

Research Title:

**The Role of Social Media Marketing in Enhancing
Consumers' Purchase Intention in Saudi Arabia**

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Introduction

As one of the most potent forces in modern consumer behavior, social media marketing has completely revolutionised how consumers come into contact with brands and how they make purchasing decisions. In the digital world today, consumers are engaged in a constant stream of marketing content on platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X (Twitter), and Facebook, making marketing a two-way, dynamic communication process. This transformation enables consumers to not only consume information, but also to interact with brands such as commenting, sharing, liking and reviewing, resulting in higher emotional engagement and stronger action towards products and services. Therefore, social media marketing has become a main factor that influences purchase intention, both directly and indirectly, through issues of consumer awareness, attitudes, and willingness to purchase goods and services (Pandey, Sahu, & Dash, 2018). Besides, it has been found that digital engagement through social platforms has a significant positive impact on consumer perception and decision-making process, thus making customers more likely to buy when they are constantly exposed to engaging marketing content (Jiang & Yin, 2020). Moreover, research has validated that the social media environment promotes electronic word-of-mouth and peer influence that has a significant impact on consumer intentions and reinforce their intention to purchase products and services (Sianturi et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the impact of social media marketing is not limited to merely advertising products – it plays a key role in developing long-term brand-related

outcomes, including brand equity, brand loyalty and perceived brand value. All these factors contribute to the consumer's perception of products and to the building of trust towards a brand over time. The more consumers see content that is both engaging and meaningful, the more they will feel a connection with the brands they see, and ultimately, the more they will be likely to purchase. The research has proved that social media marketing activities have a positive impact on brand equity as it has raised brand awareness and consumers' perception of quality and credibility (Almohaimmeed, 2019). Likewise, other studies have highlighted that a degree of brand loyalty as a key predictor of repurchase behavior and a positive attitude towards purchase, due to the consistency of digital engagement (Sağtaş, 2022). Furthermore, the results show that the perception that consumers gain from social media interactions with brands has a significant impact on consumer behavior, especially in highly competitive markets where a brand's differentiation is crucial (Hanaysha, 2022).

Similarly, trust is among the psychological factors that is found to be the most important between social media marketing and purchase intention. The days of consuming masses of information and being bombarded with promotional content have led to consumers heavily depending on trust as a decision making shortcut. Social media can help foster this trust through transparent communication, customer feedback, influencer recommendations and user-generated content, which all help decrease perceived risk and boost credibility. Research has shown that customer trust has an important mediating effect between SMM and purchase intent; customers are

more likely to buy from brands that are honest and reliable (Manzoor et al., 2020). Further, studies indicate that trust is a direct result of social media marketing and a fundamental mechanism that helps marketers convert their marketing efforts into actual purchases (Ali & Naushad, 2023). Moreover, empirical results indicate that trust positively affects consumers' attitudes toward brands and their journey toward purchase in digital settings (Mu, 2023).

Additionally, consumer engagement is another key factor of understanding the impact of social media marketing on purchase intention. Engagement is an indicator of the interactions, participation and emotional connection that consumers have with brand-related content and has a meaningful impact on consumer behaviour. The more consumers engage with brands, the more they are likely to feel attached to the brand, which can improve the likelihood of consumers intending to purchase the brand. Research has shown that social media marketing can increase consumer engagement by offering content that allows for interaction like video, live streaming, influencer partnerships, and storytelling that captivates consumer interest and fosters active involvement (Huang et al., 2024). Furthermore, engagement has been identified as a link between exposure to marketing content and actual purchase-making across multiple studies, helping to create the emotional connection between consumers and brands (KV et al., 2021). Furthermore, empirical studies show that engagement is linked to the consumers' intention to buy, where the increase in engagement levels also

positively influences the consumers' level of involvement with and attachment to the brand experience (Sianturi et al., 2022).

