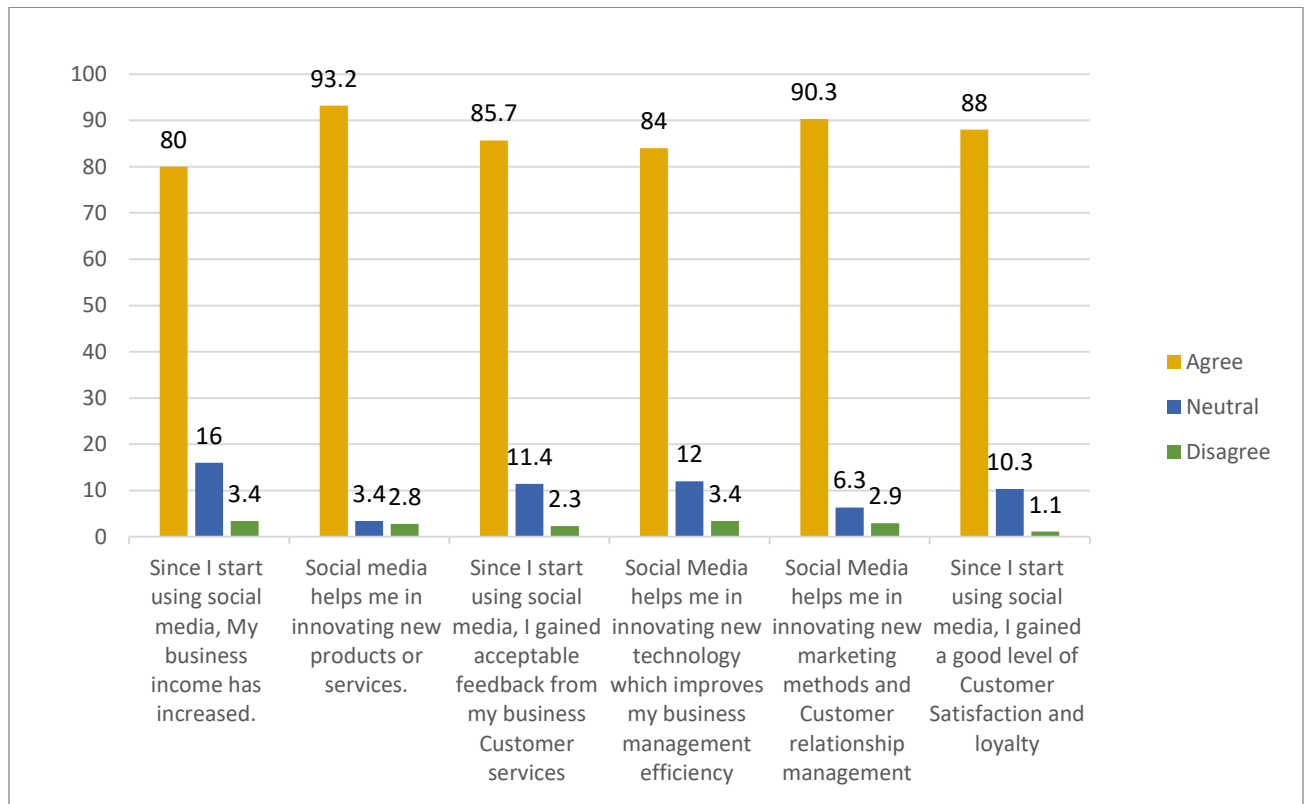


Figure 2: Creativity, Innovation, and Technological Development

Table 6 and figure 3 show that participants believe in the importance of social media in entrepreneurship skills, and customer interaction. 93.1 percent of participants agree that they are aware of social media posts resolved in public or private, followed by the greetings and being transparent with names or initials (88 percent) and reply quickly as possible on social media, questions, and comments (88 percent).

