



TECHNIUM
SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

Vol. 15, 2021

**A new decade
for social changes**

www.techniumscience.com

ISSN 2668-7798



9 772668 779000

Identifying the role of Social media on Real Estate Marketing in Kish Island

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Abstract. Social media marketing has recently been recognized as a vital element of marketing programs and has significantly contributed to their effectiveness. Today Small businesses can, thanks to social media, create sales opportunities comparable to those created by their powerful competitors. Therefore, in the present study attempts are made to identify the impact of social media (Instagram, Telegram, Divar and Sheypour) on marketing in the real estate sector. In the present study, qualitative research method is used to fulfill the objectives of the study. The present study was conducted through a semi-structured interview with 10 real estate agents and property buyers on Kish Island. The results showed that social media can effectively contribute to attraction of customers in the real estate sector and even help customers save time when trying to find their favorite property. The results also showed that Social media can help customers do home search without worrying about the spatial constraints, affect the dissemination of real estate images, affect the relationship between sellers and real estate customers, and finally mitigate the costs of real estate customers.

Keywords. Customer, marketing, social media, Instagram, telegram, Divar, Sheypour.

1. Introduction

Social media marketing has recently been recognized as a vital element of marketing programs and has significantly contributed to their effectiveness. Today Small businesses can, thanks to social media, create sales opportunities comparable to those created by their powerful competitors. Consideration of customers as well as their attitudes and interests and detection of potential customers are social media marketing techniques that should be taken into account. Social media marketing (SMM) ranges from using customers' name to sophisticated strategies in order to target individuals involved in an organization or business (Appel et al, 2020).

Social media such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram are constantly updating their platforms to provide clients with a better business environment and facilitate marketing and access to the target clients. (Labbafi et al., 2017)

On the other hand, creating and maintaining a positive public impression is one of the most important ways to achieve success (Boudlaie et al, 2020). Research show that, social media can play an important role in this field.

Optimal use of social media can significantly increase the number of audience and customers.

Without enough experience and an adequate insight, however, one may find it difficult to get started. In other words, adequate perception of the mechanisms and infrastructure of social media is indispensable in this field. (Aminifard et al., 2018)

The present study is actually an innovative research that addresses all the real estate agents and other individuals involved in real estate marketing on Kish Island. Although increasing studies are being conducted on the Impacts of social media on the real estate sales market, the way advertising can be integrated into marketing through social media in the real estate market has been subject of few studies (Breuer et al, 2020). The present study was an attempt to gain a comprehensive perception of the techniques used by real estate agents and brokers on Kish Island to systematically engage and even encourage customers to use social media such as Instagram, Telegram, Divar and Sheypour to enjoy their services when buying, selling, mortgaging, renting or bartering real estates. By conducting this study, the researcher actually aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on real estate marketing and even provide the real estate activists with new media-based marketing methods. Customers interact with brands through social media on a daily basis, and failure of businessmen to directly interact with their audience through social media, may cause them to be forgotten by their customers. Proper social media marketing can bring about significant prosperity in your real estate business.

Social media serve as a powerful element used to shape different aspects of business mainly because they boost word-of-mouth marketing and rapidly gain prominence in customers' purchasing decisions. To conduct media-based marketing, marketers are required to learn how to apply these policies. (Dashti et al., 2015). Although advertising is a reliable source of information, social media may outperform advertising, and since large number of messages are communicated through these media, marketers usually fail to gain adequate knowledge of them or effectively control them. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter and their impact on marketing have been subject of considerable debate. Many companies have created accounts on social media. Although many experts believe that word-of-mouth marketing is incredibly valuable, the true value of social media is yet to be fully explored. Organizations have recently taken word of mouth on social media as a means of communication. The customer is the only source of the company's present profit and future growth. However, a good customer, who provides more profit with less resource, is always scarce because customers are knowledgeable and the competition is fierce (Gary & Byun, 2001, 8)

In general, according to Gamson (1999) "relationship requires two parties who interact with each other." For example, marketing communication is based on the relationship between the (service) provider and a customer. Gronroos (2000) believes that a relationship can be developed only when all or at least the most major customer relations and interactions are oriented to relationship build approach.

The objectives of Social media marketing is to identify and establish, maintain and enhance and, when necessary, terminate relationships with customers and other stakeholders, at a profit so that the objectives of all parties involved are met; and this is done by mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises (Alina Elenaab, 2016).

Social media bring together people of different age groups, social backgrounds, and real-world distances. Schools, charities, public companies, brands, etc. also try to use social media to gain loyal customers. Thus, it can be argued that social media are playing a much more prominent role in bringing together existing and potential customers to create an environment that strengthens the customer-brand links and offers new ways to develop this relationship (Jalilian and Mejani, 2011).

Social media can be defined as online services provided by decentralized text created by users (including editing or tagging, social interaction, free or public membership). Public

forums, free online communities, social networks, public download groups, and... Fall within the category of social media. Private company emails and corporate news articles, however, do not fall within this category because they are non-public or subjected to centralized control processes (Algsheimer and Herman, 2005).

Social media can be defined as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan 2010). Social media has also been defined as online technologies and techniques people use to share knowledge and ideas. This definition was also supported by Rheingold (1993), who claimed that social media are social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace. The most important thing that members of such communities share is creation of meaning and discussing them (Algsheimer and Herman, 2005).

Communication researchers have spent many years analyzing people's communication behaviors and the perception of other parties. The resulting theories have provided hundreds of different ways to observe the world and mankind in the academic world. Although the leap into digital communication is innovatory, and has not been explored as fully as traditional communication methods, humans have not changed over the course of history. (The researcher believes that the theory of communication provides researchers with sufficient knowledge and insight to exploit the power and potentials of social networks. the researcher also believes that real estate agents and brokers can reach the culmination of their business when they advertise their business through social media and figure out how their posts are processed by users on Instagram, Telegram, Divar, Sheypour, and other social media. to achieve this goal, the researcher has used a systematic exploratory model to identify the preferential motivations of Instagram, Telegram, Divar and Sheypour users and figure out why some users show no interest in posts related to real estate agencies. (Harandi et al., 2017).