Furthermore, brand image is found to have an important mediating role between the social media marketing and purchase intention, which indicates the perception of the consumer regarding the quality, credibility, and overall value of the brand. These days, social media platforms offer organizations potent ways to curate and propagate their brand identity by way of visual storytelling, influencers, and regular content plans. Building a brand image using social media can go a long way in boosting consumer confidence and influencing their buying decisions. It has been shown that social media marketing helps to develop a positive brand image, which leads to a better perception of brand reliability and attractiveness, ultimately boosting a consumer's purchase intention (Ali & Naushad, 2023). Likewise, they have found that brand image is another key channel that relates marketing actions to consumer behavior and decision-making processes (Almohaimmeed, 2019). In addition, results have indicated that the coherent brand image established with digital marketing efforts is one of the factors that helps to distinguish brands and generate consumers' preference in competitive markets (Sağtaş, 2022).

Lastly, for Saudi Arabia, social media marketing is significant because of the swift digitalization and heavy utilization of social media by consumers. Saudi Arabia is one of the region's most dynamic online markets, and they are extremely receptive to online content, influencer marketing and digital advertising campaigns. The level of

engagement with social platforms is a huge opportunity for businesses aiming to impact consumer behaviour and boost purchase intent. Social media marketing was found to have a strong and significant effect on purchase intention in several sectors such as digital and fast growing where consumers' decision-making processes are heavily influenced by their online interactions in these sectors (Ho, Zakaria, Foo, 2024).

Research Problem

Although social media marketing is one of the most influential and dominant marketing tools in today's digital marketing strategy, the work that lies between social media marketing activities and consumers' purchase intention is still far from being well understood, especially in new and culturally different markets like Saudi Arabia. Previous studies on social media marketing and its impact on consumer attitudes, behaviors and purchase decisions have been conducted in different parts of the world, including Western countries and Asian nations, and have identified its importance in influencing consumers' behaviors and attitudes; however, most of these studies have been conducted in different contexts from that of Saudi Arabia with respect to cultural values, consumption patterns and digital engagement behaviors. Therefore, it remains unclear if the results of these countries could be extrapolated to the Saudi consumers context, due to the fast pace of digitalization and social media penetration in Saudi Arabia (Pandey, Sahu, & Dash, 2018). Moreover, while previous research has successfully established a positive correlation between social media marketing and purchase intention, the connection between the two is still unclear indicating that the

link between social media marketing and purchase intention is still fragmented for people in digital environments (Jiang & Yin, 2020). In addition, social media marketing has been studied previously as a monolithic construct, failing to fully categorise and explain the various aspects of social media marketing, including informativeness, personalisation, entertainment, interaction, and content quality, which results in a shallow understanding of the concept (Sianturi et al., 2022).

Additionally, while there are a great number of studies that examines the effect of social media marketing on different individual variables like brand awareness, brand loyalty and brand equity, there is still no accounting of how these variables work together to affect purchase intention. Much of the current research focuses on single factors, instead of on a set of factors that are inter-related and can collectively influence the consumer decision-making process. This results in a theoretical shortage in understanding the whole chain that social media marketing has on the consumer behavior. For example, although some studies have shown that brand equity plays a significant role in the linkage between social media marketing and purchase intention, others have focused on the role of brand loyalty and emotional attachment without incorporating them into a holistic explanatory model (Almohaimmeed, 2019; Sağtaş, 2022). Furthermore, social media platforms are dynamic and interactive, which implies that consumer perceptions are continually changing, but the evolution of consumer perceptions as a dynamic process is not fully captured by many social media studies that are based on static models (Hanaysha, 2022).

Similarly, in this context, trust has received widespread attention as an important driver of digital consumer behaviour, particularly where uncertainty exists, high levels of information overload and high level of brand competition. But, although it is vital, there is still not enough knowledge about how trust can be built, maintained, or damaged with the various social media marketing techniques. Although a few studies have linked customer trust with purchase intention as a mediator between social media marketing and purchase intention, there is a lack of consensus regarding the influence of various types of social media content, like influencer marketing, user-generated content, and paid advertisements, on customer trust building (Manzoor et al., 2020). Moreover, brand image has been highlighted as another important mediator, however, the influence of regular exposure to social media contents over time on consumer perception and the subsequent purchase decision, particularly in competitive markets, have not been fully explained in the literature (Ali & Naushad, 2023). This suggests that there is a need to conduct further research into the psychological mechanisms that drive consumers to respond to digital marketing stimuli.