Table 6: Entrepreneurship skills, customer interaction

S.L	Statements	N	Mood	Median	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29	I reply as quickly as possible on social media.	172	5	4	46.3	41.1	10.3	.6	0.0
32	I include a greeting and be transparent with names or initials.	171	5	5	51.4	36.6	9.1	.6	0.0
30	I'm aware of which social media posts should be resolved in public or private	172	5	5	53.1	40.0	5.1	0.0	0.0
31	I Respond to all social media feedback, questions, and comments	172	4	4	44.0	44.0	9.7	.6	0.0

Source: Authors' findings

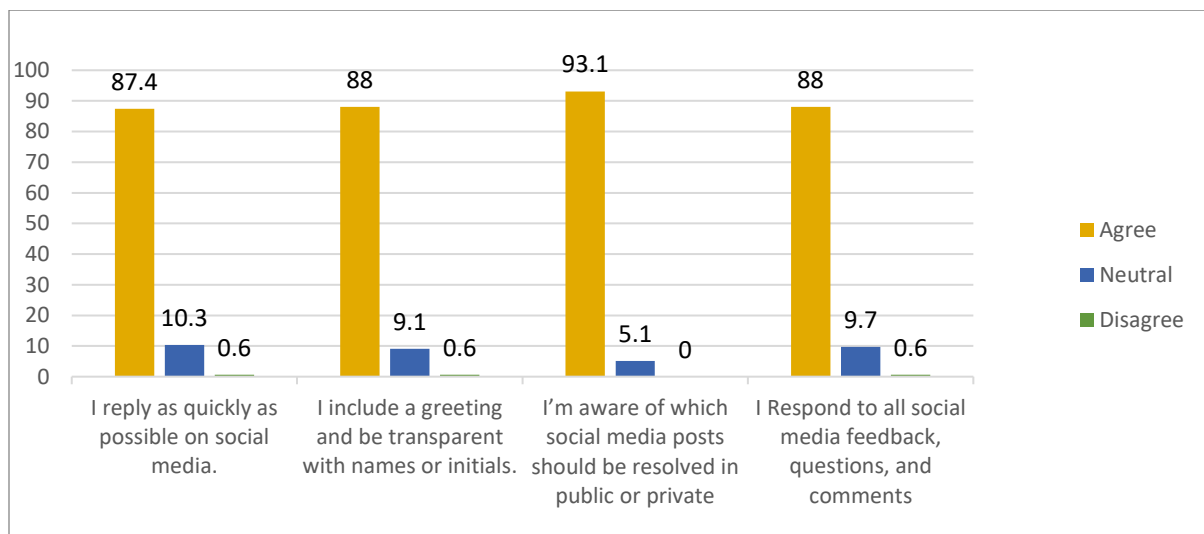


Figure 3: Entrepreneurship skills, customer interaction

Table 07 the results suggest 24.6 percent of participants confirm that 6 to 10 percent of the sales of their business income coming from social media and only 8.6percentof them indicated that more than 75percent of the Sales of their business income coming from social media. Also, 28 percent of the respondents have more than 1000 likes or followers in their business social media accounts and 8.6 percent have 251-500 and the same for 501-800.

Table 07: Frequency of components of social networking items

S.L	Statements	Frequency	
39	age of sales/income coming from social media (internet marketing).		
	less than 5percent	30	17.1 percent
	6percent-10percent	43	24.6 percent
	11percent-20percent	30	17.1 percent
	21percent-50percent	33	18.9 percent
	51percent-75percent	23	13.1 percent
	More than 75percent	15	8.6 percent
38	A total number of likes or followers you have in your business-related social media accounts.		
	less than 100	38	21.7 percent
	100-250	39	22.3 percent
	251-500	15	8.6 percent
	501-800	15	8.6 percent
	801-1000	18	10.3 percent
	More than 1000	49	28.0 percent
37	Your Business's Daily usage of social media.		
	less than 1 hour	51	29.1 percent
	1-2	31	17.7 percent
	2-4	37	21.1 percent
	more than 5 hours	55	31.4 percent
36	Social media accounts that you use frequently in your business (multiple options could be chosen).		
	Facebook	23	6.5percent
	Twitter	29	8.2percent
	YouTube	9	2.5percent
	LinkedIn	6	1.7percent
	Instagram	95	26.9percent

	WhatsApp	159	45.0percent
	Snapchat	32	9.1percent
40	Customers' Database (multiple options could be chosen).		
	Social Media	109	38.9percent
	Family and Friends	83	29.6percent
	Walk-in Customers	52	18.6percent
	Governmental Organization	17	6.1percent
	Private Organization.	19	6.8percent