Therefore, the present study is primarily an attempt to figure out to what extent social media users in general and property buyers in particular, are systematically or exploratorily encouraged by the real estate agents' post on Instagram, Telegram, Divar and sheypour. In the present study, this researcher also seeks to analyze the experiences of real estate buyers or sellers through social media with an emphasis on their feedback to real estate agents' posts.

The above-mentioned goal can be achieved through the following sub- goals:

- exploring the role of real estate agents in customer attraction through social media.
- figuring out how real estate agents can use social networks to help customers save time when trying to find their favorite property
- figuring out how real estate agents can use social networks to help customers overcome their spatial constraints.
- Investigating the way real estate agents can use social networks to disseminate real images of properties.
- investigating the way real estate agents can use social networks to reduce the costs of real estate customers.
- investigating the way real estate agents can use social networks to facilitate real estate sellers-buyers interactions

2. Theoretical foundations of the study

Social media and social networks are two closely related concepts with considerable overlapping and distinctions. These concepts are interchangeably used so much so that even those who are well aware of their differences may fail to address them in detail. This problem actually arises from our general weakness in localizing the corresponding terms that have

entered the Persian language and have actually been literally translated without any regard for their background.

Social media is made up of two terms namely "media" meaning the platform or means of sending a message and "social" which refers, in this case, to reception of a single message by a group of people. Virtual social media refers to technology-based platforms that provide the ground for communication, interaction and gatherings intended to generate and consume content. Virtual social media are characterized by communication spaces in which participants or attendees, who are also referred to as users, both generate and consume information at the same time.

Today, people use social media more actively and interact at a faster pace than they could ever do through mass media. Today, news dissemination takes place at an unbelievably fast pace making it impossible for audience to bear with delays in receiving latest news. People actually seek comprehensive coverage of information and news, and their inability to stand delays make them turn to social media. (Oftadeh, 2010)

As Kotler et al., 2006 said, the rapid development in the social media application has gained overwhelming majority in the Marketing practices. Companies market performance and the products of the companies influenced by the huge quantity of data and information which are generated by users on internet (Kietzmann et al., 2011)

By Social media analytics, companies gain competitive advantages by assessing the competitor's strategies, supplier's performance and consumer behavior (Fan and Gordon, 2014).

Today, Social media are recognized as the leader of the web today and have been able to gain highest levels of popularity among Internet users. Social media have outgrown the mass media such as television, radio and the press (which still have a large audience) and still continue to grow at an incremental rate.

As for mass media, the growth rate is decremental and the social media will overshadow the mass media over time. Therefore, the term "**Social Media**" refers to the **use of web-based and mobile technologies** to turn **communication into** an interactive **dialogue**. Social media are means of social interaction that use highly accessible and scalable communication techniques (Oftadeh, 2010).

The term "social media" was first used in July 2006. Chris Chile (founder and chairman of global research department of Guideword Group) is often recognized as the first person to use the term social media. Chile believes that social media are leaders of future events for dialogue; events that are discussed in blogging and social networks and form-related technologies used in collaborative media. Of course, the term had been previously used by Tina **Showraki** in 1997 to describe a type of Internet content management community. Darrell Barry also used the term in 1995 to describe multimedia software systems that facilitate community participation and the mind experience of space (Tavernis, 2010). Nevertheless, there is no single universal and known definition of social media like those provided for other concepts in the communication field. In his definition of social media, Brian Solis argues that Social Media is the democratization of content and the understanding of the role people play in the process of not only reading and disseminating information, but also how they share and create content for others to participate. (Ghadimi, 2015).

He also argues that social media describes the online tools that people use to share content, profiles, opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives and media itself, thus facilitating conversations and interaction online between groups of people. Some analysts have introduced social media as a concept that can be interchangeably used with web. They acknowledge that social media defined as web, actually refer to current generation of interactive websites built on Ajax and RSS databases to provide a highly personalized and flexible web-based experience

(Mehdzadeh, 2010). Andre Kaplan and Michael Hanlin define social media as: “as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan and Hanlin, 2010).

Social media are of numerous types and can be classified according to their function, audience, generated information or communication style. Social networks are just one of the many types of social media that fall within the communication category of these media. So, social networks such as Telegram, Instagram, etc. constitute one of the types of social media functioning based on communication and marketing. Not every social media is necessarily a social network. The term "network" attributed to type of communication actually has its roots in interdependent multilateral communications that take place in social media.

Social networks are recognized as one of the subsets of social media with specific structure or components. Each of these components (users) is connected to the other components through nodes (just as is the case in nervous system). When it comes to using a social network to develop business services, knowledge of the social network position among the media, as well as the overall structure of the components and the way they are interconnected can significantly contribute to one's perception of the social network. Social media describes the online tools that people use to share content, profiles, opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives and media itself, thus facilitating conversations and interaction online between groups of people. These tools include blogs, message boards, podcasts, wikis, and vlogs. Brian Solis actually believes that social media is democratization of content and understanding of the role people play in data dissemination and consumption. In other words, these media are not used merely for generation of information, but their contents are being continuously complemented by users (Bakhshi and Pishnamazi, 2010).

Social media refer to the interactive approach to public relations put forward by Iwilly back in his time. Social media actually deal with social listening and engaging. This phenomenon makes people stop sending messages and try to establish relationships instead (Bagherian, 2014).