Furthermore, consumer engagement has been identified as a major factor in determining the effectiveness of SMM, but it is not included in a lot of empirical studies. Engagement goes beyond just likes or comments to also involve emotional engagement, content sharing, joining brand communities, and active interaction with digital content. Although the importance of this has been noted there is still little empirical evidence that explains how engagement, a mediating variable, interacts with

other mediators, such as trust and brand image, to ultimately create purchase intention. Although some scholars have found that engagement can positively impact the relationship between the consumer and the brand and boost their intention to purchase, there is still a lack of a comprehensive model that integrates engagement with other psychological and behavioral factors in the same model (Huang et al., 2024; KV et al., 2021). Furthermore, the majority of the current research literature is limited to what is known as 'engagement effects' rather than long-term 'behavioural' outcomes.

Moreover, Saudi Arabia has a specific digital environment, which further accentuates the gap in the literature. Saudi consumers also use social media platforms the most and let influencer marketing, social media reviews and digital advertising campaigns guide their buying decisions. The high level of digital interaction, however, has not yet been explored in the context of Saudi Arabia using empirical studies focusing on localized factors that specifically impact purchase intention. Cultural values, social norms and religious beliefs can also be influential in how consumers react to social media marketing content, which however is largely neglected in current international research (Ho, Zakaria, & Foo, 2024). Furthermore, the academic study of consumer behavior in digital environments has not sufficiently caught up with the speed of digital transformation in Saudi Arabia, where national development projects are quickening the pace, resulting in a gap between the practice and theory of understanding consumer behavior in digital settings (Mu, 2023).

As such, the primary research question of this study is that what is the effect of social media marketing on Saudi Arabia consumer purchase intention mediated by trust, brand image and consumer engagement simultaneously? This shows the need for additional empirical studies to delve deeper into the direct connection between social media marketing and purchase intent, as well as explore the intricate interplay of psychological, behavioral, and contextual influences affecting consumer decision-making in the digital era (Pandey, Sahu, & Dash, 2018; Ali & Naushad, 2023; Sağtaş, 2022).

Research Questions

Main Research Question:

- What is the role of social media marketing in enhancing consumers' purchase intention in Saudi Arabia through trust, brand image, and consumer engagement?

Sub-Research Questions:

- What is the impact of social media marketing on consumers' purchase intention in Saudi Arabia?
- How does social media marketing affect trust, brand image, and consumer engagement?

- To what extent do trust, brand image, and consumer engagement mediate the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention?

The importance and objectives of the research.

Importance of the Research

Theoretical Importance

The theoretical significance of this study is that, it helps in the expansion of the knowledge of social media marketing on consumers' purchase intention in a more integrated and structured approach. This study contributes to the existing knowledge in digital marketing by explaining the correlation between social media marketing and consumer behaviour as opposed to individual variables. This study is one of the most important because multiple factors, including consumer engagement, brand image and trust, were integrated in the same model, thereby explaining the entire process of how social media marketing influences consumer purchases. This approach combines elements to create a more comprehensive picture of consumer behavior in the digital landscape, where several psychological and behavioral factors come into play simultaneously. Theoretically, this study is important as it can explain the psychological mechanisms of consumers' reaction to social media marketing. It illustrates that consumers respond to advertising not just with their actions, but also by forming attitudes and intentions through their trust, emotional response and

engagement with content. This helps to gain greater insight into the mechanisms of the digital marketing impact on human behaviour, particularly in high exposure contexts where consumers are constantly engaging with digital media. It also contributes to the development of traditional marketing theories to align with contemporary marketing environment where social media is a key driver of consumer decisions.

Moreover, this research contributes to the literature as it deals with the complexity of consumers in social media in which there are dynamic interactions that are constantly changing. It emphasizes the importance of purchase intention not being a one-off decision, but the result of a series of exposures, interactions, evaluations, and emotional responses. This enables the researchers to appreciate the interaction of various factors influencing consumer decisions, instead of studying these factors one-by-one. Therefore, this study helps to develop a comprehensive and updated theoretical model of digital consumer behaviour.

