Plan Overview

A Data Management Plan created using DMPonline

Title: Exploring digital branding strategies for B2B consultancy firms in the Middle East with main focus on the Role of social media in building digital brands

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Template: University of Liverpool Postgraduate Research Student Template

Project abstract:

This study explores digital branding strategies for B2B consultancy firms in the Middle East, focusing on the role of social media in building brand awareness within this unique regional context. The research is motivated by the increasing importance of digital engagement for brand development and a significant gap in studies addressing digital branding in Middle Eastern consultancy sectors. Guided by an interpretivist epistemological framework, the study employs a qualitative methodology, using semi-structured interviews with industry professionals to understand the various factors, including regional, cultural, technological, and organizational influences, that shape digital branding practices and drive the adoption of social media strategies.

The research aims to investigate current digital branding approaches, assess the impact of digital advancements on customer engagement, and analyse the challenges firms face in adopting digital strategies. A thematic analysis of interview data will provide actionable insights into effective, region-specific branding practices. The findings will contribute to both theoretical and practical understanding of digital branding in the Middle East market, offering recommendations for B2B consultancies to enhance their visibility and engagement through social media. With a feasible timeline and a clear focus on ethical considerations, this study addresses a pressing research gap and provides valuable insights for advancing digital branding in the Middle East.

ID: 164743

Start date: 22-10-2024

End date: 28-07-2025

Last modified: 24-11-2024

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Exploring digital branding strategies for B2B consultancy firms in the Middle East with main focus on the Role of social media in building digital brands

University of Liverpool Required Information

What stage are you at in this project?

- Post-award

Which faculty do you belong to?

Do you have, or will you be applying for Ethics approval for your project?

- Yes

Will be you collecting and storing personal or sensitive data as defined under the terms of GDPR? (this includes email addresses, phone numbers, etc)

- Yes

Will you require space on the Active DataStore?

- No

If you are not using the ADS, where will you store your data?

- M Drive

Will you be depositing your data in an open repository at the conclusion of your project?

- Yes

Which repository will you be using?

- Liverpool Data Catalogue

Your research data

What types of data will be collected or created?

Primary Data:

- **Interviews**: conducting discussions with industry experts or companies' representatives to gain deeper insights.
- **Video and Audio Recordings**: capturing interviews, webinars, or presentations related to digital branding strategies and storing interviews in video and/or audio formats.
- **Transcripts**: Creating written records of audio or video content to facilitate analysis.

Secondary Data:

- **Public Databases and Reports**: Data from sources like the World Bank Open Data, OECD reports, and national statistics bureaus in Middle Eastern countries.
- **Research Studies and Surveys**: Insights from studies conducted by organizations such as Statista, Pew Research Center, and the Content Marketing Institute.
- **Organizational Records**: Information from company websites, industry associations, and social media metrics.
- **Repositories and Archives**: Access to case studies and reports from platforms like Harvard Business Review and SpringerLink.
- **Media and News Sources**: articles from regional business news platforms like Gulf News and Khaleej Times.
- **Digital and Social Media Platforms, and social listening tools**: Analytics from platforms such as LinkedIn Insights, Facebook for Business, and SEMrush (Social listening tools)
- **Commercial Data Providers**: Market research data from firms like Nielsen and Euromonitor International.
- **Educational Institutions**: Research publications from universities and academic journals.

What formats will you use?

- **Qualitative Data: Plain text (.txt)**, **eXtensible Markup Language (.xml)**, **MS Word (.doc/.docx)**, **Hypertext Markup Language (.html)**. **Digital Audio Data: MP3 (.mp3)** or **Waveform Audio Format (.wav) Digital Video Data: MPEG-4 (.mp4), MOV (.mov)**, **WMV (.wmv)**, **WebM (.webm)**. **Documentation and Scripts: PDF/A (.pdf)**, **Plain text (.txt)**, **OpenDocument Text (.odt), MS Word (.doc/.docx)**, **MS Excel (.xls/.xlsx)**.

How much data do you estimate you will be collecting and storing?

10G.B approximitly

Documentation

Are there any standards for organising, labelling or describing research data in your field of research. If so, detail below.

I will create metadata using Readme files and will include mainly the following:

- Description of the methodology used to create the data.
- Explanation of the data processing steps used to create any derived data. Be prepared to expand upon this if it’s not adequately covered in any linked publications.
- The hardware and software used to create the data, including operating system details, together with links to any software downloads, especially if they are free.
- Quality assurance steps taken to ensure accuracy of the data, if any.

Ethics and Intellectual Property

Who owns the data you will be using, creating or collecting?

Data ownership in my dissertation will be determined by the origin of the data:

Primary Data: This encompasses new data that I collect directly through methods like interviews. As the researcher, I hold ownership of this data.