Consumers spend a lot of time on social media and their purchasing decisions are significantly affected by interactions within these media. Therefore, businesses emphasize on marketing strategies in which interactive communications are used to reach online consumers and take advantage of word-of-mouth advertising benefits (Song and Yoo, 2014). Social media has emerged as a dominant digital communications channel and has significantly influenced the marketing communications environment. Not only does it allow interaction between customers and companies (Gretzel and Dinhopf, 2014; Gretzel and Fesenmaier, 2014) but also among customers (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). These media are even recognized as a platform containing useful information that can contribute to interaction of customers by sharing their experiences which could actually contain valuable information (Song and Yoo, 2016).

today, Social media is perceived by consumers as a more trustworthy source of information regarding products and brands than corporate-sponsored communications transmitted via the traditional elements of the promotion mix including advertising, sales promotion and public relations (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

Taking into account the above-mentioned points, it can be argued that social networks are a type of media that allow for instant messaging via the web. This technology, which is used for interactive communication through the web, includes instant messaging, conversations, group meetings, and so on. With advancements in wireless LAN and mobile technologies such as 3G and 4G, Internet access via mobile devices has increased significantly and IM has rapidly evolved as a mobile service (Yoon et al., 2014).

In the present study, four marketing social networks including Telegram, Instagram, Divar and sheypour are investigated. Telegram is one of the IM tools that has become very popular in Iran. Telegram is an open source **cross-platform cloud-based** instant **messaging** tool through which users can exchange messages, pictures, videos and documents.

According to the above information, it can be concluded that the use of the Internet and social media has significantly increased over the past decade and today individuals and companies play an active role in social media. Social media allow organizations to communicate with customers in a new manner, and many organizations can bring into realization the value of their company through this competitive advantage. The present study focuses on real estate. The competition between real estate agencies is stiff thus, management of reputation is of vital importance for them. This is an interesting and innovative field of study that can distinguish this industry from other industries, because sellers and buyers deal with investment, taxes and interest rates. Additionally, this process can affect economic growth. Although the literature on reputation management have highlighted the role of communication, they are mostly focused on traditional media. Studies have shown that the techniques used by organizations to manage their corporate communications and corporate reputation in online environment is yet to be fully explored. The present study is an attempt to investigate real estate agencies to figure out how they can influence the mental impression of their clients, as part of the companies' reputation. The theoretical framework developed in this study emphasized on two main theories; the Operational model for managing corporate reputation and image (Gray & Balmer, 1998), and then Honeycomb of social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011). These theories have mostly developed into a conceptual model that their correlation is revealed in this study. In order to achieve the goal of the study and find answers to the research questions, the researchers employed a qualitative approach was conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 real estate agencies. Analysis of experimental results yielded a number of key findings. Thus, it can be concluded that real estate agencies mostly use emergent social media to engage in conversation, share information and develop their relationships with customers.

Social media is a marketing phenomenon that is growing at an unbelievably fast pace. Social media help create customer value through dissemination of advertisements on social networks. Weblog posts, videos, photos, reviews and rankings have a significant impact on marketing. The present dissertation is actually an attempt to figure out how companies can achieve customer loyalty and customer relationship management using social media marketing and how they can attract new customers through social media. Word-of-mouth spreads and circulates on social media which target customers. Social media provide new channels of support, promotion and action as a news dissemination tool to keep customers posted with latest events and news.

Real estate marketers on Kish Island are beginning to use social media as a tool that help them interact with customers, elicit information and offer help. Today real estate agencies use Social networks as a new approach to provide customer service and sell properties. However, the true value of social networks is not yet fully explored, and experts and activists in this field still believe that social networks do not necessarily rule out the traditional marketing methods. Nevertheless, they argue that increasing ubiquity of these networks in the future may lead to emergence of new marketing methods in this area.

3. Review of literature

Social media marketing in the real estate sector has been subject of few studies. Of course, the studies carried out in this field are either related to specific media or address

marketing in its general sense. Some domestic and foreign studies carried in this field are reviewed below:

Zumpano et al. (2003) studied the effects of the Internet as a medium playing an intermediary role in marketing. They found that Internet literally reduces the within-period search costs and makes it easier and more convenient for shoppers to gain access to what they need. The Internet also allows shoppers and customers to access their products without a commensurate increase in search duration. The results also showed that Internet can arouse competition between buyers and sellers, which is to the benefit of both parties. In another study entitled "integrating Internet and Marketing Management operations", Maria et al. (2007) found that adopting the Internet for advanced marketing operations opens up challenging opportunities for firms of all sizes. However, such adoption might destroy investments in present market channels and thus has the characteristics of radical innovation. The analysis was built on survey data collected from 379 Swedish manufacturing firms. The results showed that composition of factors on which firms base their decision to adopt advanced Internet-based marketing operations varies significantly with firm size.

Kilplainen et al. (2012) investigated the use of social networks to improve social studies education in remote areas. The results showed that educational media and other tele-learning strategies has various advantages for both students and teachers; for example, they clarify the study process, are both motivating and principled, and enhances students' competence in information and communication technologies. Since technology is playing an increasingly important in our daily lives, it is necessary to learn how to use social media as an educational tool. In a study entitled "Social Media as a Marketing Tool" the authors tried to figure out how real estate brokers use social media marketing in the Swedish real estate market. In 2014, 8 out of each 10-membered group of Swedish people used social media in their careers (Mac, 2014). Social media has grown into a sustainable marketing tool, and that's why the authors of this article aim to figure out how Swedish marketers have adapted their marketing activities to social media. Since the subject matter is examined through the experience and knowledge of real estate agents, a qualitative approach is preferred over quantitative approaches (Berman and Bell 2013). The respondents were, therefore, selected based on these experiences and knowledge, so that they can later be used to describe their perception of the subject matter. The interviews that were part of the study were first coded using three different methods and then analyzed using a descriptive analysis model (a suitable method for descriptive studies). This study reveals two important descriptive factors that motivate the Swedish media marketers to use social media marketing.