Practical Importance

This study is very relevant for the businesses, marketers, and decision-makers in today's digital markets that are highly competitive. The results of this research can give some tips to companies how to improve their social media marketing in order to have a more positive impact on consumers' purchase intention. The importance of trust, brand image, and consumer engagement can guide organisations to create effective marketing strategies that go beyond mere product promotion to fostering meaningful

relationships with their customers. This not only attracts more customers to the business but also helps in better communication and overall marketing efficiency. Furthermore, this study offers practical recommendations for enhancing strategies of digital marketing on social media platforms. It reveals that social media marketing isn't just about publishing content, it's about being able to interact with consumers in a meaningful way. The key areas of trust to be emphasized are transparency, consistency in brand messaging, and engaging content through interaction. These factors enable companies to build a tighter bond with consumers, thereby increasing purchase intent and overall business results. Furthermore, this study would have real-world applications in the business firms of the fast-growing Saudi market in the digital domain, where the users are active on social media platforms. In this context, knowing what consumers want and prefer will guide the organization in tailoring its marketing strategies to local needs and desires. Additionally, it can help companies make better decisions about their advertising and marketing campaigns, creating content, and customer engagement strategies to make them more competitive in the digital world. Last but not least, this research is valuable in bridging the gap between academia and business and offers clear and applicable insights relevant to marketers in their everyday work. It helps businesses enhance customer satisfaction, build customer loyalty, and boost sales by utilizing social media marketing strategies more effectively.

Research Objectives

Main Objective:

- To examine the role of social media marketing in enhancing consumers' purchase intention in Saudi Arabia, through the mediating effects of trust, brand image, and consumer engagement.

Sub-Objectives:

- To measure the impact of social media marketing on consumers' purchase intention in Saudi Arabia.
- To investigate the effect of social media marketing on trust, brand image, and consumer engagement.
- To analyze the mediating role of trust, brand image, and consumer engagement in the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention.

Research Hypotheses

Main Hypothesis:

- There is a statistically significant relationship between social media marketing and consumers' purchase intention in Saudi Arabia, mediated by trust, brand image, and consumer engagement.

Sub-Hypotheses:

- H1: Social media marketing has a significant positive effect on consumers' purchase intention in Saudi Arabia.
- H2: Social media marketing has a significant positive effect on Trust, Brand image, Consumer engagement
- H3: Trust, brand image, and consumer engagement significantly mediate the relationship between social media marketing and consumers' purchase intention in Saudi Arabia.

Literature Review

With its huge impact on consumer behaviors and its ability to change the whole process of decision making in digital environments, social media marketing has become one of the most dominant and the fastest growing field in the marketing research. The fact that social networks like Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Facebook and X (Twitter) have become so common in recent years has completely transformed the way brands communicate with consumers. Marketing is no longer a one-way process involving only the transmission of messages; it is an ongoing interactive process of which the consumer is an active participant, responds to and contributes to the meaning of the brand. This change has established social media marketing as a key strategic tool for businesses aiming to shape customer perceptions and enhance the likelihood of conversion in saturated markets. Social media marketing has consistently shown to have a significant and positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions, as

it not only raises brand awareness but also enhances their attitudes towards brands and boosts their willingness to purchase products and services in digital marketplaces (Pandey, Sahu, & Dash, 2018; Jiang & Yin, 2020; Sianturi et al., 2022). There is also a more indirect, but far greater and multifaceted impact that social media marketing has on consumers' psychology, impacting both what consumers see, but also how they think, feel and act towards brands. The most crucial aspect of social media platforms is the capacity to develop constant interaction among brands and customers by means of interactive features like likes, shares, comments, live sessions, messages and more. These characteristics allow consumers to become the active players of the brand communication. Such an engagement establishes an emotional bond and a psychological connection with brands, thus improving the chance of purchasing. Furthermore, the impact of social media on consumer behavior is further heightened by the notion that social interactions, user-generated content and peer opinions are increasingly shaping consumers, as well as social media's own influence on their behavior. The results from empirical studies have shown that interactive and engaging social media content has a significant impact on consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions towards purchasing products and services (Salvation & Sorooshian, 2018; KV et al., 2021; Pandey, Sahu, & Dash, 2018).