*Source:*Authors' findings

Table 08 includes that more than 31 percent of participants use social media daily for more than 5 hours. However, 17.7 percent used it for 1 to 2 hours only and 29.1percent used it for less than 1 hour only. 45 percent of the participants depend on WhatsApp frequently used for their business followed by Instagram (26.9 percent) LinkedIn and YouTube are the less Social media application used by entrepreneurs in Oman, respectively by 1.7 percent and 2.5 percent. Furthermore, the customer database of participants was from social media [38.9 percent] and family and friends [29.6 percent], and Governmental and private Organizations respectively by 6.1 percent and 6.8 percent.

Table 08: Spearman's correlation result

Spearman's rho				
		Importance of social media in new forms of businesses	creativity, innovation, and technological development	entrepreneurship skills and customer interaction
The daily usage of social media	Correlation Coefficient	.160*	.222**	.174*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	.003	.023
	N	173	174	171
age of sales / income from social media	Correlation Coefficient	.155*	.213**	.216**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	.005	.004
	N	173	174	171
Number of likes or followers in business-	Correlation Coefficient	.211**	.232**	.277**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.002	.000

related social media	N	173	174	171
Business location	Correlation Coefficient	-.173*	.001	.155*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	.986	.043
	N	173	174	171
creativity, innovation, and technological development	Correlation Coefficient	.499**	1.000	.447**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	173	174	171
entrepreneurship skills and customer interaction	Correlation Coefficient	.303**	.447**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	170	171	171

*Source:*Authors' findings

Table 09 shows the result of Spearman's correlation test, which indicates that the daily usage of social media has a significant positive relationship with social media in new forms of businesses and with creativity, innovation, and technological development and entrepreneurship skills, and customer interaction. **The result indicates that the age of sales and income from social media has a significant positive relationship with social media in new forms of businesses, creativity, innovation, technological development, and entrepreneurship skills and customer interaction.** Furthermore, the result indicates that some likes or followers in business-related social media have a statistically significant positive relationship with the Importance of social media in new forms of businesses and with creativity, innovation, and technological development and entrepreneurship skills and customer interaction. Nevertheless, the business location has a significant positive relationship with entrepreneurship skills and customer interaction and a significant Negative relationship with social media in new forms of businesses.

Table 09: Mann Whitney U Test

		Importance of social media in new forms of businesses	creativity, innovation, and technological development	entrepreneurship skills and customer interaction
The daily usage of social media	Chi-Square	7.138	10.759	6.854
	df	3	3	3
	Asymp. Sig.	.068	.013	.077
Number of likes or followers	Chi-Square	9.127	15.866	11.299
	df	5	5	5

	Asymp. Sig.	.104	.007	.046
age of sales/income from social media	Chi-Square	16.549	11.388	14.586
	df	5	5	5
	Asymp. Sig.	.005	.044	.012
Business location	Chi-Square	15.667	9.135	18.707
	df	8	8	8
	Asymp. Sig.	.047	.331	.017

*Source:*Authors' findings

Finally, the result also indicates the importance of social media in new forms of businesses statistically significant positive relationship with creativity, innovation, and technological development and entrepreneurship skills, and customer interaction.

Table 10: Mean Rank of Daily usage of social media

Variable2	Item 37		Item 37	
	less than 1 hour	more than 5 hours	2-4 hours	more than 5 hours
N	51	55	31	55
Total	106		86	
Mean Rank	44.13	62.19	38.48	46.33
Sum of Ranks	2250.5	3420.5	1193	2548
Mann-Whitney U	924.5		742.5	
Wilcoxon W	2250.5		1445.5	
Z	-3.048		-2.208	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002		0.027	

*Source:*Authors' findings

Table 10 shows the result of the Mann-Whitney U test, which confirms the daily usage of social media (Item 37) has significant differences with creativity, innovation, and technological development. The number of likes or followers in business-related social media (Item 38) has statistically significant differences with creativity, innovation, and technological development and entrepreneurship skills and customer interaction age of sales/income coming from social media has statistically significant differences with Importance of social media in new forms of businesses, creativity, innovation, and technological development and entrepreneurship skills and customer interaction. Finally, the business location has

statistically significant differences with the Importance of social media in new forms of businesses and entrepreneurship skills and the cost. **Table 11 shows significant differences between the daily usage of less than 1 hour and more than 5 hours. Also, there are significant differences between 2-4 hours and more than 5 hours daily usage. According to the mean rank, it can be concluded that daily usage of social media of more than 5 hours is higher than the other group (less than 5 hours) toward creativity, innovation, and technological development through social media in Oman.**