4. Research Methodology

Taking into account the nature of the subject matter, the researchers used qualitative research method to address the research problem in detail. In the qualitative research method, the open-ended research questions including vocabulary and careful consideration were used to explore the ideology and views of the participants (Boudlaie, Keshavarz Nik & Kenarroodi, 2020). These questions will specifically allow the researcher to figure out how the social networks such as Telegram, Sheypour, Divar, and Instagram influence marketing activities in the real estate sector.

The type of interview chosen by researchers generally depends on the objectives of study and characteristics of the interviewees. In the present study, semi-structured interview was selected with respect to the subject matter and characteristics of the respondents.

Thematic analysis method was used for data analysis purposes. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data.

This method is a process in which textual data are analyzed and scattered and diverse data are converted into valuable and detailed data.

Theme is indicative of important information about the data and research questions and can partly show the meaning and concept of the pattern in the data set. (Clarke and Braun, 2006). Thematic analysis is not merely a specific qualitative method but is recognized as a process that can be used in qualitative methods. In the present study, the six-step thematic analysis method proposed by Clarke and Braun, (2006) which is actually known as the basis of 3-stage thematic classification method of Attride-Stirling (2001) was used to develop a network of themes.

Clarke and Braun, (2006) proposed the following six-step thematic analysis method:

Step 1: become familiar with the data, Step 2: generate initial codes, Step 3: Search for themes, Step 4: Review the themes, Step 5: Defining the themes, Step 6: write-up

Attride-Stirling (2001) developed a network of themes for thematic analysis. The theme network offers the web-like network as an organizing principle and a representational mean. Three types of themes namely basic theme, organizing theme and global theme have been introduced to determine the position of the theme in the theme network,

The basic theme indicates an important point in the text. The organizing theme is the result of combining and summarizing the basic themes and serve as middle-order theme that links the global and basic themes. The global theme is a super-ordinate theme that encompasses the principal metaphors in the data as a whole

Taking into account the nature of the study, the research questions as well as the data collection method (interview), the researcher chose to use a researcher-made thematic analysis method which is derived from the previous two methods.

Step 1: become familiar with the data

In order to become familiar with the data, the researcher must immerse oneself in them by reading the data "repeatedly." Immersion in data usually involves the repeated reading of the data in an active way searching for meanings and patterns (Clarke and Braun, 2006).

Step 2: generate initial themes

After studying the data and becoming familiar with them, the researcher prepares an initial list of interesting ideas derived from the data. Textual data are divided into meaningful and systematic parts such as paragraph, phrase or word and a specific theme is assigned to each part. Initial themes should have well-defined boundaries so that they are not interchangeable or redundant; and they should also be limited in scope and focus explicitly on the object of analysis, in order to avoid coding every single sentence in the original text (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Step 3: Search for organizing themes

In this step, various basic themes are classified as potential themes, and the generated basic themes are assembled into organizing themes. In fact, the researcher analyzes the basic themes and considers the process in which different themes can be assembled into global themes.

Step 4: generate global Themes

At this stage, the themes derived in the previous stage are assembled into similar and coherent groups to generate global themes. Decisions regarding theme assembling procedure, shall be made with respect to the content and, if necessary, the theoretical foundations. Since in the present study a network of themes is created to delineate a specific strategy map of human resource performance, global themes have been developed in the form of strategic goals so that they can fit into the four perspectives of a balanced scorecard. The themes identified at this stage serve as the foundations of the theme network.

Step 5: describing the themes

Once the global themes are identified and created, the researcher defines the themes that are to be analyzed and then analyzes the organizing and basic themes that fall within them. According to the afore-mentioned information, the researcher tries to explore the nature of the themes that are accounted for by a global theme, and also find out to determine the aspect of data each theme covers. In the present study, the themes have been defined at three levels:

Level 1: describing global themes

At this level, global themes are defined and described and finally their constituent themes are analyzed.

Level 2: describing different perspectives of Strategy Map (Super-narrative)

Once the network of themes is delineated, the existing relationships between the global themes is used as a basis to fit each theme, as a strategic goal, into a perspective of the balanced scorecard to develop a strategy map. Each perspective and the reason for assembly of global themes into them will be discussed in the Super-discription

Level 3: overview of the strategy map

Taking into account the cause-effect nature of strategic goals and perspectives of the strategy map, the researcher will, at this level, give an account of the reason for choosing perspectives and the relationships between them.

Step 6: delineating a network of themes

Once the relationships between the global themes are detected and analyzed, these themes and the relationships between them will be presented in the form of a graphic diagram referred to as the theme network. In the present study, global themes are considered as the strategic goals of the human resources unit and the network of themes will serve as a strategy map.

Step 7: write-up

Once a complete set of final global themes is prepared, and the relationships between them is discovered and a network of themes is plotted, the researcher will go for final analysis and formulation phase of the study. The write-up is intended to define the complete and complex story in the data in such a way that the reader is convinced about the validity and accuracy of the researcher's analysis. The analysis must necessarily provide a concise, coherent, logical, and non-redundant definition of the data in terms of its themes and their inter-relationships. As mentioned before, the write-up obtained from the thematic analysis defines the global themes, the landscape of the strategy map and the general strategy map.

In the present study, the researcher interviewed 10 real estate agents and property buyers in "Kish Island". The demographic information and work experience of interviewees are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of the interviewees

Row	code	Work experience (years)	position
1	p1	12	Real estate agent
2	p2	8	Real estate agent
3	p3	5	Real estate agent
4	p4	3	Real estate agent



5	p5	10	Real estate agent
6	p6	-	Property buyer
7	p7	-	Property buyer
8	p8	-	Property buyer
9	p9	-	Property buyer
10	P10	-	Property buyer

5. Findings

Findings from analysis of data collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 real estate agents and property buyers in "Kish Island" are presented below.