Moreover, trust is known to be among the most important psychological factors that have been found to buffer between social media marketing and purchase intention. Digital environments are dynamic, competitive, and uncertain, causing consumers to

be overwhelmed with information and often struggle to assess the credibility of brands and marketing messages. This means that trust is now a critical element affecting consumer decisions. Social media marketing helps establish trust in a variety of ways: through transparency, real brand stories, influencer reviews, user-generated content, and customer reviews. These factors contribute to minimizing perceived risk and consumers' trust in the reliability and honesty of brands. According to several studies, customers trust is a powerful mediator between social media marketing and purchase intention; thus, customers are more likely to make a purchase from a brand they trust and find credible (Manzoor et al., 2020; Hanaysha, 2022; Mu, 2023).

Similarly, in this context, brand related constructs (brand image, brand equity) are basic consequences of social media marketing and important factors in purchase intention. Social media channels offer organizations tremendous potential to create, strengthen, and sustain strong brand identities using a consistent visual communications approach, storytelling techniques, influencers, and targeted digital marketing campaigns. Repeatedly consuming such content over time creates a substantial cognitive and emotional link in consumers' minds, and ultimately has a strong impact on their perception and evaluation of the brands. The brand image is a significant determinant for the perception of quality, greater brand attractiveness and consumer confidence leading to a high purchase intention. In the same way, engaging in effective social media marketing activities greatly improves brand equity, which encompasses brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, making consumers

more inclined towards one brand compared to another in competitive scenarios (Ali & Naushad, 2023; Sağtaş, 2022; Almohaimmeed, 2019).

Further, the mechanism of consumer engagement has been found to be one of the most influential mechanisms of SM effects on the intention to purchase. The engagement is a multi-nested phenomenon consisting of cognitive, emotional and behavioral interaction with the brand content in social media. This can involve anything from liking posts to sharing content, commenting on ads, joining in with discussions, engaging with influencers or brand communities. Consumers who are very engaged are likely to be very close to the brand, making their likelihood of purchasing significantly higher. Social media marketing strategies that incorporate interactive content such as videos, live streaming, influencer collaborations, contests, and storytelling techniques are particularly effective in increasing engagement levels. Consumer engagement has been found to be a crucial mediator between social media marketing exposures and actual consumer buying behaviors (Huang et al., 2024; KV et al., 2021; Sianturi et al., 2022).

Moreover, social media advertising is a strong sub-segment of digital marketing that directly impacts purchasing intention by raising exposure and consumer perceptions. Social media advertising is more targeted, data-driven and personalized than traditional advertising methods, enabling marketers to target specific audiences based on their interests, demographics, behaviours and online activity. This level of accuracy boosts the impact of advertising campaigns and improves the response of

consumers. Advertisements are more likely to capture the attention of consumers and to resonate with them if they are visually pleasing, emotionally compelling and introduced by trusted voices like influencers or recommendations from peers. Furthermore, algorithms and data analytics can be used to continually fine-tune advertising campaigns for maximum engagement and conversions. Empirical studies have validated that social media ads have a positive and significant impact on purchase intention by arousing interest, increasing awareness and encouraging purchasing actions (Nawaz & Kaldeen, 2020; KV et al., 2021; Pandey, Sahu, & Dash, 2018).

Furthermore, empirical research carried out in different sectors regularly shows that there is a strong relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention, which can be different in terms of its strength and type due to contextual and environmental factors. Studies in the fast food, clothing, real estate, smartphone, and retail sectors show that social media marketing is a powerful tool that can impact consumer behavior, from shaping their perception of brands and products to driving engagement and brand loyalty. They tend to be stronger in markets where digital adoption is stronger, and where consumers are highly reliant on digital channels for product discovery, comparison and decision. Therefore, in the digital environment, consumer behaviour needs to be examined from the perspective of culture, society and economy because it can affect the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies (Ho, Zakaria, & Foo, 2024; Mu, 2023; Jiang & Yin, 2020).