Table 11: Mean Rank of Number of Followers or Likes

Variable2	Item 38		Item 38		Item 38		Item 38		Item 38	
	less than 100	251-500	100-250	251-500	100-250	More than 1000	less than 100	More than 1000	501-800	More than 1000
N	49	11	39	15	39	49	38	49	15	49
Total	60		54		88		87		64	
Mean Rank	33.44	17.41	24.4	35.57	37.95	49.71	36.34	49.94	22.67	35.51
Sum of Ranks	1638.5	191.5	951.5	533.5	1480	2436	1381	2447	340	1740
Mann-Whitney U	150.5		171.5		700		640		220	
Wilcoxon W	891.5		951.5		1480		1381		340	
Z	-2.672		-2.365		-2.163		-2.512		-2.361	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.008		0.018		0.031		0.012		0.018	

Variable3	Item 38		Item 38		Item 38	
	less than 100	251-500	less than 100	More than 1000	less than 100	More than 1000
N	37	15	37	48	37	48
Total	52		52		85	
Mean Rank	22.99	35.17	35.39	48.86	35.39	48.86
Sum of Ranks	850.5	527.5	1309.5	2345.5	1309.5	2345.5

Mann-Whitney U	147.5	147.5	606.5
Wilcoxon W	850.5	850.5	1309.5
Z	-2.67	-2.67	-2.543
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.008	0.008	0.011

Source: Authors' findings

Table 12 shows that there are significant differences between the number of likes or followers of less than 100 and many other groups which are: 251-500 and More than 1000. Furthermore, 100-250 likes or followers have significant differences with 251-500 and More than 1000 likes or followers. Also, there is a significant difference between 501-800 and More than 1000 likes or followers. According to the mean rank, it can be concluded that the number of likes or followers of more than 1000 has statistically significant differences from other groups of Number of likes or followers. This means that the number of likes or followers impacted creativity, innovation, and technological development as the number of likes or followers differs.

Table 12: Mean Rank of Business Location

Variable1	Item 08		Item 08		Item 08	
	Muscat	North Sharqya	South Batinah	North Sharqya	South Batinah	Dahira
N	59	11	49	11	49	9
Total	70		60		58	
Mean Rank	38.23	20.86	33.44	17.41	31.4	19.17
Sum of Ranks	2255.5	229.5	1638.5	191.5	1538.5	172.5
Mann-Whitney U	163.5		125.5		127.5	
Wilcoxon W	229.5		191.5		172.5	
Z	-2.629		-2.785		-2.025	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.009		0.005		0.043	

Variable3	Item 8	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
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	Muscat	58	47.26	2741
	South Batinah	50	62.9	3145
	Total	108		
Mann-Whitney U		1030		
Wilcoxon W		2741		
Z		-2.625		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		0.009		

Source: Authors' findings

Table 12 also shows significant differences between the number of likes or followers of less than 100 and many other groups: 251-500, 801-1000, and More than 1000. Based on the mean rank, it can be concluded that the number of likes or followers of less than 100 has statistically significant differences from other groups of several likes or followers. This means that the number of likes or followers impacted the entrepreneurship skills and customer interaction as the number of likes or flowers differed.

Tables 13 indicate a significant difference between Businesses located in Muscat and North Sharqyia Toward the importance of social media in new forms of businesses. Also, a business is located in South Batinah and North Sharqyia and South Batinah and Dahira. According to the mean rank, it can be concluded that business located in Muscat and South Batinah has statistically significant differences from other business locations. This means that businesses located in Muscat and South Batinah recognize more the importance of social media in new forms of businesses. Furthermore, there is a significant difference between Muscat and South Batinah between entrepreneurship skills and customer interaction. The mean rank indicates that businesses located in South Batinah differ in entrepreneurship skills and customer interaction than a business located in Muscat.