Secondary Data: This includes information sourced from external entities such as public databases, reports, and organizational records. The original creators or institutions that compiled this data retain ownership. For instance, if I utilise data from the World

Bank Open Data or reports from the OECD, these organizations hold the rights to their respective datasets. I will acknowledge these sources appropriately and adhere to any usage permissions or licensing agreements they stipulate.

Examples:

Public Databases and Reports

- **Examples:** Reports and datasets from **telecommunications authorities** (e.g., UAE TRA, CITC Saudi Arabia), **global organizations** (e.g., International Telecommunication Union, World Bank, OECD), and **regional statistics bureaus** (e.g., UAE Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Centre, Qatar Planning and Statistics Authority).
- **Type of Source:** Quantitative datasets and statistical reports on internet penetration, social media usage, and economic trends.
- **Ownership:** Owned by the original institutions (e.g., ITU, TRA, World Bank). Usage will comply with licensing agreements.

Research Studies and Surveys

- **Examples:** Digital marketing studies from **We Are Social and Hootsuite**, content marketing insights from **Content Marketing Institute**, and regional surveys from organizations like **Arab Social Media Report (MBRSG)** and **Global Web Index (GWI)**.
- **Type of Source:** Survey results, audience insights, and regional studies on digital behavior and branding trends.
- **Ownership:** Proprietary to the original creators or institutions (e.g., Hootsuite, MBRSG). Proper acknowledgment will be given.

Organizational Records

- **Examples:** Reports and data from **consultancy firms** (e.g., PwC, Deloitte, Bain & Company), **government initiatives** (e.g., Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia), and **digital branding agencies** (e.g., Omnicom Media Group, J. Walter Thompson).
- **Type of Source:** Case studies, operational reports, and branding analytics from businesses and agencies.
- **Ownership:** Data is owned by the respective organizations (e.g., PwC, Vision 2030 teams). Permissions or licensing terms will be adhered to.

Repositories and Archives

- **Examples:** Academic and business repositories such as **SpringerLink, Emerald Insight, and MBRSG Archives**, as well as **regional statistical archives** like GCC Statistical Archive.
- **Type of Source:** Peer-reviewed journal articles, case studies, and archival datasets on marketing and branding strategies.
- **Ownership:** Managed by universities, publishers, or regional institutions (e.g., GCC Statistical Archive). Proper usage permissions will be followed.

Media and News Sources

- **Examples:** Business and technology news platforms like **Gulf News, Khaleej Times, Arabian Business**, and global media such as **Forbes Middle East** and **Bloomberg Middle East**.
- **Type of Source:** Articles, reports, and trend analyses on branding and social media adoption.
- **Ownership:** Content remains with the respective media outlets (e.g., Gulf News). Citations and fair use principles will be applied.

Digital and Social Media Platforms

- **Examples:** Insights and analytics from **LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram**, and reports from platforms like **Think with Google (MENA)**.
- **Type of Source:** Platform-specific analytics and campaign reports on branding strategies.
- **Ownership:** Data is proprietary to the platforms (e.g., Meta, LinkedIn). Usage aligns with their terms and permissions.

Commercial Data Providers

- **Examples:** Market research reports from **Nielsen, Statista, Euromonitor**, and digital marketing platforms like **eMarketer and Gartner**.
- **Type of Source:** Commercial data on consumer behavior, branding trends, and digital marketing strategies.
- **Ownership:** Proprietary data owned by the respective research firms. Licensing agreements govern access and use.

Educational Institutions

- **Examples:** Studies and publications from **regional universities** (e.g., MBRSG, AUD) and global institutions like **Harvard Business School** and **MIT Sloan School of Management**.
- **Type of Source:** Academic research, case studies, and theoretical insights into branding and marketing strategies.
- **Ownership:** Content belongs to the respective universities or publishers. Appropriate credit and permissions will be ensured.

Are there any legal, ethical or commercial considerations?

Yes, there are several legal, ethical, and commercial considerations pertinent to my dissertation:

Legal Considerations:

- **Data Protection Compliance**: Personal data may be included in the information collected from participants during interviews
- **Intellectual Property Rights**: Certain secondary data may require permission for access and use.

Ethical Considerations:

- **Informed Consent**: It is essential to inform interviewees about the purpose of the research, how their data will be used, and their rights.
- **Anonymity and Confidentiality**: protecting participants' identities and sensitive information is crucial.
- **Bias and Representation**: Potential biases in data collection

Commercial Considerations:

- **Data Sensitivity**: The research generates insights directly applicable to commercial sectors (e.g., branding strategies, product design) that may lead to industry interest or commercialization opportunities.

If there are, how do you propose to deal with them?

- **Legal:** obtaining ethical approval (informed consent & participant consent), anonymizing data while complying with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and verifying secondary data ownership and licensing agreements to prevent infringement on intellectual property rights. Proper attribution and adherence to usage permissions are crucial.
- **Ethical:** Respecting participant autonomy, protecting confidentiality, and mitigating risks of bias.
- **Commercial:** Formalising agreements on proprietary data use and ensuring compliance with any industry or organizational guidelines.