Lastly, although a lot of research has been conducted on social media marketing and purchase intention, the study of integrated theoretical models that include several of mediating variables in one model remains a gap in the literature. The majority of previous research focuses on the individual effect of each of these variables on purchase intention, but not all of them take into account the combined and interactive effect of these variables. This disorganized method does not prove to be very effective because it doesn't enable a person to completely grasp the intricate ways in which social media marketing impacts consumer behavior. Thus, future empirical studies are needed to incorporate these factors in one comprehensive model and to use them in specific contexts, including Saudi Arabia where the digital transformation is accelerating and social media users are turning rapidly, and in turn, their shopping habits and behaviors.

Research Methodology

Research Approach

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to investigate the role of social media marketing in enhancing consumers' purchase intention in Saudi Arabia. The quantitative approach is considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect numerical data from a large number of respondents and statistically analyze the relationships among the study variables. The study specifically examines the influence of social media marketing on purchase intention while considering the mediating roles of trust, brand image, and consumer engagement. Through the use of

quantitative methods, the researcher can objectively test the proposed hypotheses, measure the strength and direction of relationships between variables, and draw conclusions that can be generalized to a broader population. Furthermore, the study employs a descriptive-explanatory design. The descriptive aspect focuses on describing the current level of social media marketing activities and consumer purchase intention, whereas the explanatory aspect aims to identify and explain the causal relationships among the study variables.

Research Population

The target population of this study consists of social media users in Saudi Arabia who are regularly exposed to social media marketing content and have experience with online purchasing activities. This population is particularly relevant because Saudi Arabia is among the countries with the highest rates of social media usage, and consumers increasingly rely on social networking platforms to search for products, compare alternatives, read reviews, and make purchasing decisions. The population includes individuals from different demographic backgrounds, including various age groups, educational levels, occupations, and income categories, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in the Saudi digital marketplace. Since the population is very large and geographically dispersed, selecting a representative sample is necessary to facilitate data collection and analysis.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

This study utilizes a non-probability convenience sampling technique to select respondents. Convenience sampling is considered suitable because it allows the researcher to reach social media users efficiently within the available time and resources. Respondents will be selected based on their accessibility and willingness to participate in the study. The sample size for this research is 300 respondents, which is considered adequate for conducting advanced statistical analyses and testing the proposed research hypotheses. A sample of this size provides sufficient statistical power to detect significant relationships among the variables and ensures a reasonable level of reliability and validity. Furthermore, a sample size of 300 is widely accepted in social science research and is appropriate for regression analysis and mediation testing involving multiple variables.

Sources of Data Collection

The study relies primarily on primary data collected directly from respondents through a structured survey questionnaire. Primary data is essential because it provides firsthand information regarding consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors related to social media marketing and purchase intention. In addition to primary data, the study also utilizes secondary data obtained from academic journals, books, conference proceedings, published research articles, reports, and other scholarly sources related to social media marketing, consumer behavior, trust, brand image,

consumer engagement, and purchase intention. Secondary data plays an important role in developing the theoretical framework, identifying research gaps, formulating hypotheses, and supporting the interpretation of findings.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in this study is a structured questionnaire designed based on established scales and measures from previous studies in the field of social media marketing and consumer behavior. The questionnaire is divided into several sections. The first section gathers demographic information about respondents, such as gender, age, education level, and frequency of social media usage. The subsequent sections measure the main variables of the study, including social media marketing, trust, brand image, consumer engagement, and purchase intention. Responses are measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. This format enables respondents to express their opinions clearly and allows for accurate quantitative analysis of the collected data.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the quality and accuracy of the research instrument, both validity and reliability tests will be conducted. Validity refers to the extent to which the questionnaire accurately measures the concepts it is intended to measure. Content validity will be established by reviewing relevant literature and consulting academic experts in marketing and research methodology to evaluate the appropriateness and

clarity of questionnaire items. Any necessary modifications will be made based on expert feedback.

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the measurement instrument. The reliability of the questionnaire will be assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which is one of the most commonly used measures of internal consistency. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or higher will be considered acceptable, indicating that the questionnaire items consistently measure the intended constructs. Conducting validity and reliability tests helps ensure that the findings of the study are credible and dependable.

Statistical Analysis Procedures

The collected data will be analyzed using appropriate statistical software such as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Several statistical techniques will be employed to achieve the objectives of the study and test the proposed hypotheses. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, will be used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and describe the main study variables.