Table 13: Mean Rank of the age of Sales/Income from Social Media

Variable1	Item 39		Item 39	
	less than 5 percent	6 percent -10 percent	less than 5 percent	21 percent -50 percent
N	29	43	29	33
Total	72		62	
Mean Rank	28.03	42.21	24.09	38.02
Sum of Ranks	813.00	1815.00	698.50	1254.50

Mann-Whitney U	378	263.5
Wilcoxon W	813	698.5
Z	-2.841	-3.058
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004	0.002

Variable2	Item 39		Item 39		Item 39	
	less than 5Percent	6Percent - 10Percent	less than 5Percent	21Percent - 50Percent	less than 5Percent	51Percent - 75Percent
N	30	43	30	33	30	23
Total	73		63		53	
Mean Rank	32.00	40.49	25.68	37.74	22.00	33.52
Sum of Ranks	960.00	1741.00	770.50	1245.50	660.00	771.00
Mann-Whitney U	495		495		195	
Wilcoxon W	960		960		660	
Z	-1.696		-1.696		-2.719	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.09		0.09		0.007	

Variable3	Item 39		Item 39	
	less than 5Percent	21Percent - 50Percent	less than 5Percent	51Percent - 75Percent
N	30	33	30	23
Total	63		53	
Mean Rank	26.40	37.09	22.47	32.91
Sum of Ranks	792.00	1224.00	674.00	757.00
Mann-Whitney U	327		209	

Wilcoxon W	792	674
Z	-2.35	-2.492
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.019	0.013

*Source:*Authors' findings

Finally, Table 14 indicates a significant difference between the age of sales/income of less than 5percent and many other groups toward the importance of social media in new forms of businesses which are: 6percent-10percent, 21percent-50percent, and More than 75percent. Furthermore, there are significant differences between the age of sales/income of less than 5percent and many other groups toward creativity, innovation, and technological development which are: 21percent-50percent, 51percent-75percent and More than 75percent. Also, there are significant differences between the age of sales/income of less than 5percent and many other groups toward entrepreneurship skills and customer interaction which are: 21percent-50percent, 51percent-75percent, and More than 75percent. Besides, there are significant differences between the age of sales/income of 6percent-10percent and many other groups toward entrepreneurship skills and customer interaction which are: 21percent-50percent, 51percent-75percent and more than 75percent. Finally, there are significant differences between the age of sales/income of 11 percent-20 percent and more than 75percent toward the importance of social media in new forms of businesses.

Table 14: Mean Rank of the age of Sales/Income from Social Media

Variable1	Item 39		Item 39	
	less than 5 percent	6 percent -10 percent	less than 5 percent	21 percent -50 percent
N	29	43	29	33
Total	72		62	
Mean Rank	28.03	42.21	24.09	38.02
Sum of Ranks	813.00	1815.00	698.50	1254.50
Mann-Whitney U	378		263.5	
Wilcoxon W	813		698.5	
Z	-2.841		-3.058	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004		0.002	

Variable2	Item 39		Item 39		Item 39	
	less than 5Percent	6Percent - 10Percent	less than 5Percent	21Percent - 50Percent	less than 5Percent	51Percent - 75Percent
N	30	43	30	33	30	23
Total	73		63		53	
Mean Rank	32.00	40.49	25.68	37.74	22.00	33.52
Sum of Ranks	960.00	1741.00	770.50	1245.50	660.00	771.00
Mann-Whitney U	495		495		195	
Wilcoxon W	960		960		660	
Z	-1.696		-1.696		-2.719	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.09		0.09		0.007	

Variable3	Item 39		Item 39	
	less than 5Percent	21Percent - 50Percent	less than 5Percent	51Percent - 75Percent
N	30	33	30	23
Total	63		53	
Mean Rank	26.40	37.09	22.47	32.91
Sum of Ranks	792.00	1224.00	674.00	757.00
Mann-Whitney U	327		209	
Wilcoxon W	792		674	
Z	-2.35		-2.492	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.019		0.013	