Research question 1: can real estate posts on social networks such as Instagram, Telegram, Divar and sheypour effect the customer attraction process?

Opinions about the role of social media in real estate customer attraction on Kish Island are varied, but the most important views shared by all participants are: 1) social network posts increase the number of customers, 2) offer New customer attraction methods 3) bring together a large number of users 4) show the way 5) Daily visits to social media 6) attract customers methods 7) customer retention methods 8) serve as a basic customer detection method 9) provide a channel for communication with customers 10) provide ways to find customers 11) Increase customer referrals to real estate agents.

Research question 2: can real estate posts on social networks such as Instagram, Telegram, Divar and sheypour reduce the time property buyers spend on finding their favorite property?

The ideas about the role of social media in reducing the time property buyers spend on finding their favorite property in "Kish Island", are varied but the most important views shared by all participants are: 1) the social networks cross out the time dimension in the process of buying and selling properties. 2) New communication technologies remove time constraints and facilitate access to information and messages. 3) Thanks to social networks, customers don't have to spend much time on the initial search for properties. 4) Social networks help customers save time. 5) Social media can be used at any time. 6) Social networks provide round-the clock access to properties' images and features.

Research question 3: can real estate posts on social networks such as Instagram, Telegram, Divar and sheypour spare the need for spatial dislocation?

The ideas shared by participants are as follows: 1) Delete location dimension. 2) Social media cross out the spatial dimension in the search for property 3) social media spare the need to show up in person in the initial search for property 4) Social media spare the need for spatial dislocation 5) social media help gain access to a larger circle of customers 6) social media can help Attract customers from areas beyond the island 7) social media obviate the need for physical presence in the search for properties 8) Social media provide a vast Advertising space 10) thanks to social media, search for property and customers will not be limited to the boundaries of "Kish Island".

Research question 4: can real estate posts on social networks such as Instagram, Telegram, Divar and sheypour have an effect on dissemination of authentic real estate images?

According to the interviews: 1) social media allow for dissemination of authentic images of the interior and exterior designs of properties 2) thanks to social media, people can easily see property images 3) using social media, people can compare similar sale files. Moreover, social media make property images highly conspicuous. 4) using social media, people can have instantaneous access to property images 5) social medial enhance the persuasion power during the property sale process6) social media can Speed-up the dissemination of sales ads 7) thanks to social media, people can put on ads on a daily basis 8) social media allow customers to compare files uploaded by different real estate agents 9) social media allow for comparison of a given case with a larger number of cases 10) using social media people can interact with a larger number of real estate agents 11) using social media, people can gain access to a larger number of files, 12) social media provide round-the clock access to images 13) using social media, people can easily detect the specific characteristics of each property

Research question 5: can real estate posts on social networks such as Instagram, Telegram, Divar and sheypour reduce the costs of real estate clients?

According to the interviews: 1) social media reduce the marketing costs, 2) social media can help detect inexpensive marketing techniques, 3) social media can reduce marketing costs, 4). Social media can reduce customer costs.

Research question 6: can real estate posts on social networks such as Instagram, Telegram, Divar and sheypour affect the seller-buyer communications?

According to the interviews: 1) social media facilitate the interactions of both parties, 2) social media can provide a large number of ways for communication with customers, 3) social media allow for development of dynamic communication with customers, 4) social media can improve communication with real estate activists 5) social media can facilitate communication with real estate agents 6) social media can provide the ground for Efficient communication.

According to the findings, the social media including Telegram and Instagram, Divar and sheypour can significantly contribute to introduction of real estate agency (as a business) and the real estate agents. Social networks provide users with more opportunities to introduce and give an insight into real estate agency (as a business)

Themes and the clustering process

When through with the codification process, the researcher rewrote all the meaningful statements along with their code so that he could use them as a basis for classification. The statements were frequently studied and compared by the researcher so that the most similar codes which could convey a semantically consistent meaning could be assigned into a single class. Finally a specific theme was assigned to the resulting classes of codes.

In the next step, all the code were assigned to 6 categories, creating the following 6 themes:

Table 2. theme 1: social media and customer attraction

Row	Theme	Codes	Final code
1	social media and	1-1	Rise in the number of customers
		2-1	New customer attraction methods



	customer attraction	3-1	Bringing together a large number of users
		4-1	Showing the path
		5-1	Checking the social media on a daily basis
		6-1	Customer attraction methods
		7-1	A customer detection source
		8-1	a channel of communication with clients
		9-10	Ways to find customers
		10-1	Increase referrals to real estate agencies

Table 3. Theme 2: No time limitation

Row	Theme	Codes	Final code
2	No time limitation	2-1	Elimination of time dimension
		2-2	Elimination of temporal limitations
		2-3	Time management
		2-4	Saving time
		2-5	Lack of time limitation
		2-6	Round-the clock access to property images and characteristics

Table 4. Theme 3: No spatial constraint

Row	Theme	Codes	Final code
3	No spatial constraint	3-1	Elimination of spatial-location dimension
		3-2	Elimination of spatial constraints



		3-3	Sparing the need for physical presence in the initial search for property
		3-4	No spatial limitation
		3-5	Access to a larger circle of customers
		3-6	Attracting customers from areas beyond the boundaries of the Island
		3-7	No need for physical presence during the initial search
		3-8	No spatial constraint
		3-9	A vast advertisement space
		3-10	Access to areas beyond the territory of the island
		3-11	Attracting customers from areas beyond the boundaries of the Island

Table 5. Theme 5: media and image dissemination

Row	Theme	Codes	Final code
4	media and image dissemination	4-1	Dissemination of authentic images of properties' interior and exterior design
		4-2	Easy observation of properties
		4-3	Comparison of similar sale files
		4-4	Making property images highly conspicuous.
		4-5	Fast observation of properties
		4-6	Increasing the persuasion power in sale interactions
		4-7	Fast dissemination of sale ads