In addition, correlation analysis will be conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships among social media marketing, trust, brand image, consumer engagement, and purchase intention. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis will be used to assess the effect of social media marketing on purchase intention and to

evaluate the contribution of each mediating variable. Mediation analysis will also be performed to determine whether trust, brand image, and consumer engagement significantly mediate the relationship between social media marketing and consumers' purchase intention. The findings obtained from these statistical procedures will provide empirical evidence for accepting or rejecting the research hypotheses and answering the research questions.

Research Limits

The present study has several limitations that need to be noted to interpret the results and to understand the scope of results. The first constraint concerns the geographic area of study, since the study is focused on the consumers in Saudi Arabia. This attention to consumer behaviour within a fast-growing digital space is necessary to understand consumer behaviour, but it also limits the generalisability of the results to other cultures and nations, particularly those with different social media usage, consumer behaviour patterns, and/or digital marketing practices. Hence, the findings should be interpreted in the context of socio-cultural and economic context in Saudi Arabia.

The second limitation is related to the sample size and sampling technique. The study involved a sample of 300 respondents, statistically sufficient for analyzing the research needs, but a small percentage of the total population of social media users in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the study relies on convenience sampling

and hence may contain some level of selection bias as subjects are selected for their availability as opposed to a random sampling. This can impact the generalizability of the sample and reduce the extent to which findings are generalizable to the population.

The other limitation is data collection technique: the study is based on self-administered questionnaire. This technique relies on the honesty, comprehension and willingness of the respondents to give accurate responses. Therefore, there is a risk of response bias in the form of social desirability bias or in understanding of some of the questions which can impact the data collected. Furthermore, the data are self-reported data and represent perceptions and intentions, not actual purchases, which may vary in real-world situations.

Also, this study uses the cross-sectional research design, which is a research design that gathers data at one time. This restricts the study's capacity to reflect changes in consumer behaviour over time, and to draw strong causal inferences from the variables. Consumer attitudes and behaviours towards social media marketing can change very quickly over time and with the introduction of technology and trends, and changing digital media platforms.

Last but not least, the study concentrates on the limited variables such as social media marketing, trust, brand image, consumer engagement, and purchase intention.

General Perception of the Research Structure

The overall organization of the research is structured in a logical and systematic way, leading from theory to research and preserving smooth transitions. The study starts with an introduction where the research topic, background and significance of this study in the context of social media marketing in consumers' purchase intention in Saudi Arabia is explained. This preliminary chapter sets the scene of the study, its importance, and the increasing relevance of digital marketing in the contemporary markets. The research problem is clearly stated after introduction, where the problem is well defined and represents the central problem of the study. This section focuses on highlighting the gap in the current literature in the absence of integrated understanding of the impact of social media marketing on the purchase intention via the mediating variables of trust, brand image and consumer engagement, particularly in the Saudi context. The research problem is the basis for the development of objectives, questions and hypotheses. Once the problem has been defined, the research objectives, research questions and hypotheses are presented in an organized and coherent way. The components are given some care to be consistent and coherent throughout the study. Main objective and sub-objective have direct correspondence with the main and sub-research questions, while the hypotheses are based on the theoretical relationships between the variables.

This alignment provides for a clear focus and logical progression of the study from theory to the empirical testing. The literature review section is next which is a detailed account of the studies conducted on social media marketing and purchase

intention in the past. The section summarizes the results from previous studies as well as main concepts, theories and empirical outcomes that support the present study. It also points to the social media marketing relationships with relevant intermediate variables like trust, brand image, and consumer engagement. Furthermore, the literature review will identify the research gap that is the need for this study. The research methodology section then describes the methodology used to conduct the study which comprised of research design, population, sampling size (300 respondents), sampling technique, data collection method and statistical tools for analysis. This section should make it easy for other researchers to see and understand how the study was carried out and to assess the study's validity. Lastly, there are sections like research limits and outcomes which give the researcher a realistic idea of the scope and boundaries of the research. The limitations help to give an idea of the constraints within which the research was conducted, as well as to point to areas of further research. The overall organization, coherence, and logical flow of the research is well developed and the chapters are logically related to one another resulting in a comprehensive and academically sound study.

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