*Source:*Authors' findings

The entrepreneurs in the Sultanate of Oman believe that social media is important for promoting products or services, globalising local products & Services, enhancing business awareness, meeting customer needs, wants, and demands, enhancing customer services and satisfaction, and listening to customers, and creates stronger employment rates. This result is consistent with (Steiner, 2019) and (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). This means that entrepreneurs' awareness of the importance of social media in the new forms of business increases with an increase in the daily usage of social media, sales/income from social media, and the number of likes or followers. This finding is supported by (Flanigan & Obermier, 2016). The study described the reaction that when customers had created trust with the brand, there was a high likelihood of turning into a purchase. Moreover, Kaplan & Haenlein, (2010) found that social media platforms have been made to enhance connectivity through creating virtual customer environments (VCEs) where online communities/individuals of interest can join and do business, including selling a brand, products, and services. The business location has statistically significant differences with the Importance of social media in new forms of businesses. There is a considerable difference between Businesses located in Muscat and North Sharqiyah, South Batinah and North Sharqiyah, and South Batinah and Dahira toward the importance of social media in new forms of businesses. This means that business located in Muscat and South Batinah has statistically significant differences from other business locations. The age of sales/income coming from social media has statistically significant differences with the Importance of social media in new forms of businesses. This is supported by the study conducted by (Durkin, McGowan, & McKeown, 2013). Entrepreneurs in Oman believe that Social media helps in innovating new products or services, new marketing methods, and customer relationship management. Also, media helps in innovating new technology to improve business management efficiency, gain a good level of customer satisfaction and loyalty, and gain acceptable feedback to business Customer services. This finding is supported by (Pauceanu, 2016). Moreover, a study by (Hajli, 2014) showed that the advent of social media platforms has enhanced creativity in the business world. Also, the daily usage of social media, age of sales/income from social media, and Number of likes or followers in business-related social media have a statistically significant positive relationship with creativity, innovation, and technological development. This finding is supported by (Tajvidi & Karami, 2017). Furthermore, (Hur, Kim, Karatepe, & Lee, 2017) stated that Innovation comes when there are exchanges of ideas among the industry players, as fueled by consumer-generated content. Using social media, businesses can measure innovation by the capability to syndicate innovation, the capability to produce efficiently, increase innovative activities, and improve success rates. Also, the importance of social media in new forms of businesses has a statistically significant positive relationship with creativity, innovation and technological development and entrepreneurship skills, and customer interaction. (Smits & Mogos, 2013) further supported the findings indicating that innovation promoted in social media can create customer relationship management (CRM) where entrepreneurs can mine data to make an informed decision, reach more customers, and receive feedback for improvement. Entrepreneurs in Oman believe that Social media helps to have a good level of customer interaction. (Jones, Borgman, & Ulusoy, 2015) also noted that social media platforms enhance entrepreneurship through creating a stream of new customers at the point of view. The study further noted that SM (social media) marketing platforms **promote brand awareness**, leading to inquiries and a subsequent enhanced relationship with the client. Entrepreneurship is also developed when customers can interact with the firm, creating a rapport where information is exchanged, and purchasing decisions are made. This finding support by the findings of (Flanigan & Obermier, 2016).

5. Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendation

The research focuses on various factors which are influencing entrepreneurship activities on various social media platforms. The structured questionnaire is designed and executed after careful checking of reliability and validity of the instruments after incorporation of a pilot study. **The results confirm that entrepreneurs in Oman is vastly increasing their entrepreneurial activities through the use of media and is promoting the products or services, globalize local products & services, enhancing their business awareness, meeting the customer needs, wants, and demands, listening to their customers, and creates stronger employment rates.** The business locations are **critical** and statistically significant with the importance of social media in new forms of businesses due to the market environment, and the lifestyle of different areas. The age of sales/income coming from social media has statistically significant differences with the importance of social media in new forms of businesses. Social media helps in innovating new technology to improve business management efficiency, gain a good level of customer satisfaction and loyalty, and gain acceptable feedback to business Customer services.