		4-8	Putting on ads on a daily basis
		4-9	Comparison of files put on by different real estate agents
		4-10	Comparison of properties with a larger number of properties
		4-11	Interaction with a larger number of real estate agencies
		4-12	Access to a larger number of files
		4-13	Round-the clock access to property images and characteristics

Table 6. Theme 5: media and cost reduction

Row	theme	code	Final code
5	media and cost reduction	5-1	Reduction of marketing costs
		5-2	Inexpensive marketing methods
		5-3	Low marketing costs
		5-4	Negligible marketing costs
		5-5	Reduction of customer costs

Table 7. Theme 6: Customer Relationship

Row	theme	code	Final code
6	Customer Relationship		Easy interaction of parties
			Large number of ways for communication with customers
			Communication with a larger number of customers
			Increase contacts with customers
			Easy contact with Real Estate agents

6. Description of themes

Once the themes were counted, the researcher provided a description of themes in the third stage of data analysis. The themes presented in this study are described as follows:

Theme 1: media and customer attraction

Media and customer attraction is the first theme addressed in the present study. This theme is used to investigate customer attraction in social media marketing. The themes detected through interviews include: Rise in the number of customers, new customer attraction methods, bringing together a large number of users, checking social media on a daily basis, new ways to attract customers, customer detection source, customer detection techniques, and increase referrals ton Real estate agencies.

Rise in the number of customers: this theme, coupled with application of content power and social media marketing, this type of marketing can be used to increase the number of audience and potential customers. To increase the number of their customers, businessmen must use social media as means of introducing their business to users. When a new content attracts the customer's attention, they can easily share it with others. Social media adds credit to your business and increases the number of your customers. For example, participant P1 noted that "using on-line ads, real estate agencies and other actors in the field managed to present their files to a larger number of applicants" "authentic images of interior and exterior designs of properties, coupled with sale ads disseminated through platforms such as Divar and Sheypour and other social media has increased the number of customers." Participant p2 pointed out that "by sharing images of properties put up for sale or rent, real estate agents can keep in touch with customers within and outside the Kish Island."

New customer attraction methods: customer attraction can be defined as the process of convincing potential customers by showing them how your business can be distinguished from similar businesses and offering sales services. For example, participant P1 pointed out that "thanks to increasing ubiquity of social media such as Telegram and Instagram among Iranian users, real estate agencies could use the latest methods to attract customers." Participant p3 points out that "to attract a large number of potential customers on the Internet, one can increase the number of followers on social media."

Bringing together a large number of users: Today, we can find a large number of smartphone users on social media. Making money from social media can be considered as the most important event of the contemporary era. Development of social media all around the world has resulted in emergence of a combination of virtual social activities or online marketing and sale activities. To be honest, social media can, thanks to their increasing ubiquity among users all around the world, serve as suitable advertising and e-commerce tools. For example, the participant p2 contributor pointed out that "with the advent of smartphones, we can find a large number of smartphone users on social media."

Checking social media on a daily basis: Social Media has become a Ubiquitous Part of people's Daily life and today constitute an integral part of human life. The time each person spends on social media must be taken into account, as an important factor, by marketers.. For

example, participant p2 noted that "many users visit their personal social media page at least once a day."

Customer detection source: when it comes to finding new customers, advertising is the first thing that may occur to most people. Advertising can help people find new customers. Telegram, Instagram, etc. can be recognized as important advertising platforms. Participant P3, for example, noted that "Telegram and Instagram are perfect platforms for finding customers."

Customer finding methods: a variety of ways and tools, including social media, can be used to find and attract more customers. For example, participant P4 noted that "using an official page on social media, we can attract customers on a regular basis" and "by sharing nice posts, images and characteristics of our properties via Divar, Telegram, Instagram and Sheypour, we can introduce our real estate agency to a group of new people who can become our customers in the future"

Increasing the referrals to real estate agencies: cyberspace and social media marketing can also be used to increase referrals to real estate agencies. For example, participant P4 noted that "each social medium (Telegram, Divar, Instagram, Sheypour) that we add to our marketing toolbox, can be regarded as a doorway into our real state agency"

Theme 2: no time limit

"No time limit" is a theme which is addressed for time management purposes in social media marketing. The themes detected through interviews include elimination of time dimension, elimination of time limits, time management, saving time, no time limit, and round-the-clock access to real estate images and characteristics.

Elimination of time dimension: elimination of time dimension in the property buying and selling process is the first advantage of social media visual marketing in the real estate sector. For example, participant P1 pointed out that "Elimination of temporal and spatial dimension is the best advantage of social media marketing in the process of property buying and selling" and participant p5 noted that "some people find it impossible to personally refer to real estate agencies mainly due to their job and time limitations"

Elimination of time limitations: by eliminating time limitations, new communication technologies have made it easy for us to have permanent access to information and messages. Application of Social media such as Divar, telegrams, Instagram, etc., is not associated with any time limit and users can feel free to use these media whenever they wish. For example, participant p1 noted that "access to the authentic images of the exterior and interior design of properties on social media has actually spared people the need to see rental and sale files at a specific time and place" and participant p9 pointed to "round-the-clock access to these ads"

Time management: time is a valuable and volatile asset. We have a large share of it in our lifetime, and by managing it we can get the most out of it. Today, thanks to the Internet, people can simply have access to a huge quantity of information. We do not need to spend a lot of time on the initial search. For example, participant P1 pointed out that: "finding a property not appealing at the first glance, property buyers will never waste their time to personally visit the property"

Saving time: we can't achieve success in our profession, unless we spend time wisely. Contributor P1 pointed to this in his statements.

No time limit: application of social media is no associated with any time limit. For example, participant P6 points out that "there is no time limit for viewing sale or rental files. You can feel free to take a look at the property images uploaded by real estate agencies at any time you wish".