Storage and Organisation

Where will the data be stored during your project?

UoL Managed Drive (M Drive)

If you are not using UoL managed drives, where will you be storing your research data and what are your reasons for doing this?

NA

Are there any security issues relating to the storage of the data.

Security issues may arise if the following instructions are not adhered to:

- **Secure Storage:**
  - All research data should be stored on **University-approved secure systems** or encrypted devices to prevent unauthorized access.
  - For digital data, the use of encrypted drives and password-protected storage is essential.
- **Access Control:**
  - Data access should be restricted to authorized individuals involved in the research. Proper authentication mechanisms should be in place to monitor access.
- **Anonymization:**
  - Anonymising data to minimize the risk of participant identification in the event of data loss or a breach.
- **Data Retention:**
  - Ensuring that the storage and retention of data must comply with the university's data retention policies, and ensuring it is securely disposed of after the agreed retention period.
- **Remote Access Risks:**
  - Ensuring that secure connections (e.g., VPNs) and institutional platforms are used to mitigate the risk of data breaches

Who else will have access to this data during the project?

The principal investigator and I, as a researcher.

Data Sharing

Will you be able to share any of your data?

Yes, I will be able to share my data; however, I will not share any data or metadata if I believe your project output has the potential for commercial exploitation. I will consult the university about commercialisation.

How do you plan to share your data? Will it be 'open'?

- I plan to share my research data in a manner that is as open as possible while remaining as closed as necessary to protect participants' privacy and ensure compliance with ethical and legal standards. Open access to research data maximizes its value, enhances transparency, and supports the integrity of research findings.

  Using good data management practices, I aim to make the data openly accessible while safeguarding participants' confidentiality. Personal research data will only be shared if it has been anonymized, and informed consent has been obtained for its use and sharing. In accordance with the University of Liverpool's expectations, all research data will be made openly available with as few restrictions as possible and in a timely manner.

  However, I will ensure that no data is shared or made openly available if consent for sharing has not been provided or if doing so would compromise the rights of individual researchers or participants. These considerations will guide my approach to data sharing, balancing openness with ethical responsibilities.

If not 'open' who could have access to your data?

If the data cannot be made open, access will be restricted to individuals or groups directly involved in the research or with legitimate reasons to use it. This may include my academic supervisors, collaborators, and funding bodies. In cases involving sensitive or proprietary data, access may also be extended to ethical oversight committees or regulatory authorities for compliance purposes. Any external access requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, subject to ethical approval and legal agreements, such as non-disclosure agreements. Data sharing will always follow university policies and occur through secure, approved platforms.

Long term archiving

Which data will you be able to retain in the long term?

In the long term, I will retain data that supports publications, fulfills ethical requirements, or holds significant value to the research community. Retention will follow the University of Liverpool’s Records Retention Schedule and funder policies. Sensitive data will be anonymised before retention, and all retained data will be securely archived using approved repositories or systems.

Where will the data be archived at the end of the project and how long will it be retained?

Data will be archived at the end of the project in the University of Liverpool Data Catalogue, one of the university’s managed repositories.

Data acquired in undergraduate or taught postgraduate projects will not normally be retained. It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that any research data collected during such projects is deleted at the end of the project except in exceptional circumstances, including but not limited to where legal or regulatory requirements are in place or research findings are included in published outputs.

What formats do you anticipate the data will be archived in?

Qualitative Data: Plain text (.txt), **eXtensible Markup Language (.xml)**, **MS Word (.doc/.docx)**, **Hypertext Markup Language (.html)**. **Digital Audio Data: MP3 (.mp3)** or **Waveform Audio Format (.wav) Digital Video Data: MPEG-4 (.mp4), MOV (.mov)**, **WMV (.wmv)**, **WebM (.webm)**. **Documentation and Scripts: PDF/A (.pdf)**, **Plain text (.txt)**, **OpenDocument Text (.odt), MS Word (.doc/.docx)**, **MS Excel (.xls/.xlsx)**.

Implementation

How often will this plan be reviewed?

Researchers are responsible for making appropriate appraisal decisions for the retention, transference of ownership, or destruction of research data at the end of the project and/or when they leave the University. These decisions should consider legal or funder requirements as well as the University's Information Management Policy and Records Retention Schedule.

What training is needed to implement this plan?

No training is required to implement this plan, as its details are clear, straightforward, and ready for execution. However, to further enhance my knowledge and skills, I may consider the following:

Guidance and training for DMPs, as well as best practices for managing research data throughout the project, can be found on the library's Research Data Management Essential web pages.

Workshops and one-on-one consultations on RDM practices.

What further information or help is required to implement this plan?

No additional information or assistance is required at this stage. However, if any questions arise, I will consult the Research Data Management Team for guidance.