Public Authority for SME development may increase the awareness of the importance of social media in developing entrepreneurship among entrepreneurs in Oman, with more attention to North and South Sharqia, South Batinah, and Dahirah. **The awareness should include the importance of social media in promoting products or services, Globalising local products & Services, enhancing business awareness, meeting customer needs, wants, and demand, enhancing customer services and satisfaction, listening to customers, and creating stronger employment rates.** Entrepreneurs may focus more on the daily usage of social media and the number of likes or followers in business-related social media in business-related accounts to enhance creativity, innovation, and technological development. **Entrepreneurs may focus on spending more than 5 hours on social media and increasing the number of followers to more than 1000 to improve their entrepreneurship skills and customer interaction.** Entrepreneurs may improve and enhance the age of sales/income from social media as it will help them in the creativity, innovation, and technological development of entrepreneurship.

Conflict of Interest: The authors have no conflict of interest.

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Table 1 Volume of social media users per platform in Oman

2020	Facebook	YouTube	Twitter	Pinterest	Instagram	Tumblr
January	61.3	3.33	14.51	11.45	8.4	0.39
February	62.11	2.91	14.44	10.7	8.9	0.37
March	64.99	3.1	14.29	8.31	8.54	0.28
April	60.15	4.2	15.48	10.46	8.73	0.36
May	72.02	5.58	6.2	13.49	1.48	0.5
June	74	4.99	6.5	12.11	1.2	0.53
July	74.17	4.86	6.78	11.68	1.35	0.44
August	75.15	3.62	6.41	11.51	1.42	0.45
September	74.59	3.99	6.88	11.58	1.58	0.54
October	71.85	4.47	8.65	12.31	1.53	0.43
November	68.72	4.22	11.68	12.11	2.01	0.41
December	68.39	4.27	10.25	13.61	2.25	0.33
January 21	69.8	4.9	9.54	11.88	2.56	0.36

Source: Stat Counter, 2019

Table 2: Regional Representation

Governorate	No. of Entrepreneurship	percent from Total population	Minimum sample size	percent from Total respondents
Muscat	4338	32.64percent	59	33.91percent
North Batinah	681	5.12percent	19	10.92percent
South Batinah	1256	9.45percent	50	28.74percent
North Sharqyia	1083	8.15percent	11	6.32percent
South Sharqyia	945	7.11percent	6	3.45percent
Masndem	25	0.19percent	1	0.57percent
Dahira	971	7.31percent	9	5.17percent

AlBurimi	128	0.96percent	1	0.57percent
Dhakliah	2792	21.01percent	15	8.62percent
Dhofar	1072	8.07percent	3	1.72percent
Total	13291	100.00percent	174	100.00percent

Source: Authors' findings

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics

Demographic variables	Category	Frequency	age percent
Gender	Male	103	60.2percent
	Female	68	39.8percent
Business Age	Less than 1 year	37	21.4percent
	1-5 years	63	36.4percent
	6-10 years	34	19.7percent
	11-15 years	9	5.2percent
	More than 15 years	30	17.3percent
Number of products/services	1-5	87	49.7percent
	6-10	34	19.4percent
	11-20	21	12.0percent
	More than 20	31	17.7percent
Nature of Business	Retail	28	16.0percent
	Manufacturing	15	8.6percent
	Electronics	6	3.4percent
	Fruit and Veg	5	2.9percent
	Restaurant & coffee shop	9	5.1percent
	Foods and Drinks	4	2.3percent
	constructions	16	9.1percent
	Beauty Products	20	11.4percent
	Dates	8	4.6percent

	different services	57	32.6percent
	others	6	3.4percent
Annual business sales	less than 500	72	41.1percent
	501-1000	32	18.3percent
	1001-5000	23	13.1percent
	5001-10000	13	7.4percent
	More than 10000	34	19.4percent
Entrepreneur Age	18-24	30	17.1percent
	25-34	77	44.0percent
	35-44	48	27.4percent
	45-54	13	7.4percent
	55-64	6	3.4percent
Qualification	Less than General Diploma	26	14.9percent
	General Diploma	49	28.0percent
	Diploma	21	12.0percent
	Bachelor	61	34.9percent
	Master	15	8.6percent
Location	Muscat	59	33.7percent
	North Batinah	19	10.9percent
	South Batinah	50	28.6percent
	North Sharqyia	11	6.3percent
	South Sharqyia	6	3.4percent
	Musandam	1	0.6percent
	Dahira	9	5.1percent
	AlBurimi	1	0.6percent
	Dhakliah	15	8.6percent
	Dhofar	3	1.7percent

*Source:*Authors' findings