Round-the-clock access to property images and features: We can have round-the-clock access to property images and files uploaded on social media channels by real estate agents. For example, participant P6 noted that "customers and applicants can have permanent access to property images, videos and features shared by real estate agents."

Theme 3: no spatial-location constraints: lack of spatial-location constraints is the third theme addressed in the present study. The themes detected through interviews include: elimination of spatial dimension, elimination of spatial constraints, no need for physical presence in the initial search, no spatial constraints, finding more customers, attracting customers from areas beyond the territory of "Kish Island", No spatial-location constraint, access to a vast advertising space, and attracting customers from areas beyond the boundaries of the Island.

Elimination of spatial dimension: social media marketing is one of the most competitive and lucrative businesses, because it is almost easy and inexpensive to go into this business. On the other hand, spatial-location dimension is eliminated in this business. Participant P1, for example, points out that "lack of temporal-spatial constraint is the best advantage of online and social media marketing process."

Elimination of spatial constraints: social media marketing in the real state sector has, by eliminating spatial constraints, enabled people to get information about property, regardless of the spatial location of the property or the people themselves. For example, participant P1 noted that "access to authentic images of properties' interior and exterior design on social media obviates the need to visit the rental and sale cases at specific times and places." Participant p2 also noted that "By disseminating images of the property put up for sale or rent, we can connect with a larger number of customers both within and beyond the Territory of Kish Island"

No need for physical presence in the initial search: Social media spare us the need to personally visit real estate agents in the initial search for property. For example, participant P6 pointed out that "thanks to social media, we can view and compare files uploaded by different real estate agent without having to personally show up at the real estate agency"

Access to a larger circle of customers: It is very important to introduce yourself and your business to others. By doing so, you can not only attract customers, but encourage them to introduce you to their friends and acquaintances. For example, participant P4 noted that "without social media marketing in the real estate sector, access to a wider range of customers is very difficult or even inconceivable"

Attracting customers from areas outside the territory "Kish Island": social media are not limited to a specific geographical area and a real estate agency can take advantage of this to attract a larger number of customers by creating marketing channels on social media. For example, participant P5 pointed out that: "using social media, we can gain access to customers from outside the Kish Island."

Access to a vast advertising space: In the contemporary world, large quantities of information are transmitted via various social media. The widespread use of social media marketing platforms such as Telegram and Instagram has made it possible to overcome many customer attraction challenges. For example, participant P10 pointed out that "access to a vast advertising space is one of the main advantages of Divar and Sheypour social media in the real estate sector."

No spatial constraints: application of social media is not associated with any spatial constraints. For example, participant P4 noted that "without social media marketing, our customer attraction strategies will be feasible only within the boundaries of Kish Island."

Theme 4: Media and image dissemination

Media and image dissemination is the fourth theme to be addressed in the present study. The themes extracted from the interviews include: dissemination of authentic images of the interior and exterior designs of properties, easy access to property images, comparing similar sale files, making property images highly conspicuous, instantaneous access to property images, enhancing the persuasion power in the property sale process, accelerating the dissemination of sales ads, putting on ads on a daily basis, comparing files uploaded by different real estate agents, comparing a given case with a larger number of cases, interacting with a larger number of real estate agents, gaining access to a larger number of files, round-the clock access to images, easy detection of specific characteristics of a given property

Dissemination of authentic images of the interior and exterior design of properties: Using the potential power of social media, one can quickly and easily share property images with potential buyers and customers. For example, participant P1 pointed out that "thanks to Social media, people can easily disseminate authentic images of the interior and exterior design of properties as well as the files of properties put on for sale via mobile phones"

Easy access to property images: Using social media such as Telegram, people can easily receive information about the properties put up for sale or rent by real estate agents. For example, participant P1 pointed out that "Social media make it possible for people to find a property within a short period of time and even enable busy applicants to easily gain access to the images of properties put up for sale".

Comparing similar sale files: By sharing real estate images through social media channels, real estate agents enable people to compare similar files and choose the best case. Participant P1, for instance, noted that "comparability of similar property files is also one of the advantage of social media marketing"

Highly conspicuous images of properties: considering the high popularity of social media (such as Instagram and Telegram) among Iranians, a real estate agent can make his files and property images more conspicuous by sharing them with others through channels. For example, participant P2 pointed out that "property images posted on social media such as Instagram are seen by a large group of audience mainly because social media make the images highly conspicuous"

Instantaneous access to property images: by sharing the property images via more social media, one can increase the speed of access to property images. People can provide

instantaneous access to property images by simply signing up to new social media and creating advertisement channels. For example, participant P3 noted that “beautiful and simple images coupled with effective content can make your property increasingly conspicuous within a short period of time”

Enhancing the persuasion power in the property sale process: successful marketing is a function of several important factors, including persuasion of customers. By disseminating beautiful images of properties, we can attract more customers and persuade them more effectively. Participant p3, for instance, pointed out that “an influential biography shared with others on social media, can make our business authority and power known to the audience”

Accelerating the dissemination of sales ads: The rapid spread of information on social media and cyberspace has made them a perfect platform for advertising. Participant P3, for instance, noted that "taking advantage of the power of social media, one can quickly and easily share an ad and attract a large number of potential customers"

Putting on ads on a daily basis: Telegram, Instagram, Divar and Sheypour allow for putting on various sales advertisements on a daily basis. These social media are not associated with any marketing restrictions. For example, participant P5 noted that: "Thanks to social media, you can share files, financial conditions, real estate training courses, beautiful and attractive property images as well as address and phone numbers with your customers on a daily basis”

Comparing files uploaded by different real estate agents: Social media allows you to simultaneously view and compare the files uploaded by different real estate agents. For example, participant p3 pointed out that "thanks to social media, you can see and compare the files shared by different real estate agents without having to visit the real estate agency in person”

Interacting with a larger number of real estate agents: Social media makes it possible to interact with more real estate agencies. You can simply see the property images disseminated by more real estate agents and interact with each and every one of them. For example, participant p8 noted that "social media enables customers to interaction with a larger number of real estate agencies"

Round-the-clock access to property images: people can have unlimited and round-the-clock access to property images shared by real estate agencies via social media channels. For example, participant p8 pointed out that "customers and applicants can have permanent access to property images, videos and features shared by real estate agencies on social media."

Theme 5: Media and cost reduction

Media and cost reduction is the fifth theme used to evaluate the costs of marketing on social media. The themes extracted through interviews include: marketing cost reduction, inexpensive marketing methods, low marketing cost, and customer cost reduction.

Marketing cost Reduction: social media marketing allows for reduction of advertising costs. For example, participant p1 noted that "social media allow for easy and cost-effective dissemination and access to real estate images." According to participant P2, "reduction of marketing costs is one of the main advantages of social media marketing”. Participant p7 also

pointed out that “social media marketing through Diavr and Sheypour can cost-effectively increase the number of website visitors”

Inexpensive marketing methods: social media allow people to gain access to inexpensive marketing methods. Real estate agents can easily put on ads by signing up to and creating a channel on Telegram, Instagram, Divar and Sheyoor. Participant P3, for instance, pointed out that "using social media, we can gain access to free or inexpensive marketing methods"

Low marketing cost: low marketing cost is one of the important advantages of social media marketing. For example, participant p5 noted that "we can sign up to all social networks for free, and social media ads and marketing is relatively less expensive than other forms of marketing" he also pointed out that " when it comes to the real estate sector, Social media marketing is probably the most cost-effective advertising strategy that can be used to Establish efficient communication between customers and business and even improve public impression of the real estate agencies.

Reduction of customer costs: social media marketing not only reduces the cost of both real estate agents and customers. For example, participant p6 pointed out that "This marketing method can even reduce additional costs by sparing us the need to visit different real estate agencies in person". Participant P8 also shared the same idea.

Theme 6: Customer Relationship

Customer relationship is the sixth theme that is used to evaluate the customer's relationship with real estate agents through social media. The themes extracted through interviews include, easy interaction of the parties, large number of ways for communication with customers, communication with customers, Communication with a larger number of customers, easy and efficient communication with real estate agents.

Easy interaction of the parties: Social media allows the parties to easily interact with each other. For example, according to participant P1 "Social media can, by facilitating interactions between parties, contribute to the process of overcoming recession and increasing the volume of property sale transactions”

Large number of ways for communication with customers: With advancement of technology and ubiquity of smartphones among people, social media can serve as a means of communication with customers. For example, participant p3 noted that “Many real estate agents use Instagram to advertise and contact potential customers."

Communication with customers: considering the stiff competition between businesses and the necessity of customer retention, businessmen need to communicate with customers day by day. For example, participant 4p mentioned that "using social media, we can contact a wide range of audience" and participant p7 stated that "social media can increase the opportunity to interact with customers".

Easy communication with real estate agents: easy communication is one of the main advantages of social media. Participant P9, for instance, noted that "In this marketing method, users and real estate agents can easily contact with each other and get to know each other better"

Effective communication: customer relationship is an important principle in marketing and customer attraction. This relationship does not necessarily mean convincing the customer to buy from you! Rather, it refers to an interactive communication that ultimately leads to perception and resolution of issues related to services to be offered as part of the sale process. Participant P9, for instance, pointed out that "Social media has provided the ground for effective interaction of customers and real estate agents on Kish Island"

7. Conclusion

In the present study, attempts were made to analyze some qualitative data. First, descriptive and demographic statistics were presented and then qualitative analysis was addressed in three stages. In the first step, meaningful statements were identified and in the second step, the codes were extracted. In the third step, six research themes were identified. These six themes include: media and customer attraction, no time limit, no spatial constraint, media and image dissemination, media and cost reduction, and customer relationship.

According to research findings, social media such as Telegram, Instagram, Divar and Sheypour can significantly contribute to popularity of business and introduction of real estate agencies to the public. Social media provides real estate agents with more opportunities to be seen and introduced to people.

Telegram and Instagram can increase Customer attraction opportunities by providing the ground for sharing attractive content and property images. Beautiful images and videos as well as effective textual content shared on Telegram and Instagram allow real estate agents to interact with previous customers and attracting new customers at the same time.

Ordinary people are known as the premises and target of Social media marketing in every community. Interacting with ordinary people and acting like them is one of the easiest ways to attract customers on social media.

Social media marketing is the most cost-effective type of marketing used by real estate agents. Telegram, Instagram, Divar and Sheypour serve as the most powerful marketing tools in this sector. To take advantage of this exceptionally effective space, you need to share persuasive content and interact with users.

In this marketing method, lack of budget and financial limitations cannot be a big challenge. Showing perseverance and trying to keep in touch with customers are the most essential factors that need to be taken into account in this business.

8. Suggestions for further studies

- Sign up to Telegram, Instagram, iHome, Divar and sheypour and other social media ... (in case you wish to gain access to a large number of property images). Interact with users, share good news and improve your distinctive features.

- Instead of using your personal account on social networks, you can simply create a business account and rest assured that creating a business account won't incur any cost. It just takes a few clicks to create an account on Instagram and Telegram.

- As you know, videos are receiving more and more attention in search engines and social networks. So you can simply make a short video of specific properties, satisfied customers, sold properties and anything that customers may find appealing and share it with them via the social networks.

- When using social media, ask thought-provoking questions and encourage audience to find answers. By doing so, you can have your name or brand passed from one customer to another (mainly through word of mouth) and increase the popularity of your brand among people.

Landlords wish to share beautiful images of their property with friends and family members in order to encourage customers to share or even email specific contents and images with others through social media.

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